

THE  
**PULPIT COMMENTARY,**

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**PHILIPPIANS.**

*Exposition and Homiletics*  
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# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### I. PHILIPPI: ITS INHABITANTS; FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.

THE Epistle to the Philippians was written about thirty years after the Ascension, about ten years after the first preaching of the gospel by St. Paul at Philippi. Christianity was still young, in all the freshness of its first youth. It had come suddenly into the world. The world seemed growing old: the old religions had lost whatever power they once possessed; the old philosophies were worn out; the energies of political life had been weakened or suppressed by the all-pervading despotism of Rome. Avarice, uncleanness, cruelty, were rampant in the earth. There was little faith in God, in goodness, in immortality. "What is truth?" was the despairing question of the age. The gospel flashed upon this scene of moral confusion like, what it is in truth, a revelation from heaven. It brought before the eyes of men a life and a Person. The world saw for the first time a perfect life; not a mere ideal, but a real life that had been really lived upon the earth; a life that stands alone, separate from all other lives; unique in its solitary majesty, in its unearthly loveliness, in its absolute purity, in its entire unselfishness. The world saw for the first time the beauty of complete self-sacrifice. And this life was not merely a thing past and gone. It was still living, it is still living in the Church. The life of Christ lived in his saints. They felt it: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." They could tell others the blessed realities of their own spiritual experience. They were in earnest; that was plain: they had nothing to gain in the world. St. Paul especially had renounced a career most tempting to Hebrew ambition, for a life of unceasing labour—a life full of hardships, persecutions, dangers, and evidently destined to end in a violent death. He was in earnest, certainly; he was consumed with an untiring zeal; in spite of many personal disadvantages, much natural timidity, the constraining love of Christ urged him to spend and to be spent in his Saviour's work.

And in that work, amid all its difficulties, anxieties, and dangers, he found a deep and living joy, joy among tears ; "sorrowing," he said of himself, "yet alway rejoicing." Joy, he felt and taught, was the privilege and the duty of a Christian, who knew that he was redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, that the Holy Spirit was sanctifying him, that God the Father had chosen him to be his own.

No wonder that those early years were years of fruitfulness. Earnest, truthful natures soon ranged themselves with the preachers of the new religion ; a chord was struck that vibrated in all true hearts ; all who waited for salvation, who were longing after God, were gathered round the cross.

St. Paul had first come to Philippi about the year 52. It was his first visit to Europe. He had seen in Asia a vision, a man of Macedonia, who said, "Come over and help us ;" and he came. Philippi was the first Macedonian city which he reached ; for Neapolis, the port of Philippi, was generally (not always) reckoned as belonging to Thrace. The place had been called Crenides, or Fountains, a prophetic name, for it became the fountain of European Christianity. The city was founded by the well-known Macedonian king from whom it derived its name, the ἀνὴρ Μακεδών of Demosthenes. The soil was exceptionally fertile ; there were gold and silver mines in the neighbourhood, which produced a large revenue. But the importance of Philippi was mainly owing to its situation : it commanded one of the principal routes between Europe and Asia ; the mountain range which separates the East and the West sinks into a pass near to Philippi. It was this circumstance, not only the mineral riches of the neighbourhood, which attracted the attention of Philip ; it was this, as well as the wish to commemorate his decisive victory, which led Augustus to plant a Roman colony at Philippi.

It was a Roman city that St. Paul found when he came hither in his second missionary journey : "a Roman colony in Greece," says Bishop Wordsworth, "an epitome of the Gentile world." The settlers brought by Augustus were mainly Italians, discharged Antonian soldiers. Along with these there existed a large Greek element in the population ; we may say Greek, for the Macedonians possessed, from the period when they first assumed prominence in Grecian history, many of the distinctive characteristics of a Hellenic people (comp. Mure's 'Literature of Ancient Greece,' I. iii. 9). The official language was Latin, but Greek was the tongue commonly spoken. Inscriptions in both languages have been found among the ruins of Philippi ; the Latin, it is said, outnumber the Greek. The colonists were Roman citizens ; the ensigns of Roman rule, the S.P.Q.R., were everywhere to be seen. The colony was a miniature of the imperial city. Its magistrates, properly called duumviri, were addressed by the more ambitious name of praetors (*στρατηγοί*) ; they were attended by lictors (*μαρτυρίχοι*). The inhabitants claimed the great name of Romans (Acts xvi. 21), the name which Paul and Silas vindicated to themselves in the house

of the Philippian jailor. The Philippians possessed some of the simple virtues of the old Roman stock. Romans and Macedonians were mingled together at Philippi, and the Macedonian character seems to have resembled the Roman more nearly, perhaps, than that of any other of the subject races. The Macedonians, like the old Romans, were manly, straightforward, and affectionate. They were not sceptical like the philosophers of Athens, or voluptuous like the Greeks of Corinth. Holy Scripture gives a very favourable view of the Thessalonians and Berœans, as well as of the Philippians. There were only a few Jews resident at Philippi, for it was a military colony, not a mercantile city. There was no synagogue, only a prosenche, a place of prayer, by the river-side, and that so little known that (according to the best-supported reading in *Acts* xvi. 13), Paul and Silas only *supposed* that they should find a place of prayer by the Gangites. Thither they went, with Timothy and Luke, on the sabbath. They found only a few women. But that sabbath was an eventful day; that little congregation was the germ of great Churches; the gospel was preached for the first time in that continent of Europe which was destined in the providence of God to be the scene of its greatest successes. The first convert, Lydia, strange as it may seem, came from that Asia where Paul had been forbidden to preach. She, with her household, was the firstfruits of Philippi unto Christ. Afterwards, as Paul and Silas were on their way to the same place of prayer, they met a slave-girl possessed with a spirit of Pytho; she recognized them again and again as "servants of the most high God." St. Paul cast out the spirit. This led to the apprehension of Paul and Silas. It was the first direct conflict of Christianity and heathenism; hitherto, as at Lystra, Jews had been the instigators of persecution. It was the first appearance of St. Paul before a Roman tribunal, the first beating, and the first imprisonment. Then came the conversion of the jailor and his family. Thus the Philippian Church was formed—the purple-seller from Thyatira, the Greek slave-girl, the (probably Roman) jailor, with the households of the first and last. Two of them were women—one engaged in a profitable trade, the other a slave; the third remarkable for his earnest question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and for his kind attentions to Paul and Silas. We observe already some of the blessed results of Christianity—the Christian family, Christian hospitality, the religious equality of women and slaves. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal.* iii. 28). There were others not known to us by name; there was a Church in the house of Lydia, where Paul and Silas saw the brethren and comforted them before their departure from Philippi (*Acts* xvi. 40). We notice the prominence of female converts in Macedonia. At Thessalonica (*Acts* xxii. 4) and at Berœa (*Acts* xvii. 12) many women, and those ladies of rank, became Christians. Women formed an important element in the early Philippian Church.

## II. SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH.

St. Paul's first visit to Philippi ended in suffering. In the Roman colony he and Silas claimed the privilege of Roman citizens. They were soon released, but the persecutions which the teachers were the first to feel did not pass away. The Churches of Macedonia, the Philippian Church especially, were called to suffer tribulation. St. Paul mentions their afflictions more than once (see 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, and ch. i. 28—30). It was given to them, it was their privilege, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake. Their sufferings, their "deep poverty," did not check that liberality which was characteristic of the Philippian Church. St. Paul had not left them long, he was still at Thessalonica, when they "sent once and again unto his necessities." And from 2 Cor. xi. 9 compared with ch. iv. 15 we may safely infer that his Philippian converts supplied his wants during his first sojourn in Corinth. Philippi was the only Church from which the great apostle was willing to accept help; it is a striking testimonial to their zeal and love.

St. Paul probably visited Philippi twice during his third missionary journey. After leaving Ephesus he went into Macedonia; "and when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece." It is not likely that Philippi was omitted. Philippi, with the other Churches of Macedonia, was then suffering that "great trial of affliction" mentioned in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which St. Paul wrote during this visit to Macedonia. We gather from that Epistle that he was busily employed in collecting alms for the saints in Jerusalem, and that the Macedonian Christians contributed readily and liberally; and we also learn (see 2 Cor. vii. 5 and viii. 2) that it was a time of persecution and distress for himself as well as for the Macedonian Churches. After three months in Greece, he "purposed to return through Macedonia," and, St. Luke continues (Acts xx. 6), "we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread." St. Paul chose to keep the Passover, the greatest of the Jewish festivals, at Philippi, among those whom he calls his dearly beloved, his joy and crown. There were very few Jews at Philippi: did he keep the feast as a Christian Easter among Christians, rather than a Jewish festival among Jews? It was the last Passover for several years which he could keep where and as he pleased.

At this point in St. Luke's narrative (Acts xx. 6) we notice the resumption of the first person, which St. Luke has not used since Acts xvi., in which St. Paul's first visit to Philippi is related. From this circumstance it has been inferred that St. Luke was left at Philippi to carry on the work of organizing the Macedonian Churches; and perhaps remained there till he rejoined St. Paul on his way to Jerusalem. Thus it may be that the Christians at Philippi had the benefit of the teaching of the evangelist during the seven or eight years which followed St. Paul's first visit. Thus their

love for St. Paul, their unhesitating submission to his apostolic authority, their steadfast adherence to his teaching, may in part be the result of the labours of his trusted friend and follower, who continued faithful (2 Tim. iv. 11) when others forsook him.

St. Paul "sailed away from Philippi" in the year 58. His imprisonment soon followed; he remained a prisoner for four or five years, the first half of the time at Cæsarea, the second half at Rome. The Epistle to the Philippians has been assigned to the Cæsarean imprisonment by Paulus and others. St. Paul was kept at Cæsarea in Herod's prætorium (Acts xxiii. 35), and in the Epistle (ch. i. 13) he says that his bonds in Christ have become manifest in the whole prætorium. But it is most probable that in the last-quoted passage the word "prætorium" signifies, not a building, but the Prætorian Guard (see note on ch. i. 13). Rome is not mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians (nor in any of the other three supposed to have been written there); but St. Paul's reference to Cæsar's household, his account of the success of his preaching, his expectation of a speedy release, all point to Rome rather than to Cæsarea. Accordingly, the very great majority of commentators are agreed in ascribing the Epistle to the Roman captivity.

From the Epistle we learn that the Church at Philippi was already an organized society: two orders of the Christian ministry are mentioned by name. The Philippians were suffering persecution. There was a tendency to discord among them; especially there was a quarrel between two of their female members. Otherwise there is no hint of moral corruption or erroneous doctrine. There is nothing to disturb the joy and thankfulness with which the apostle contemplates their growth in grace. Their love for him was unchanged. They had sent Epaphroditus, possibly their chief pastor, to convey their gifts and to minister to St. Paul in his affliction.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, expresses a hope (ch. ii. 24) of shortly seeing them again. We gather from his mention of a journey into Macedonia in 1 Tim. i. 3 that this expectation was fulfilled. From the notices in 2 Tim. iv. 13 and 20 it has been inferred that he may possibly have visited them a second time during the interval between the two Roman imprisonments.

We hear nothing more of the Philippian Church till the beginning of the second century. About fifty years after the Epistle was written, Ignatius passed through Philippi guarded by ten soldiers (ten leopards, he calls them), on his way to his martyrdom at Rome. He was kindly received, and conducted on his journey by the Philippian Christians. This led to a correspondence with Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, and disciple of St. John. The Philippians, it seems, had written to him, asking for copies of the letters of Ignatius, and for advice and exhortation. He sends the letters according to their request. He cannot, he says, reach the wisdom of the blessed Paul, who had taught them and written to them. He gives them much exhortation, with rules for deacons and presbyters. One presbyter

of Philippi, Valens, and his wife, had caused scandal by their avarice. Polycarp hopes they will repent; he begs the Philippians to receive them to forgiveness on their repentance. Polycarp's epistle, like St. Paul's, is rather practical than doctrinal. Like St. Paul, he praises the Philippians for their steadfastness and for their sympathy with suffering brethren; in both epistles we find allusions to strife and disunion; in both we notice the absence of appeals to Old Testament authority.

From the time of Polycarp's epistle the Church of Philippi almost vanishes out of ecclesiastical history. Now and then the name of a Philippian bishop occurs in the subscriptions of the decrees of Councils. It is said that the name is still retained in the title of an Eastern bishop, the Bishop of Drama and Philippi. But the Church of Philippi has disappeared, and the town is represented only by ruins. It is a strange history. The first founded of the European Churches, the foremost, it seems, of all the Pauline Churches for faith and love, has wholly passed away; but the names of many Philippian Christians, unknown to men, remain, and ever will remain, written in golden light with Clement in the Lamb's book of life.

### III. PLACE AND TIME OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

St. Paul wrote four Epistles during his first Roman imprisonment—to the Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and to Philemon. The three last were evidently written about the same time. The Epistle to the Philippians has been commonly regarded as the latest of the four. But some writers (notably Bishop Lightfoot, to whom all students of St. Paul's Epistles owe more than they can well express) place it early in the first Roman imprisonment, while they assign the other three to as late a date as possible.

The Epistle implies the existence of a large Christian community at Rome, much activity in preaching, party spirit too, and divisions. The gospel had penetrated even to Nero's establishment on the Palatine; there were Christians, apparently not a few, in Cæsar's household. The bonds of the apostle were known, not only throughout the prætorium, but "to all the rest." This great progress seems to require a considerable time.

On the other hand, we must remember that there was a flourishing Church at Rome before St. Paul's arrival. The Epistle to the Romans is one of the longest and the most elaborate of all his letters. The salutations (assuming that the last chapter really belongs to that Epistle, and not, as some think, to the Epistle to the Ephesians) are more numerous than in any other. The number of the Roman Christians must naturally have increased considerably during the three intervening years. We are told that two deputations from the Roman Church met St. Paul at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns. The assertion that his bonds were known "to all the rest" may be compared with 1 Thess. i. 8, where he says of the Thessalonians,

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"In every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad." It is a Christian hyperbole, the language of joy and thankfulness, not to be pressed to a literal interpretation.

Again, it is urged that Aristarchus and Luke, who accompanied St. Paul to Rome, are mentioned in the Epistles to Philemon and the Colossians, but not in the Epistle to the Philippians. It is inferred that they must have left Rome before this last Epistle was written, which, therefore, would seem to be of later date.

This argument is too precarious to be of much weight. They may have been absent for a time; or accidental circumstances, unknown to us, may have caused the omission. They are not mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians; nor is Timothy, though that Epistle was certainly written at the same time as those to Philemon and the Colossians.

Again, the various communications between Rome and Philippi are thought to imply a late date for our Epistle. The Philippians had heard of St. Paul's arrival at Rome. They had sent Epaphroditus with contributions for the relief of his wants. Epaphroditus had a dangerous illness, the result of over-exertion. News of his illness had reached Philippi. And lastly, Epaphroditus had heard that the report of his danger had greatly distressed the Philippians.

But the time required for these communications is not very long. The distance from Rome to Philippi is about seven hundred miles. Each journey would occupy about a month (see Bishop Lightfoot's note, 'Philippians,' p. 38). And no one supposes that St. Paul could have written the Epistle till he had resided several months in Rome.

Again, it is thought that St. Luke's words in the Acts of the Apostles and also St. Paul's in the Epistle to the Ephesians (vi. 19, 20) imply a greater degree of liberty than the Epistle before us. When St. Paul writes to the Philippians, he does not seem to be actively engaged in preaching; others preach (ch. i. 15, 16), his work is almost limited to the silent eloquence of his bonds. This more rigorous imprisonment, and the possibilities of martyrdom hinted at in the Epistle, are thought by some to point to the time when Tigellinus became Praefect of the Praetorian Guard, after the death of the upright Burrus, the captain of the guard to whom St. Paul with other prisoners was at first delivered (Acts xxviii. 16). Burrus died in the year 62, scarcely a year after St. Paul's arrival. It is also thought that the Jewish tendencies of Poppaea, who was married to Nero about the same time, may have led to the aggravation of the apostle's sufferings. But it does not seem very likely that such a prisoner as St. Paul, though to us Christians an object of the very deepest interest, would have attracted the notice of Tigellinus or Poppaea; and indeed, if such were the case, the result in all probability would have been, not closer confinement, but immediate death.

Not much stress can be laid on the other evidence furnished by the Epistle. St. Paul trusts to come to the Philippians shortly (ch. ii. 24); but,

on the other hand, he expresses much uncertainty as to the result of his trial; he knows not whether it will end in acquittal or the death of martyrdom: he is prepared for either issue. He seems to speak with more hope of a speedy release in his Epistle to Philemon (ver. 22), which must have been written about the same time as that to the Colossians. But these variations of expression may be due to accidental circumstances, or to those changes of feeling which must have taken place in the course of a long imprisonment, and therefore seem scarcely sufficient to furnish reliable arguments in either direction.

Bishop Lightfoot, who thinks that the Epistle to the Philippians must be placed as early as possible in St. Paul's first Roman imprisonment, insists strongly on its undoubted resemblance to the Epistle to the Romans. He points out many close parallels and a considerable number of verbal coincidences ('Philippians,' pp. 43, 44). These, he thinks, furnish a strong argument for the earlier date of this Epistle as compared with those to the Ephesians and Colossians, which are connected rather with the pastoral Epistles than with those of the third missionary journey. In the Epistle to the Philippians we have "the spent wave of the controversy" with Judaism. In those to the Ephesians and Colossians we meet with new forms of error, made known to the apostle, it may be, by the visit of Epaphras of Colossæ, the shadows of the coming heresies of Gnosticism, which at the time of the pastoral Epistles had assumed something more of distinctness.

There is considerable weight in these arguments. On the other hand, we must remember that the Epistles to the Romans and Philippians cannot be separated by an interval of less than three years; while the last Epistle, on the hypothesis of its priority, cannot have been written more than two years before those to the Ephesians and Colossians. The close resemblance, therefore, between the Epistles to the Romans and Philippians can scarcely be due exclusively to nearness of date. It may result in large measure from the fact that both Epistles are the spontaneous utterances of the apostle's heart. They were not elicited, like the Epistles to the Corinthians or the Galatians, by the special circumstances, errors, or backslidings of the Churches addressed. The one is a treatise, the other a letter; but both represent the apostle's general teaching when not modified by the needs of particular Churches. At Ephesus or Laodicæa and Colossæ the tendencies which afterwards took the form of Gnosticism may have shown themselves early; while at Philippi, a European city, there was no appearance of those Eastern heresies. We must not omit to notice that, if this Epistle has many points of contact with the Epistle to the Romans, it exhibits in two or three places (ch. i. 23, 30; ii. 17) a remarkable resemblance to a striking passage in the Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 6—8), the last Epistle written by St. Paul.

On the whole, the balance of argument seems slightly in favour of the earlier date of our Epistle. It may have been written in 61 or 62. But

the evidence, it seems to us, is not decisive ; nor would the decision be of much importance, were it not for the various points of interest which it brings to our notice.

#### IV. CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Philippians is a letter from a friend to friends, a letter of spiritual counsel, written in acknowledgment of loving help. The apostle knew that the Philippians would be interested in his personal circumstances, as he himself is interested in theirs. He tells them of his bonds, of the progress of the gospel at Rome, of the conduct of the Jewish party, of their endeavours to distress him by factious opposition, preaching Christ, as they did, out of envy and party spirit. He tells them of the inward peace and joy which bore him up in all his afflictions ; he feels sure of their sympathy, he writes in the fullest confidence of Christian friendship, his joy is their joy. He tells them of the uncertainty of his future ; he does not know how his trial will end, in death or in life ; he is prepared for either event—a holy life is blessed, a holy death more blessed still. He tells them of his thankful acceptance of their gifts : he had been unwilling to receive aid from other Churches, but with them he was on terms of the very closest intimacy, and that affectionate and trusting friendship made him ready to accept their help. But he valued it, not so much as an alleviation of his own hardships, but rather as an additional evidence of their love to himself and of their growth in that charity which is the first of Christian graces. For himself, he was content ; he had learned to be self-sufficient in the Christian sense : none felt his own weakness more than he, but he could do all things through the strength of Christ.

He assures them of the sympathy of the Roman Christians ; especially he mentions, we know not why, the interest which the Christians of Nero's household felt in their Philippian brethren. St. Paul believed with all his heart in the communion of saints ; the sense of Christian fellowship, the sympathy of his brother Christians, was very precious to him ; he knew it was so to the Philippians.

He tells them of his own circumstances, and dwells with affectionate friendship upon theirs. He calls them saints in Christ Jesus, his brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, his joy and crown. He mentions their bishops and deacons (see note on ch. i. 1). He assures them of his constant prayers ; he always remembers them, and that with joy and thankfulness. He remembers their fellowship with him in the gospel ; they had assisted him, and that loyally and earnestly, in his self-denying labours. He believed that his continued life was desirable for their sakes ; he was confident, therefore, that it would be prolonged, and that he should see them again. He hints here and there at their Roman citizenship (ch. i. 27 ; iii. 20) ; he urges them to live as citizens of the heavenly country, to show the courage of Romans in the good fight of faith. He knows, he tells

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them, their trials and persecutions ; to suffer for Christ, he says, is a gift from God, a high honour. He reminds them delicately of his own example : he is suffering as they are, more than they are ; he and they are partners now in affliction, as they will be hereafter in glory.

They have already given him much satisfaction ; he begs them to complete the joy which he has in them. There is one fault in the Philippian Church, a tendency to disunion. He implores them, in the most affectionate language, to be on their guard against strife and vain-glory, to esteem, each one of them, others as better than himself. He exhorts them to cultivate lowliness and unselfishness. He knows how hard the lesson is ; precept is not enough,—there is need of a high constraining example. He points to the Saviour ; he bids them remember his lowliness, his Divine self-sacrifice. This introduces the great doctrinal passage of the Epistle. He soon returns to exhortation. Hitherto, he says, they have obeyed him : they obeyed when he was with them ; in his absence, obedience is more needful still. They must work out, each one of them, his own salvation, not depending on the presence of a human teacher, but on God who worketh in the Christian heart, from whom alone all holy desires and all good works do proceed. He again warns them against murmurings and disputings ; they must be blameless and harmless, the sons of God. They appear already, he says, as lights in the world ; they hold forth the Word of life to others. Let them persevere, for his sake as well as their own, that he may rejoice in the day of Christ. Nothing can give him greater joy than their salvation ; for that great end he is willing to be offered up ; it would fill him with holy joy to pour forth his own blood as a drink offering upon the sacrifice of their souls as a whole burnt offering unto God. He will send Timothy to them shortly, that he may have a trustworthy account of their state ; he reminds them that they know the proof of him,—he will care for them with a genuine love. He hopes to come himself. In any case, he will send Epaphroditus at once. Epaphroditus had just recovered from a dangerous illness ; that illness had been caused in some way by his unselfish labours, possibly during the autumn always unhealthy at Rome (see ch. iv. 10, and note). St. Paul knew that the Philippians felt the deepest interest in their brother's recovery : he will send him at once with the letter.

After another doctrinal digression, St. Paul returns to the circumstances of the Philippian Church. He mentions especially two women, Euodia and Syntyche. They evidently held an important position at Philippi ; they were at variance with one another ; their reconciliation was necessary for the well-being of the Church. He exhorts them in the most earnest words to be of the same mind, and that in the Lord ; they were members of the one body of Christ ; the Church's union with the one Lord must not be disturbed by disunion among its members. He begs his "true yokefellow," perhaps Epaphroditus himself, with Clement and his other fellow-labourers, to assist in the Christian work of restoring peace. He exhorts them all to rejoice in the Lord, for that holy joy is the best remedy against the spirit

of dissension. He insists on the paramount duty of prayer and thanksgiving, and the watchful government of the thoughts. He acknowledges with thanks their repeated gifts, and prays that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirit.

This Epistle has been called "the least dogmatic of the apostle's letters" (Bishop Lightfoot, Preface, p. ix.). It is natural that it should be so; the apostle is writing a letter in acknowledgment of the gifts of the Philippians, not a theological treatise; a letter of Christian love and spiritual counsel. But, though the doctrine is introduced incidentally, and always employed to enforce Christian practice and holiness of life; nevertheless, the whole Epistle is interpenetrated with Christian doctrine. The great doctrinal passage in the second chapter asserts most of the distinctive articles of the Christian creed. St. Paul insists upon the divinity of Christ, his pre-existence, his equality with God the Father, his incarnation, his perfect humanity, his precious death upon the cross, his glorious exaltation. In the third chapter we have his resurrection, his second advent, his Divine power. In that chapter we have also a full statement of the doctrines of justification by faith, of the transitory character of the Mosaic Law, and of the Church as the city of God. Doctrine, then, is here, as elsewhere, the basis of St. Paul's teaching; but here, as elsewhere, he enforces doctrine as bearing upon holiness of life.

In the practical portion of the Epistle, the graces on which the apostle most insists are, especially and above all others, Christian joy; then unity; and, as conducive to unity, unselfishness and humility. He also urges the duty of mutual forbearance, thankfulness, constant prayer, contentment, and the due ordering of the thoughts.

## V. CORRESPONDENCE OF THE EPISTLE WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PHILIPPIANS.

We must not omit to notice the correspondence which exists between the language of the Epistle and the circumstances of the Philippians. Philippi was a Roman colony; St. Paul refers once and again to the rights and duties of citizenship. Like other Roman colonies, it had a military character; it was a garrison against the Thracian barbarians. St. Paul calls Epaphroditus his fellow-soldier; he derives his metaphors from wrestling and the race; he bids the Philippians to stand fast and strive together for the gospel. It was a city in which there were very few Jews; hence there is nothing in the Epistle which presupposes an acquaintance with the Old Testament. There are references to it here and there (ch. i. 19; ii. 10, 11, 15; iv. 18); but no direct appeals to its authority. It was founded by a Macedonian king on Macedonian soil. The official tongue of the colony was of course Latin; but the language, education, customs, religion, of a large proportion of the Philippians were Greek. The apostle not only writes in Greek, as in all his extant Epistles; but uses here and there words

which remind us of Greek thought and Greek philosophy, *αὐτάρκεια, ἀρετή, ἐπιείκεια, αἰσθησις, μορφή*: or of Greek rites, *μυεῖσθαι, ἐνάρχεσθαι, σπένδεσθαι*. It was not a very populous city, not a great centre of trade; but it was situated on the great Egnatian Way, the main road between Rome and Asia; it was "the first city of Macedonia" as one came from the East. Hence it had something of a cosmopolitan character, which seems to be reflected in the composition of the earliest Church—the purple-seller from Thyatira, the Greek slave-girl, the Roman jailor. Women appear to have had a much higher social position in Macedonia than in other parts of the heathen world; St. Paul in this Epistle speaks of the dissensions between Euodia and Syntyche as a matter of grave importance. The hospitality of Lydia was the first item in that "account of giving and receiving," which he mentions in ch. iv. 15, 16. Philippi was the first European city in which he preached; in writing to them, therefore, he naturally speaks of "the beginning of the gospel" (ch. iv. 15). Timothy was with him during that first visit; he reminds them in ch. ii. 22, "Ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." He suffered much at Philippi—it was the scene of his first imprisonment; he mentions "the conflict which ye saw in me" (ch. i. 30). At Philippi he and Silas in the dungeon "sang praises unto God;" and afterwards the jailor "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." It is not without significance that the Epistle to the Philippians is emphatically the Epistle of Christian joy.

## VI. GENUINENESS OF THE EPISTLE.

Of the genuineness of this Epistle there can be no shadow of doubt. It has been questioned by F. C. Baur, who finds references to Gnosticism in the second chapter, and creates for himself a historical difficulty by identifying the Clement of ch. iv. 3 with Flavius Clemens, the relation of Domitian, who was put to death by that prince, and was, in all probability, a Christian martyr. But the arguments of Baur have found little acceptance even with the Tübingen school, and are rejected even by such critics as M. Renan. Dean Alford calls them "the insanity of hyper-criticism." The Epistle is essentially Pauline; it reflects the character, the heart, the teaching, of St. Paul. Its language and style are St. Paul's; especially it bears a close resemblance, both in teaching and in words, to the Epistle to the Romans, one of the four Epistles which Baur regards as undoubtedly Pauline. It is simply inconceivable that a forger could have so successfully imitated the apostle's manner, could have poured forth that warm flood of affection, or could have so exactly adapted his production to the circumstances both of St. Paul and of the Philippians.

There is large external testimony to our Epistle. We meet with words and expressions from it reproduced in the earliest Christian writings; in Clement of Rome, in Ignatius, in Polycarp, in the epistle to Diognetus.

Polycarp, when himself writing to the Philippians, speaks of the Epistle which they had received from St. Paul. Men who had known St. Paul, who had contributed to his necessities, may well have been living at Philippi when Polycarp's letter was received, A.D. 107. There is a distinct quotation from the Epistle in the letter from the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177), preserved in the 'Ecclesiastical History' of Eusebius (v. 2), where the words of ch. ii. 6 are cited. In the same century it is quoted by Irenæus, by Clement of Alexandria, and by Tertullian. It is found in Marcion's Canon, in the Muratorian Fragment, and other ancient lists of the books of the new Testament. It is contained in the Peshito, the Old Latin, and other ancient versions.

## VII. COMMENTARIES ON THE EPISTLE.

AMONG the most valuable patristic helps are the Homilies of St. Chrysostom; there are also the commentaries of Theodoret, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theophylact. Among later writers may be mentioned Calvin (1539) and Estius (1614); and in modern times, Bengel (1742), Van Hengel (1838), Rilliet (1841), Meyer (1847), Höleman (1839), De Wette (1847), Wiesinger (1850), Neander (1849).

Among the best English commentaries are those of Bishops Lightfoot, Ellicott, and Wordsworth, Deans Alford and Gwynn, and Professor Eadie.

# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I.

**Ver. 1.**—Paul and Timotheus. St. Paul does not assume his official title in writing to the Macedonian Churches, Philippi and Thessalonica; it is used in all his other Epistles, except the short letter to Philemon. His relations to the Philippians and Thessalonians were those of the deepest personal affection; there was no need of a formal introduction, especially in an Epistle which has so little of an official character as this to the Philippians. He joins the name of Timothy with his own, as in 2 Corinthians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Thus Timothy is associated with St. Paul in every Epistle in which another name is found except 1 Corinthians, where Sosthenes only is mentioned; this shows the intimate affection that bound St. Paul to his "own son in the faith." There was a special reason for mentioning Timothy in this Epistle, as he was so well known to the Philippians, and St. Paul was intending (ch. ii. 19) to send him shortly to Philippi. But St. Paul writes in his own name from the beginning. Timothy was not in any sense a joint author; he may possibly have been St. Paul's amanuensis, as Tertius was in the case of the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xvi. 22). Possibly also motives of humility led St. Paul to insert other names besides his own; but it was not to support his teaching by additional authority—he was "an apostle, not of man, neither by man," and needed not the weight of other names. The servants of Jesus Christ; slaves, literally: "made free from sin and become servants [slaves] to God," whose service is perfect freedom. We belong to him; he is our Master (*κύριος, δεσμότης*) as well as Father, we are his slaves as well as his sons: "Ye are not your own, ye are bought

with a price." Compare the words of the "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" at Philippi: "These men are the servants [slaves] of the most high God." She felt the difference between her state and theirs; she was the slave of her Philippian masters, of the evil spirit too; St. Paul and his companion were the slaves of God most high. In the best manuscripts, as in the R.V., "Christ" is put before "Jesus" here. The apostle frequently sets the official before the personal name of our Lord; possibly because he knew not the Lord Jesus after the flesh, but saw him first as the Messiah, the Christ of God. To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi. The word "all" is of very frequent occurrence in this Epistle. There may possibly be a reference to the dissensions alluded to in ch. iv. 2; or, as some think, to the supplies sent for St. Paul's assistance; he addresses all alike, not only those who contributed; he does not recognize their divisions. But it is, perhaps, only the natural expression of his warm affection: the apostle was beloved by all the Philippians, and all were dear to him; there was no hostile faction there, as at Corinth and elsewhere. Compare the affectionate repetition, "always," "every," "all," in ver. 4. St. Paul uses the word "saint" as the general name for his converts, like "Christian." The word "Christian" occurs only three times in the New Testament (Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16). Christ's people are called "brethren," "disciples," or "saints." Thus St. Paul addresses the Corinthians generally as "saints," though many of them were far from possessing holiness of heart and life. The ancient Church was holy; the Israelites are called "a holy nation," "saints of the Most High." They were holy by God's election, his chosen

people, separated unto him by the rite of circumcision. By the same election the Christian Church is holy, dedicated to God in baptism. This holiness of dedication (comp. 1 Cor. vii. 14) does not necessarily involve the actual existence of that inner holiness of heart "without which no man shall see the Lord." But it does imply the bounden duty of striving after that spiritual holiness. "Ye are the temple of the living God," St. Paul says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. vi. 16), "for God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people . . . therefore . . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The Greek word *ἅγιος* (in our translation sometimes "holy," sometimes "saint") is the usual rendering for the Hebrew *ἅγιον*. The primary idea of the Hebrew word seems to be that of separation—separation from all that defileth. God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil;" those who are dedicated to him must strive by his grace to purify themselves even as he is pure. "Bo ye holy, for I am holy." *In Christ Jesus.* They are saints in virtue of their relation to Christ. They were once "baptized into one body"—the mystical body of Christ. Holiness of dedication can issue in holiness of heart and life only by abiding *in him* (comp. John xv. 4—6). All saints are one body in Christ; they are knit together into one communion and fellowship by their personal union with the one Lord. With the bishops and deacons. In the New Testament the word *ἐπίσκοπος* is synonymous with *πρεσβύτερος* (comp. Acts xx. 17; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2; 1 Tim. iii. 1—7; Titus i. 5—7). St. Paul is addressing the elders of the Church at Philippi, not bishops in our sense of the word. It is possible that Epaphroditus may have been the presiding bishop of the Church (see notes on ch. ii. 25 and iv. 3). If so, we see a reason why the second and third orders of the ministry only are mentioned, as Epaphroditus was the bearer of the Epistle. But diocesan episcopacy does not seem to have become general till the last quarter of the first century. We know that Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every Church" in their first missionary journey; we need not, therefore, be surprised at the mention of these official designations in this Epistle, which was written seventeen or eighteen years later. St. Paul's address to the elders of the Church at Ephesus shows the importance which he attached to the office and to the faithful performance of its duties. Perhaps "the bishops and deacons" are specially mentioned here as having collected the contributions sent to St. Paul; so Chrysostom and Meyer. On the whole subject,

see Bishop Lightfoot's exhaustive 'Dissertation on the Christian Ministry,' in his volume on the Epistle to the Philippians.

Ver. 2.—*Grace be unto you, and peace.* This combination of the Greek and Hebrew salutations is the common form in St. Paul's earlier Epistles; in the pastoral Epistles "mercy" is added. Grace is the favour of God, free and sovereign, which rests on the faithful Christian, and brings the gift of peace; which is, first, reconciliation with God; and, secondly, the childlike confidence and trustful hope which result from faith in Christ's atonement. *From God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* God the Father is the first Author of our salvation; God the Son, the Word made flesh, brought the message of peace from heaven, and reconciled us to God.

Ver. 3.—*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.* All St. Paul's Epistles, except those to the Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus, begin with a thanksgiving. In this Epistle the thanksgiving is especially warm and earnest; no cloud of doubt darkened the apostle's confidence in the Philippians; he pours forth his gratitude to God for their spiritual gifts fervently and without reserve. *My God.* The pronoun expresses the inner consciousness of personal relations with God; it reminds us of Acts xxvii. 23, "God, whose I am, and whom I serve." *Upon all my remembrance of you* (as R.V.) is the more exact rendering. The remembrance (not mention) was continuous; he "had them in his heart," and that unbroken remembrance resulted in unbroken thanksgiving.

Ver. 4.—*Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.* Perhaps the first part of this verse is better joined with ver. 3, "*I thank my God . . . always in every prayer of mine for you all;*" so Bishop Lightfoot. The Greek word for "prayer" and "request" is the same, *δέησις*, better rendered "my supplication," as in the R.V.; it implies not merely a lifting up of the heart to God, but an earnest entreaty for a *necessary* gift. We meet now for the first time with that "joy" which is the keynote of this Epistle. "Summa epistola, Gaudeo; gaudeo;" so Bengel, who continues, "This Epistle of joy well follows that to the Ephesians, where love reigns. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy.' Joy gives life to prayer."

Ver. 5.—*For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; rather, as R.V., for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel.* This verse should be taken in connection with ver. 3. St. Paul thanks God for their help, their co-operation towards the work of the gospel. They helped forward the work by their prayers, their labours,

and their liberal bounty. This fellowship began "in the beginning of the gospel," when the Philippians sent aid to the apostle at Thessalonica and Corinth; it continued "until now"—ten years; they had just sent their alms to St. Paul at Rome by Epa-phroditus (ch. iv. 10).

Ver. 6.—**Being confident of this very thing.** St. Paul's thanksgiving refers, not only to the past, but also to the future. He has a confident trustfulness in God's power and love. The words *αὐτὸν τοῦτο* might mean "on this account," i.e. on account of the perseverance described in ver. 5, but the order seems to support the ordinary rendering. That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it; rather, as R.V., *he which began*. Both *ἐνορθόεσσος* and *ἐπιτελέσσει* have (Bishop Lightfoot) a sacrificial reference. The good work is self-consecration, the sacrifice of themselves, their souls and bodies, issuing in the co-operation of labour and almsgiving. This sacrificial metaphor recurs in ch. ii. 17. The good work is God's; he began it and he will perfect it. The beginning (Bengel) is the pledge of the consummation. Yet it is also their work—their co-operation towards the gospel (comp. ch. ii. 12, 13). **Until the day of Jesus Christ.** The perfecting will go on until the great day. To the individual Christian that day is practically the day of his death; though, indeed, the process of perfecting may be going on in the holy dead till they obtain their perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul. These words do not imply that St. Paul expected the second advent during the life of his Philippian converts. The words "in you" must be understood as meaning "in your heart," not merely "among you."

Ver. 7.—**Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all.** It is *meet*; rather, *just*, *right*. **To think this;** to entertain this confidence concerning you. **Because I have you in my heart;** or, *because you have me in your heart.* But the order of the words, and ver. 8, make the first rendering the more probable. His love for them increases his confidence. **Inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.** These words may be taken with the preceding, "I have you in my heart during my imprisonment and defence." So Chrysostom, whose words are very striking: Οὕτω γάρ ἔστι τυ-ραννικὸν δὲ ἔρως δὲ πνευματικὸς ὡς μηδενὶ παρα-χωρεῖν καιρῷ. But it is, perhaps, more natural to take them with the following. **Ye all are partakers of my grace;** rather, *ye all are partakers with me of the grace.* They were partakers of the grace of God given to him in his bonds and in his work. The like grace was given to them both for the passive and active sides of the Christian life—both

in endurance of suffering and in propagating the gospel. Thus there seems to be no reference in the words "defence and confirmation" to his public defence before Cæsar (which probably had not yet taken place), but generally to his work of preaching the gospel, which was both apologetic, meeting the objections of adversaries, and aggressive, asserting the truth.

Ver. 8.—**For God is my record—rather, witness** (comp. Rom. i. 9)—how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. The word *στραγγίχνα*, here rendered "bowels," means the heart, liver, etc., not the entrails. The expression is remarkable, and is well illustrated by Bengel's striking words, "Paulus non in Pauli, sed Jesu Christi moveretur visceribus." "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." He is so united with Christ that he feels with the heart of Christ, he loves with the love of Christ.

Ver. 9.—**And this I pray.** This is the purport of the prayer already mentioned in ver. 4. The conjunction *ινα* marks the end of St. Paul's prayer, and so its purport. **That your love may abound yet more and more.** Your love; not love for the apostle only, but the grace of Christian charity. St. Paul finds no fault with the Philippians, but "ignis in apostolo nunquam dicit, Sufficit" (Bengel). He prays for their continued growth in love, but not unintelligent love. **In knowledge and in all judgment.** *Ἐπιγνώσις* is a stronger word than *γνῶσις*: it means full, complete knowledge. The Greek *αἰσθητήσις* (literally, *sense*) occurs only here in the New Testament, though *αἰσθητήρία* (organs of sense) is found in Heb. v. 14. "Discernment," the rendering of R.V., is more correct than "judgment." It is, Bishop Wordsworth says, "that delicate tact and instinct, which almost intuitively perceives what is right, and almost unconsciously shrinks from what is wrong." It cannot exist without love. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." With love there comes a spiritual sense, spiritual sight, spiritual hearing, a sense of the beauty of holiness, a fine perception of Christian propriety: ἡ ἀγάπη οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ.

Ver. 10.—**That ye may approve things that are excellent.** Love, issuing in spiritual discernment, would enable them to recognize, to test, to prove things that are excellent; so Bengel, "Non modo præ malis bona, sed in bonis optima." This seems better than the alternative rendering, "to prove the things that differ" (comp. Rom. ii. 18). **That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.** Εἰλακρινής, according to the common derivation (from *εἰλη*, sunlight, and *κρίνω*), means "judged in the full light of the sun," that is, pure, true; comp. John iii. 21, "He that doth truth cometh

to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." According to another possible derivation, the word would mean "unmixed," that is, genuine, sincere. "Without offence" may be taken actively or passively; without giving offence (causing stumbling) to others, or without stumbling themselves. Perhaps the latter sense is more suitable here. He prays that the Philippians may be true and pure inwardly, and blameless in their outward lives. "Till," rather, "against the day of Christ." The preposition *εἰς* does not denote time only, as *ἐπεις* in ver. 6; it implies preparation.

Ver. 11.—**Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.** The best manuscripts read "fruit." He prays that their love may abound, not only in knowledge and discernment, but also in the fruit of holy living. The fruit of righteousness is sanctification, which springs from justification, and manifests itself in holy living (comp. Amos vi. 12; Gal. v. 22). **Which are by Jesus Christ; rather, through.** The righteousness of God's saints is not that "which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ" (comp. John xv. 4). The branch lives by the life of the vine; the Christian lives by the life of Christ. It is his life, living in, assimilated by the Christian soul, which brings forth the fruit of righteousness. **Unto the glory and praise of God.** The righteousness of God's saints, springing from the abiding presence of Christ, shows forth the glory of God. The glory of God is his majesty in itself; praise is the acknowledgment of this majesty by the voice and heart of man. The glory of God is the end of all Christian effort.

Ver. 12.—**But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.** After thanksgiving and prayer, St. Paul turns to his own imprisonment at Rome. That imprisonment, he says, has resulted in the furtherance of the gospel, rather than, as might have been expected, in its hindrance.

Ver. 13.—**So that my bonds in Christ are manifest;** rather, as R.V., *so that my bonds became manifest in Christ.* At first he seemed like other prisoners; afterwards it became known that he suffered bonds, not for any crime, but in Christ, i.e. in fellowship with Christ and in consequence of the relation in which he stood to Christ. **In all the palace;** rather, as R.V., *throughout the whole Praetorian Guard;* literally, in the whole *prætorium.* The word elsewhere means a governor's house: Pilate's house in the Gospels, Herod's palace in Acts xxiii. 35. But at Rome the name so used would give unnecessary offence, and there is no proof

that it was ever used for the palatium there. St. Paul must have heard it constantly as the name of the Praetorian regiment; he was kept chained to a soldier of that corps (Acts xxviii. 16); and as his guard was continually relieved, his name and sufferings for Christ would become gradually known throughout the force. Others, on the authority of a passage in Dion Cassius, understand the word of the barracks of that part of the Praetorian guard attached to the imperial residence on the Palatine. But the passage relates to the time of Augustus, before the Praetorian cohorts were established by Tiberius in the camp outside of the Colline Gate. And in all other places; rather, as R.V., *and to all the rest;* generally, that is, throughout the city.

Ver. 14.—**And many of the brethren in the Lord; rather, and that most.** Most of the brethren took courage; there were exceptions. **Waxing confident by my bonds.** The words, "in the Lord," are perhaps better taken with being "confident." Their confidence rests upon St. Paul's bonds, but it is in the Lord. St. Paul's example gives them courage, because they know that he is suffering for the love of Christ, and is supported in his sufferings by the grace of Christ. **Are much more bold to speak the word without fear; better, more abundantly,** as R.V. The best manuscripts read here, "the Word of God."

Ver. 15.—**Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.** The Judaizing party, whom St. Paul censures in ch. iii. 2, preached Christ, but not from pure motives. Like the writers of the pseudo-Clementines, they envied St. Paul, and in the wicked madness of the *odium theologicum*, they wished to distress St. Paul, to depreciate his preaching, and to exalt their own. **And some also of good will.** The word generally means God's good pleasure, as in ch. ii. 13, but here simply good will, benevolence towards St. Paul.

Ver. 16, 17.—These two verses must change places according to the reading of the best manuscripts. The clauses are inverted by the figure chiasmus. But the other of love; read, as R.V., *the one do it of love.* This is better than the other possible rendering, "those who are of love do it." **Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.** Κείμαι, I am set or appointed, as in 1 Thess. iii. 3; not, as some understand, I lie in prison. They preach Christ out of love—love for Christ, and love for Paul for Christ's sake. **The one preach Christ of contention;** read and translate, as R.V., *but the other proclaim Christ of faction;* perhaps rather, *announce (καταγγέλλωντι);* bring news of Christ; and that they do out of factiousness. *Ἐριθεῖα,* derived from *εριθεῖος*, a hired

servant, means labour for hire, and is commonly used of hired canvassers, in the sense of factiousness, party spirit. It is reckoned by St. Paul in Gal. v. 20 among the works of the flesh, and is condemned also in Rom. ii. 8. *Not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds*; rather, as R.V. (reading with the best manuscripts *ἐγέλπειν*), *thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds*. Their motives were not pure; they wished to make St. Paul feel the helplessness of imprisonment, and to increase his affliction by opposing his doctrines, and by forming a party insisting on the observance of the ceremonial law. Bishop Lightfoot translates *θλίψιν ἐγέλπειν* “to make my chains gull me.”

Ver. 18.—What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; rather, *only that*, as R.V. (comp. Acts xx. 23). What is the result of all this preaching? Only that Christ is announced, that the story of Christ is told. The motives of the preachers may not be good, but the result is good; the gospel facts are made more widely known, not only by those who preach in sincerity, but even by means of those who strive to promote their own party ends under the pretence of preaching Christ. *And I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* St. Paul rejoices in the good which God brings out of evil; though that good is produced by the outward agency of his own adversaries. *Yea, and I shall rejoice.* He will not allow himself to be vexed by the bitterness of his opponents, he will not imitate their party spirit; his joy will continue, for he knows that, in spite of present hindrances, the result is assured.

Ver. 19.—*For I know that this shall turn to my salvation.* *Τοῦτο*, this, refers to the general preaching of Christ, rather than (as Calvin and others interpret) to the affliction raised up for St. Paul. The opposition of his enemies will stir him up to greater activity and earnestness, and so conduce to his spiritual well-being now and to his salvation hereafter. This he *knows*, for “all all things work together for good to them that love God.” Some, as Chrysostom, understand *σωτηρία* here of present safety or deliverance from prison; but this seems improbable. The words are quoted from Job xiii. 16, Septuagint Version. Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He knows that they pray for him; he humbly believes that those prayers assist him in working out his own salvation. As the prayer ascends, says Bengel, the supply of the Spirit desceuds; comp. Gal. iii. 5, “Ho that ministreth [‘supplieth,’ R.V.] to you the Spirit.” The Spirit is the supply; the Lord Jesus sends the quickening

Spirit from the Father. Others, as Meyer, make the genitive subjective, and interpret “the aid which the Spirit supplies.” The Spirit is here called “the Spirit of Jesus Christ”—“proceeding from the Father and the Son.” So also Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 9; Acts xvi. 7 (in the true reading), “the Spirit of Jesus.”

Ver. 20.—According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed. The Greek word for “earnest expectation,” which occurs also in Rom. viii. 19, means literally, a watching with outstretched head, with the attention concentrated on one object, and turned away from all others. Neither his sufferings nor the opposition of the Judaizers will put him to shame. But that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. After “boldness” (literally, *boldness of speech*) we should expect the active form, “I shall magnify.” St. Paul, in his humility, prefers the passive, “Christ shall be magnified.” Boldness of speech was to be his part, the glory should be Christ’s. Whatever the issue might be, whether a life of Christian labour or a martyr’s death, it would be well. The apostles were not omniscient, says Bengel, in relation to their own future lot; they lived in faith and hope.

Ver. 21.—*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Others, as Calvini, render (not so well), “For to me Christ is gain both in life and in death.” The alternative suggested in ver. 20 leads St. Paul to a short digression on the comparative advantages of life and death; he is content with either. Life is blessed, for it is Christ; comp. Col. iii. 4, “Christ, who is our Life,” and Gal. ii. 20, “Not I, but Christ liveth in me;” *Quicquid vivo, Christum vivo*” (Bengel). The life of Christ lives, breathes, energizes, in the life of his saints. His flesh, his incarnate life is their meat; his blood, the mystery of his atonement, is the drink of their souls. He abideth in them, and they in him. And yet death is gain; the state of death, not the act of dying, is meant (the infinitive is aorist, *τὸ ἀποθανεῖν*), for the dead in Christ are at home with the Lord (*ἐδημούντες πρὸς τὸν Κύριον*) in a far more blessed sense than the saints on earth.

Ver. 22.—*But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not; or perhaps, as Meyer, “I make not known.”* St. Paul wavers between his own personal longing for rest in Paradise with Christ, and the thought that the continuance of his life on earth might conduce to the spreading of the gospel. The grammar of the Greek sentence aptly represents the apostle’s hesitation. The

construction is almost hopelessly confused. Perhaps the interpretation of the R.V. is the simplest: "But if to live in the flesh,—if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not." Thus *καρπός* is parallel with *κέρδος* (ver. 21); *τὸ γέννετον* is also a gain, a fruit; the genitive is one of opposition; the work itself is the fruit. St. Paul, says Bengel, regards his work as fruit, others seek fruit from their work. Bishop Lightfoot proposes another rendering, "But what if my living in the flesh will bear fruit, etc.? In fact what to choose I know not." Surely, says Bengel, the Christian's lot is excellent; he can hesitate only in the choice of blessings; disappointed he cannot be.

Ver. 23.—*For I am in a strait betwixt two*; rather, *but* (so the best manuscripts) *I am straitened, hemmed in* (Bishop Lightfoot) *betwixt the two alternatives, life and death, pressing upon me, constraining me on either side. Having a desire to depart; having my desire set towards departing (εἰς τὸ ἀναλύσας)*. The word occurs again in 2 Tim. iv. 6, 'Ο καρπὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀναλύσεως. It is used of a ship, to loose from its moorings; or a camp, to break up; comp. 2 Cor. v. 1, "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved (καταλύθη)." Probably here the metaphor is taken from tent life; to loosen, to remove the tent, the temporary abode, in the journey to the heavenly city. And to be with Christ. The holy dead are with Christ, they rest from their labours; they live unto God (Luke xx. 38); they do not sleep idly without consciousness, for they are described in Holy Scripture as witnesses (Heb. xii. 1) of the race set before living Christians (comp. also 2 Cor. v. 6, 8 and Acts vii. 59). Yet they are elsewhere described as sleeping (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15); for the rest of the spirits of just men in Paradise is as a sleep compared with the perfect consummation and bliss of God's elect, both in body and soul, in his everlasting glory. Which is far better; read and translate, *for it is by much very far better*. He piles up comparatives, as if unable to find words capable of expressing the glory of his hope.

Ver. 24.—*Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.* To abide by the flesh (if with some authorities the preposition is omitted), to hold to this human life with all its trials, is more needful for your sake. Meyer quotes Seneca, 'Epist.' 98, "Vitae sua adjici nihil desiderat sua causa, sed eorum, quibus utilis est."

Ver. 25.—*And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all.* Being persuaded of this, that my life is needful for you; or, as others render, "And this I certainly, confidently know."

The first translation seems preferable, for St. Paul's assurance does not seem to rest on direct inspiration, but on a calculation of probabilities. The apostles could not always foresee their own future (Acts xx. 22). Bishop Lightfoot says, "The same word *οἰδα* is used Acts xx. 25, where he expresses his belief that he shall not see his Asiatic converts again. Viewed as infallible presents, the two are hardly reconcilable; for the one assumes, the other negatives, his release. The assurance here recorded was fulfilled (1 Tim. i. 3); while the presentiment there expressed was overruled by events (2 Tim. i. 15, 18; iv. 20)." *For your furtherance and joy of faith; for the progress and joy of your faith, that you may continually increase in faith and take delight in it.* Joy is the key-note of this Epistle.

Ver. 26.—*That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.* Glorying or boasting (*καύχημα*), not rejoicing. Perhaps rather, as Meyer, "That the matter in which you have to glory [i.e. the bliss in which you rejoice as Christians] may increase abundantly in Christ Jesus [as the element or sphere of the glorying] in me [as the instrument or cause]."

Ver. 27.—*Only let your conversation be.* St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to steadfastness. Only, whatever happens, whether I come or no, *πολιτεύεσθε*, behave as citizens (comp. ch. iii. 20, 'Ημῶν τὸ πολιτεῦμα and Eph. ii. 19, Συμπολίται τῶν ἀγίων. The verb also occurs in Acts xxiii. 1, "I have lived (πεπολιτευμαὶ) in all good conscience towards God." St. Paul was himself a Roman citizen; he was writing from Rome; his presence there was caused by his having exercised the rights of citizenship in appealing to Cæsar. He was writing to a place largely inhabited by Roman citizens (for Philippi was a Roman colony), a place in which he had declared himself to be a Roman (Acts xvi. 37). The metaphor was natural. Some of you are citizens of Rome, the imperial city; live, all of you, as citizens of the heavenly country, the city of the living God. As it becometh the gospel of Christ; rather, as R.V. margin, *behave as citizens worthily of.* There is a striking parallel in Polycarp's letter to these same Philippians (sect. 5), 'Εὰν πολιτεύεσθε ἡξίως αὐτῷ, καὶ συμβασιλέεσθε αὐτῷ: literally, "If we live as citizens worthy of him, we shall also reign with him." That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit. The metaphor is military, and follows naturally from the thought of citizenship. Philippi was a military colony, its chief magistrates were *prætors*, *στρατηγοί* (Acts xvi. 20), literally, "generals" (comp. Eph.

vi. 13 and Gal. v. 1). Spirit is the highest part of our immaterial nature, which, when enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God, can rise into communion with God, and discern the truths of the world unseen. *In one spirit*; because the spirits of believers are knit together into one fellowship by the one Holy Spirit of God abiding in them all. This distinction between spirit and soul occurs again in 1 Thess. v. 23. The soul is the lower part of our inner being, the seat of the appetites, passions, affections, connected above with the *πνεύμα*, below with the *σάρξ*. With one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; with one soul (not mind); i.e. with all the desires and emotions concentrated on one object, all acting together in the one great work; comp. Acts iv. 32, "Striving together with one another for the faith," rather than "striving together with the faith." The personification of faith, though approved by high authority, seems forced and improbable. Faith is here used objectively; the faith of the gospel is the doctrine of the gospel, as Gal. i. 23, "The faith which once he destroyed."

Ver. 28.—And in nothing terrified by your adversaries; literally, scared, as a frightened horse. Which is to them an evident token

of perdition, but to you of salvation; translate, *seeing that it (your courage) is to them an evident token of perdition, but (with the best manuscripts) of your salvation. And that of God.* These words are to be taken with "an evident token." The courage of God's saints in the midst of dangers is a proof of his presence and favour, a token of final victory (comp. 2 Thess. i. 5).

Ver. 29.—For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. On you it was conferred (*ἐχαρισθη*) as a gracious gift, a free spontaneous act of Divine bounty. Faith in Christ is the gift of God, so is "the fellowship of his sufferings." It is not a burden, but a privilege: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Ver. 30.—Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me. These words are best taken with ver. 27, vers. 28 and 29 being parenthetical. The apostle returns to the military or gladiatorial metaphor of a contest, *ἀγών*. He had himself been persecuted at Philippi (Acts xvi; 1 Thess. ii. 2); now the Philippians heard of his Roman imprisonment, and were themselves suffering similar persecutions.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The address.* I. ST. PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF. He is a servant of Jesus Christ. 1. *He does not here style himself an apostle.* The title was unnecessary in writing to the Philippians; he does not assume it needlessly. He associates Timotheus with himself. In the presence of the blessed Lord and Master distinctions sink into insignificance. 2. *Paul and Timotheus are alike "servants."* But that name, in its inner meaning, is a lofty title. He who belongs wholly to Christ, who is the slave of Christ, bought with the blood of Christ, is free from sin; he must be free, says St. Chrysostom, from all other masters, or he would be only in part the servant of Christ.

II. HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHRISTIANS. He calls them "saints in Christ Jesus." It is true that the word "saint" may be used here in an official sense, as equivalent to "Christian." But: 1. *It implies the necessity of that which all who are to see God in heaven must possess, holiness of heart and life.* We believe in the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth the elect people of God; that belief pledges us to follow after personal holiness. We have been once dedicated to God; the great aim of life should be self-consecration—the entire consecration of our whole nature, spirit, soul, and body, to his blessed service. 2. *Saints are such only by being in Christ Jesus.* The living branch abides in vital union with the vine; the saint abides in spiritual union with the Saviour. God taketh away the unfruitful branch; the unfruitful branch is the ungodly Christian—a branch, indeed, but without fruit, withered, dead. Spiritual life is sustained only by union with Christ, by the abiding presence of Christ, who is the Bread of life, the Life of the world. If we would be saints, not in name only, but in heart and in truth, we must strive above all things to live habitually, consciously, lovingly, in that "fellowship which is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

III. THE SALUTATION—WHAT CHRISTIAN GOOD WISHES SHOULD BE. 1. *Grace.* Grace is the favour of God, unbought, undeserved, freely given, out of his generous bounty. That grace is the origin of our salvation: "By grace ye are saved." It is the source of holiness: "By the grace of God I am what I am." It is an unfailing support

in all troubles and distresses: "My grace is sufficient for thee." It should be our earnest effort not "to receive the grace of God in vain," but "to continue in the grace of God;" for that grace "bringeth salvation." 2. *Peace.* Peace is (1) a condition resting on facts external to ourselves; reconciliation with God though the atonement of Christ. He bore our sins; he suffered our punishment; he gave himself a ransom for many, dying in our stead, that we might live. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." His incarnation, death, and resurrection have wholly changed the relations in which we stand towards God. We were "sometime alienated, and enemies in our mind by wicked works; yet now hath he reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself." This is the blessed work of Christ our Lord. He hath slain the enmity; he is our Peace. By his act, external to ourselves, he hath reconciled us to God. But (2) the peace of God is internal, the blessed possession of the Christian soul. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Peace I leave with you," the Saviour said to his chosen—"my peace." Such peace as he had, not freedom from outward care and pain, but a quiet heart resting upon God. His path on earth was full of bitter sorrow, but his inner life was still and calm. No evil or selfish thought ever ruffled the clear current of holy meditation, or disturbed his constant communion with his heavenly Father. The peace of God is the blessing of the clear, calm spirit that hath chosen the good part, seeking to love God only, and to serve him with an undivided service. It is the blessed consciousness of forgiveness and acceptance with God; it is the childlike confidence and trustful love which spring from a living faith in Christ's atoning work. It passeth all understanding; it is the earnest of the eternal peace, the peace beyond the grave. It is the peace of God, for it is his gift; it comes "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Learn: 1. To be servants, slaves, of Christ; wholly given up to him; content with that service which is perfect freedom. 2. To think the best of others, to esteem them better than ourselves. 3. To wish them the best wishes—grace and peace.

**Vers. 3—8.—*St. Paul an example to all Christian ministers.*** I. **HE REMEMBERS HIS CONVERTS.** He was possessed through and through with an ardent love of souls. Like the good Shepherd, he knew his sheep, and cared for them with a sincere, self-sacrificing affection. He worked for them while he could; in prison he does not forget them. His thoughts are not taken up with his own hardships and dangers. The care of all the Churches still occupies his mind. He has his converts in his heart; it is his joy to think on their progress in holiness, to thank God for his grace vouchsafed unto them.

II. **HE PRAYS FOR THEM.** 1. *Intercessory prayer was part of his daily work.* He had learned of the Lord that men "ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and he "prayed to God always." Thus his time was fully occupied; his mind was active. He was chained to a soldier, he could not visit his converts; but he could think of them, he could pray for them. And he did what he could. He teaches us by his example to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men. 2. *He prays for all, always.* We notice the constant repetition of the word "all" in this Epistle. There were dissensions, it seems, among the Philippians. The apostle will not recognize their differences; he loves them all, he prays for all: all are dear to him, all have their place in his prayers. 3. *His prayers flow from love.* He loves them, he longs for them all, and that "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." He loves them as Christ loves them; nay, more than that, he loves them with the love of Christ, with the heart of Christ; for Christ was his life: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Hence he could say (would to God that we could say the same!) that he loved with Christ's love. Mark the intensity of his consciousness of the blessed presence of Christ in all his power and love abiding within him.

III. **His HUMILITY.** None laboured as St. Paul laboured, but he was wholly free from vain-glory. 1. *He gives the glory to God.* It was God who began the good work in the hearts of the Philippians; God began it; God will complete it. God is everything, the apostle nothing. Yet this confidence in God makes the apostle work all the more; it increases his efforts, it deepens the earnestness of his prayers. 2. *He recog-*

*nizes the fellowship of the Philippians.* They had assisted him in the furtherance of the gospel both by their gifts and by their labours. He acknowledges their help; he thanks God for it; he regards them all as partakers of his grace. Grace had been given to him to endure and to labour. The like grace, he says, had been granted to the Philippians; he is thankful.

**IV. HIS SINCERITY.** “God is my witness,” he says: his love for the Philippians is deep and true; God who seeth the secrets of the heart, knows how he longs after them. Living always in the felt presence of God, he knows, and gladly knows, that no thoughts of his heart are hidden from God.

**LESSONS.** 1. Pray for the strong love of souls. 2. Pray for a transparent sincerity and truthfulness of heart. 3. Be humble; without humility there can be no real progress in holiness. 4. Give much time to intercessory prayer.

**Vers. 9—11.—St. Paul's prayer for the Philippians.** I. **THAT THEIR LOVE MAY ABOUND MORE AND MORE.** 1. *God had begun in them the good work*, the work of faith, faith that worketh by love. St. Paul recognizes the reality of their love; it was true and deep. But: 2. *There is always room for growth in love*; it is the noblest of Christian graces, the most precious of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Christian's desire for love is without limit. *Ἄκηπετον δύοδον τοῦτο*, says Chrysostom. “Owe no man anything,” says the apostle, “but to love one another.” Love is always owing; we can never love our brethren as we ought. Still less can we attain to that soul-absorbing love which we owe to God. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, with *all* thy soul, with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength.” The commandment is very deep and searching; we can never obey it perfectly; we shall be always in debt. But we may approach ever nearer and nearer to that fulness of perfect love. Therefore the Christian's prayer for love is unceasing, deepening in earnestness as he grows in the knowledge of Christ. The Christian life is a continual progress. “The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more.” Love must be ever growing, or it will lose its freshness.

II. **HE PRAYS FOR THEIR GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE.** 1. *Christian love is not indiscriminate, unintelligent*; it is informed and directed by spiritual knowledge. Love is informed by knowledge. 2. *Love increases knowledge.* For it is not book knowledge of which St. Paul is speaking, but heart knowledge. The knowledge of Christian experience is the personal knowledge of God gained by communion with him. Only love can know him; for like is known by like. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.” And, on the other hand, “Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” The religious sense, the tact which distinguishes good from evil, which approves among good things the best and holiest, flows out of love.

III. **HE PRAYS FOR THEIR GROWTH IN PURITY.** The word means singleness of mind, simplicity, sincerity, purity. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light.” This sincerity, this singleness of purpose, springs from love. Holy love refines the whole nature; for it brings the Christian daily into nearer fellowship with Christ, who alone can cleanse the sinful heart. “If we walk in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” That inward purity results in outward blamelessness, and prepares the soul against the day of Christ.

IV. **HE PRAYS FOR THEIR GROWTH IN OBEDIENCE.** Love must work; it cannot lie dormant in the soul. It must produce the fruit of righteousness. But that fruit of righteousness is: 1. *Through Jesus Christ.* “The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine;” nor can the Christian bring forth the fruit of holy living, except he abide in Christ. The life of the vine lives in the branch; the life of Christ lives in the Christian soul, and bears the fruit of holiness. 2. *And to the glory and praise of God.* The ultimate end of the righteousness of the saints is the glory of God. Therefore we are taught to pray “that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name.” There can be no nobler ambition: to live for God; only to seek his glory; to love him, not for what he has to give us, but because he is so holy, so loving, so glorious; to be willing to live or to die; to do great things in the world, or to be unknown and obscure, if only he may be glorified;—this is the noblest aim of life, the highest theme of prayer.

**LESSONS.** 1. Pray much for others; cultivate the habit of intercessory prayer. 2. Pray

for the continual growth and diffusion of love, knowledge, righteousness. 3. Seek above all things the glory of God.

Vers. 12-18.—*The apostle's own circumstances.* His holy unselfishness. He measures his condition, not by its present hardships or comforts, but by the facilities which it gives for spreading the knowledge of Christ.

I. **HIS IMPRISONMENT HAS TURNED TO THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.** It was not to have been expected; the area of his preaching was contracted; he himself was suffering and confined. But God makes "all things work together for good to them that love him;" even things that might seem likely to interfere with their spiritual work. 1. *His chains attracted attention*: it became manifest that he was a prisoner "in Christ," living in Christ, suffering in and with Christ, for the sake of Christ. 2. *Listeners gathered round him*: the Praetorian soldiers, among whom he lived, one of whom, in continual rotation, guarded him: others too—"all the rest." His imprisonment became widely known. The strange fact (it was strange then) that these hardships were endured voluntarily, from religious motives, excited curiosity, interest; hence many converts. 3. *His example encouraged others.* Some were timid, frightened. But the greater number of the brethren took courage to preach fearlessly. Example is better than precept. The sight of a suffering saint, patient, contented, happy, does more to win souls than hundreds of sermons. It is a visible proof of the power of Christ.

II. **ST. PAUL A CENTRE OF MISSION WORK.** 1. *His presence in Rome led to much preaching*; his example, his energy, stirred up others. There was much activity. But alas! there were dissensions even in the primitive Church. There was a Judaizing party at Rome who hated the apostle. Their zeal was kindled by his success; they preached, but with the design of winning adherents to the Law. Hence there was a division. 2. *Some preached of good will*; they knew that St. Paul was set for the defence of the gospel. The sight of his earnestness, his sufferings, excited their sympathies, quickened their affections; they were eager to help on the good work, to carry the gospel message into places which the imprisoned apostle could not reach. They preached out of love—love for St. Paul, love for the work, love for Christ. 3. *But others preached of envy and party spirit.* They did preach Christ in a sense; they brought news of Christ, they made known the facts of the gospel, they spread the knowledge of Christ's life and death. But they were not sincere; they did not in their hearts care for the salvation of souls; they preached really for their party—it was party zeal, not love, that stimulated their efforts. They were like the Pharisees of whom our Lord said, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. xxiii. 15). They envied St. Paul's success, and sought to raise up a party against him, to make him feel more bitterly the confinement of his chains. The gift of preaching is far inferior to the grace of charity. The eloquent preacher may be ambitious, worldly, actuated by party spirit, not by the love of Christ.

III. **ST. PAUL IS HAPPY BECAUSE CHRIST IS PREACHED.** He seeks not his own glory; he is not troubled for himself when others disparage his preaching or his conduct. He is wholly free from party spirit, from sectarian animosities, from earthly motives. He rejoices in the progress of the gospel, though that progress may be due in part to the preaching of men who differ widely from himself, and who are his personal opponents. What an example of unselfish charity!

Learn: 1. Never to give way to despondency. 2. Never to allow ourselves to think that we could serve God better if our circumstances were other than they are. 3. Always to try to do our best where we are, knowing that he can bring good out of evil. 4. The exceeding value of the silent influence of holy example. 5. The great danger of party spirit, the blessedness of charity.

Vers. 19, 20.—*St. Paul's own hope.* I. **HIS HOLY CONFIDENCE.** He knows that God will make all things, even this opposition, work together for his eternal salvation. The activity of his adversaries will stimulate him to greater zeal; it will kindle the sympathy of his friends, and lead them to pray for him more earnestly. Mark his absolute self-surrender, his entire submission to the holy will of God.

II. THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH. 1. *Intercessory prayer.* He knows that the Philippians will pray for him. When they hear of the bitter opposition of his Judaizing adversaries, they will pray the more earnestly that help may be given him in his perplexities and trials. He gladly believes that their prayers in his behalf will be heard. He knows the power of prayer. He, the great apostle, is thankful for the prayers of the humblest Christian. The highest saints are ever the lowliest. 2. *The supply of the Spirit given in answer to the prayer of faith.* "My Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." In proportion to the depth, the strength, the reality of prayer, the help of the Spirit is given. That help issues in salvation; "to be spiritually minded is life." The presence of the Spirit in the soul is the earnest, the pledge, of our inheritance in heaven. He works within us that holiness without which we cannot see God. His writing in the heart is the counterpart of those golden characters of love in which the names of God's saints are written in the Lamb's book of life.

III. THE RESULT OF THAT STRENGTH. 1. *Boldness of speech.* A gift to be earnestly desired by all Christian ministers: boldness to preach the Word; to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering. It is a rare gift; it requires that strength of conviction, that vividness of hope, that deep humility, which were characteristic of St. Paul. With all his thoughts concentrated on the one great desire of glorifying Christ, with his assured confidence that in nothing he should be ashamed, with his absolute trust in the fulfilment of God's promises, he could speak from the fulness of his own personal experience, boldly, persuasively, with a holy enthusiasm which mightily drew the hearts of men. Oh that we could follow him as he followed Christ! 2. *The glory of Christ.* It is this that St. Paul desires with such intense eagerness; not his own glory, not earthly success or earthly comforts, but that Christ may be magnified in his body. He is content to leave the issues of life or death wholly in the hand of God; willing to live, if his apostolic activity is needed for the spread of the gospel; willing to die, if the death of martyrdom would best serve his Master's cause. His one desire is that Christ should be magnified in his servant.

Learn: 1. To value intercessory prayer, to pray ourselves for others, to desire their prayers for us. 2. To prize above all things the daily supply of the influences of the Holy Spirit. 3. To pray for boldness of speech. 4. But only that Christ may be glorified.

Vers. 21—26.—*The great alternative, life or death.* I. ST. PAUL IS PREPARED FOR EITHER; "for," he says, "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." 1. *Christ was his life.* Christ was magnified, not in his body only, in his labours and suffering, but in his spirit. The presence of Christ filled his whole conscious existence; communion with Christ was to him the very breath of life. Life was worth having only so far as the life of Christ was realized in the apostle's life. The outward life, with its comforts or its hardships, was as nothing in comparison with this inner life of the spirit. "Dost thou not, O blessed Paul, live the common life of men?" exclaims St. Chrysostom; "dost thou not see the sun, dost thou not breathe the air, dost thou not need sleep, food, clothing, like ourselves?" Yes, he needed these things; he sent for his cloak and books. But he lived in the spirit of the Saviour's words, "Take no thought [no anxious thought] for your life;" "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." His real life was hidden—hidden with Christ whose presence filled his soul. He was dead unto the world, but alive unto God. He was conscious of high thoughts burning within him; there was a power there and an energy that lifted him up and strengthened him and filled him with calm and holy joy in all his many trials. But that new life was not his life: "Not I, but Christ." Christ was there; that sacred presence influenced the whole conscious life of the apostle, keeping up a current of pure, high, heavenly thought within his heart. Where that blessed presence dwelleth the outward life sinks into comparative insignificance. St. Paul scarcely counted that outward life as belonging to himself; it was full of change, shadowy, unreal. His true, real life was the Life that lived within him. "To me to live is Christ." 2. *Death would be gain to St. Paul.* Life in Christ is blessed; still more blessed are the holy dead. They rest from their labours; death removes them from the temptations, conflicts, cares of life. And

to depart is to be with Christ, in his immediate presence. To see him thus, without the intervention of the veil of flesh, is gain, unutterable gain. But we must know by our own experience the power of Christ's life indwelling in our souls before we can feel with the apostle that death is truly gain.

II. ST. PAUL KNOWS NOT WHICH TO CHOOSE, LIFE OR DEATH. Who can tell the blessedness of such advanced holiness? Who would not gladly accept St. Paul's sufferings to share his calm faith? Life is blessed, for it is life in Christ. Death is blessed, "by much very far better," for it is to be with Christ. The apostle hesitates; he is in a strait between two alternatives—work for Christ here, and the life with Christ in Paradise. 1. *For himself his desire is set towards departing.* Death is to him but the weighing anchor, or the taking down of his tent, the last stage in his journey to the heavenly country. The blessedness awaiting him there is beyond the power of language to express; it needs the tongue of angels. 2. *But he fears there may be something of selfishness in this longing to depart.* His continued life on earth may be necessary for the progress of the gospel. For his converts' sake he is willing to remain, for their furtherance and joy. A high example of most entire unselfishness. 3. *He leaves his will submissive to the higher will of God.* God knows better than he what is best for the Church and for himself. One thing he knows: if his presence is needful, he shall continue with his converts; for his life and death are in the hands of God, and God doeth all things well.

LESSONS. 1. Death is no strange thing to the advanced Christian; he lives in habitual preparation for it. 2. He knows that he is in the hands of God; knowing this, he is content to live, and content to die; "Thy will be done." 3. More than this, he hath a desire to depart, for to depart is to be with Christ. 4. But this holy resignation, this calm and blessed hope, implies a life of fellowship with Christ. "To me to live is Christ." Be it our most eager desire, our most earnest effort, thus to live.

Vers. 27—30.—*Practical exhortation.* I. CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION THE CONDITION OF CHRISTIAN JOY. *Only* (the word is emphatic)—*only*, St. Paul says, whether he lives or dies, whether he comes again or sees them in the flesh no more, whatever happens to him or to them—let them mind this one thing, holy living. This must be, he says, your one desire, your one aim, to live as Christian men should live.

II. ST. PAUL ADDRESSES THE PHILIPPIANS AS MEMBERS OF A CHURCH; not isolated individuals, but members of a community, knit together into one body. 1. *We are citizens of the heavenly commonwealth, under the one heavenly King.* We must fight under his banner against the common enemy. There is need of united action: union is strength; we must stand fast, keeping our ground as in battle, striving together. Disunion breaks the power of the great army; it dissipates Christian energy, and impedes grievously the progress of the gospel. 2. *Christian union is the unity of the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit of God, abiding in the whole Church and in each individual Christian, is the bond of union. The spirit of the believer is the sphere of his influence. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit;" "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." The more fully he abideth in us, the more shall we be disposed to love one another, to hate party spirit, to remember that we are one body in Christ. 3. *If we preserve the unity of the Spirit, we shall strive together with one soul.* The indwelling of the Holy Spirit will direct all our affections, emotions, and desires to bear on the one great object, the progress of the faith. 4. *This Christian energy, this holy courage, is the gift of God.* It shows that his presence goeth with the Christian host. It is the pledge of victory to his servants, of ruin to their adversaries. 5. *And it implies willingness to suffer.* Patience, as well as courage, is the gift of God. It is as high a privilege to be called to suffer with Christ and for Christ, as it is to work for him.

LESSONS. 1. The gospel is the good tidings of God's unspeakable gift: think of your Christian privileges, your Christian responsibilities, and walk worthily of the gospel. 2. Pray for the grace of perseverance, pray for it daily, earnestly. 3. Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. 4. Remember that suffering comes from our Father in heaven; he chasteneth us for our profit. Suffering meekly borne, borne in the faith of Christ and out of love for Christ, becomes a blessing.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Apostolic address and salutation.* The Apostle Paul is as characteristic in his greetings as in the substance of his epistolary writings.

I. THE AUTHORS OF THE GREETING. “Paul and Timotheus, bond-slaves of Jesus Christ.” 1. *The apostle associates Timothy with himself as one who had laboured at Philippi and was well known to the Christians of that city.* Timothy, besides, was then his companion at Rome. It was natural that he should name the disciple who was associated with him through a longer range of time than any other—extending, indeed, from the date of his first missionary journey till near the very time of his martyrdom. 2. *He does not call himself an apostle, because the assertion of his official designation was not needful at Philippi,* but places himself on a level with Timothy, by bringing into prominence their common relationship to the Lord as “bond-slaves of Jesus Christ.” They belonged to him as Master, and bore his marks in their very bodies, and were supremely devoted to his service.

II. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THE GREETING WAS ADDRESSED. “To the saints which are in Christ Jesus at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” 1. *They dwelt in Philippi,* an important city of Macedonia, which, thirty-four years before, was the scene of a great battle which determined the prevalence of the imperial system of Rome. It was still more celebrated as the first city in Europe which received the gospel—“thus opening up the long vista of what has become Western Christendom.” 2. *They were “saints in Christ Jesus;*” with a ten years’ history. The title must have had a special force in the case of those addressed with such a warmth of affection. Their saintship was grounded in their union with Christ. It is interesting to mark the prominence of female names both in the first founding of the Church and in its later developments, as noticed in the Epistle. Who can say whether the delicate and untiring generosity of the Philippian Church to the apostle may not have been mainly due to these saintly women, who enjoyed in Macedonia, as women, a far more independent position than in other parts of the world? There is at all events a sweet tenderness in Philippian piety which made the designation of “saints” peculiarly appropriate. 3. *The greeting was extended to the bishops and deacons along with the saints.* (1) This implies that Philippian Christianity was fully organized. (2) It suggests that the bishops and deacons may have taken an active part in the contribution to the apostle’s wants. (3) Yet the apostle, by his mode of greeting, lends no sanction to hierarchical usurpation, for, instead of greeting “the bishops and deacons, together with the saints at Philippi,” he assigns the first place to the Christian flock.

III. THE FRIENDLY GREETING OF THE APOSTLE. “Grace to you and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (see Homilies on Gal. i. 3 and Eph. i. 2). —T. C.

Vers. 3—5.—*Thanksgiving for their fellowship in the gospel.* I. THANKSGIVING IS A NATURAL AND PROPER EXERCISE OF THE BELIEVING HEART. The apostle usually begins his Epistles by blessing God—“my God,” as marking intimate personal relationship—for the spiritual condition of his converts. There was special cause for thanksgiving in the case of the Philippians. 1. *Scripture has psalms of thanksgiving.* (Neh. xii. 8.) 2. *We have constant reason for thanksgiving.* We thank God for temporal mercies (Exod. xv. 1, 2); for spiritual mercies (Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. 4); for deliverance from the body of death (Rom. vii. 25); but, above all, for Christ, his unspeakable Gift (Luke ii. 38).

II. THE APOSTLE’S THANKSGIVING WAS BASED UPON HIS ENTIRE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS CONVERTS. “Upon my whole remembrance of you.” Gratitude is usually fed by memory. They had been often in his remembrance for ten years back. Every fresh token of their affection received in his trials and imprisonments would revive the thought of them.

III. THE OCCASIONS OF HIS THANKSGIVING. “Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy.” There is something significant in “the studied cumulation” of the “alls” in the passage. It marks the overflowing heart. 1. *The apostle was much in prayer for his converts.* He had a large heart, for he prayed for them all.

Ministers should bear their people much upon their hearts in prayer to God. They should pray always for their people. The apostle prayed for his converts as often as he remembered them (1) because "the anxiety of all the Churches" was upon him; (2) because he had a deep affection for them; (3) because they were exposed to great dangers at once from errorists and from persecutors. 2. *His prayers for the Philippians were always with joy.* "Making request with joy." Though he was a prisoner exposed to all the morbid depression caused by isolation, joy mingled with all his prayers. The sum of this Epistle is, *Gaudeo; gaudete.* Eighteen times does the word occur in its verbal or substantive forms. Joy is a true fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). The apostle mingled joy with his requests, (1) because the converts at Philippi were very dear to him; (2) because they were so mindful of his necessities; (3) because they abounded in many spiritual graces.

IV. THE CAUSE FOR WHICH HE RETURNED THANKS TO GOD. "For your fellowship in aid of the gospel from the first day until now." It was a fellowship of faith and love and service with a view to the furtherance of the gospel. It implied: 1. *A cordial and united action.* 2. *A thoughtful consideration for the apostle's wants.* 3. *A continuance in well-doing*, which was at once a proof of the gospel's power in their hearts, a demonstration of Christian consistency, and a means for sustained success in gospel work.—T. C.

Ver. 6.—*The grounds of the apostle's thanksgiving.* "Being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it till the day of Christ."

I. THE SUBJECT OF HIS CONFIDENCE. "A good work," regarded: 1. *In itself.* It is the work of grace or salvation in the human soul. 2. *In its development.* It has a beginning and an ending. It is God, not man, who begins it; and he who begins it ends it. It is thus a good work, (1) because it is God's through all its stages; (2) because it brings good to man, being the restoration of the Divine image in his heart; (3) because it brings glory to God.

II. THE GROUNDS OF HIS CONFIDENCE. Not in the power of priesthood or sacrament, but in the character and resources of the Worker. He who begins will end it, for he has fixed a day for its completeness—"the very day of Christ." Not the day of death, but the day of Christ, because man does not exist in his completely glorified condition till he stands in the redemption of both body and soul. The grounds of a believer's perseverance are not, therefore, to be found in his own watchfulness or his own strength, but (1) in the purposes and promises of God, (2) in the mediation of Christ, (3) in the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

III. HOW THIS CONFIDENCE OPERATED IN THE APOSTLE. It did not prevent him from praying for his converts or exhorting them to the use of means for their continuance in grace. It suggests (1) *that we ought to be careful not to abuse assurance;* and (2) *that we ought to interest ourselves deeply in each other's spiritual welfare.*—T. C.

Vers. 7, 8.—*A double explanation of the origin of this confidence.* "Even as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, and because in my bonds and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers with me of my grace." The apostle has found the objective ground of his confidence in the exclusively Divine source of the "good work;" but this confidence is justified at once by his own love to the Philippians and by their spiritual fellowship with him in sufferings and service.

I. LOVE INSPIRES CONFIDENCE. "I have you in my heart." Therefore, he says, it is right for him to cherish this confidence respecting them. It is the nature of love to have this confident hope, for it "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7). The intensity of his love enhanced his confidence. The apostle's love was peculiarly tender. "For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." The appeal to God marks the sincerity of his love. But its true origin, its pattern, its fervency, are only to be found in the bowels of Christ. The heart of the apostle throbs in unison with the heart of Christ.

II. ANOTHER GROUND OF CONFIDENCE WAS THEIR SYMPATHETIC FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM IN SUFFERING AND IN SERVICE. 1. *They identified themselves with him "in his bonds" by ministering once and again to his necessities and cheering him by their*

*sympathies.* They remembered him “as an ambassador in bonds,” as we are all bound to “remember them that are in bonds as bound with them” (Heb. xiii. 2). They did it, too, at a time when Roman sympathy seems to have been sorely wanting. It is strange that, with a Church in the capital of the world, he should have been dependent upon the charity of the far distant Philippians. 2. *They identified themselves heartily both with his defence of the gospel either before heathen magistrates or Jewish opponents, and with his positive establishment of the truth.* There is a negative and a positive side in the great teaching office of the Church.—T. C.

Vers. 9—11.—*The apostle's prayer.* He had spoken of praying for them. This was the purport of his prayers: “And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all discernment.”

I. THE INCREASE OF LOVE THE MAIN THING IN RELIGION. 1. *The language implies the existence of this love as well as its imperfection.* It had been manifest in many ways; but there were social rivalries and jealousies and disputes at Philippi. Therefore the apostle prays that their love may abound more and more. 2. *It is love absolutely that he speaks of, the grand principle, the motive power of Christian life.* Matthew Henry says it is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family. (1) It is Divine in its origin, for “love is of God;” (2) it is the principle of the Divine indwelling, for “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him;” (3) it is the spring of all holy obedience, for it is “the fulfilling of the Law;” (4) it is “the bond of perfectness;” (5) it has no metes or bounds like law, for we are to love with all our powers. The gospel lays the believer under a weightier line of obligation than the Law; for we are not to do this or that particular duty prescribed by the Law, but to do all that we can do through the constraining force of the love of God. 3. *It is love fed by knowledge and guided by judgment;* for it is to abound “in perfect knowledge and universal discernment.” (1) Knowledge here is the thorough grasp of theoretical and practical truth. (a) This is needed to feed love. We cannot love an unknown person; we cannot love an unknown gospel; we cannot love one another except so far as we know one another. The more we know of our blessed Redeemer the more shall we love him. Love is not a blind attachment. (b) It is needed to regulate love. Love without knowledge may lead a Christian into mistakes, irregularities, improprieties, like a foolishly fond father who spoils his child. Love may waste itself on worthless or frivolous objects, or it may attempt impracticable projects by unwarrantable means; but if knowledge be the guide, these mistakes will be prevented. (2) The love is in “all discernment.” This is more than knowledge. It is more even than the application of knowledge. It is that discriminating power, which enables a man to appreciate the true nature of things presented to him in the sphere of religious realities.

II. THE ENDS ACCOMPLISHED BY A LOVE THUS REGULATED. 1. *Christian capacity to discern excellent things.* “That you may be able to prove things that are excellent.” Love, rightly guided, penetrates through all disguises of error. It is, in fact, a mighty preservative against error. The Christian is able “to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” He does not lose sight of the true proportions and relations of truth. But the spiritual capacity of believers is found to differ like the natural capacities of men. Some are very deficient in the power of spiritual discernment, yet this may be mainly due to the weakness of love. Those who are strong maintain the tranquillity of their own mind, and will be a stay to the timid and the weak. Cecil says, “A sound heart is the best casuist.” 2. *Sincerity.* “That ye may be sincere.” Love, rightly guided, brings out the deep reality of Christian character, and presents it in a holy simplicity without stratagem, diplomacy, or manœuvre. A sincere man has all the strength that springs from an undivided heart: his love is without dissimulation; his sincerity is a godly sincerity, which realizes the impossibility of uniting the interests and pleasures and pursuits of the present world with those of true religion. 3. *The absence of offence.* “And void of offence.” It seems hard to be so in a world to which the gospel itself is an offence. Yet, though we are not to compromise the principles of the gospel, we are to live peaceably with all men, to take wrong rather than give offence, to have a good report from them that are without, to be “blameless and harmless as the sons of God.” The duration of this temper of sincerity and

inoffensiveness is "against the day of Christ"—the day of final account before the Judge, as if to imply the undeviating consistency of a life thus divinely ordered.

4. *Positive fruitfulness in Christian life.* "Being filled with the fruit of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." There is more needed than mere harmlessness: there must be a positive development of Christian life.

(1) The fruit of righteousness. The righteousness is not of nature, but of grace; it is not of the Law, but of faith; and is essentially fruitful. Therefore those who possess it are "trees of righteousness," and the quality of the tree is known by its fruit. The whole system of redemption has for its end to make men "fruitful of good works."

(2) This fruit is by Jesus Christ, because it is bound up with the life of Christ. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me" (John xv. 4).

(3) The end to which all is directed—"to the glory and praise of God." The glory is the manifestation of God's grace, the praise is the recognition by men of God's attributes.

(4) It is implied that believers are to be "filled" with the fruit of righteousness. Not a branch here and there, but all our branches are to be loaded with fruit. Thus there will be the more glory and praise to God.—T. C.

Vers. 12-14.—*Furtherance of the gospel through the apostle's imprisonment.* He now proceeds to inform his converts of his condition at Rome, with his hopes and his fears for the future. His imprisonment had in two important respects signally promoted the growth of Christianity in the great metropolis of the world.

I. **HIS SUFFERINGS FOR CHRIST HAD BECOME KNOWN TO THE SOLDIERS OF THE PRÆTORIAN GUARD AND TO OTHERS.** "My bonds have become manifest in Christ throughout the Prætorian Guard, and to all the rest." This was important for two reasons.

1. *Because these soldiers were connected with "Caesar's household."* We may well suppose that the saints in that household referred to afterwards (ch. iv. 22) owed their conversion to the apostle's ministry.

2. *Because Christianity would thus be brought under the eye of the world.* These soldiers were part of an army which then covered the world with its conquests.

3. *But the special importance lay in the fact that he was recognized as a prisoner, not for theft, or murder, or ill-doing, but for his profession of the gospel.*

II. **HIS SUFFERINGS FOR CHRIST HAD THE EFFECT OF INSPIRING MINISTERS WITH GREATER COURAGE IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL.** "And the greater part of the brethren, having in the Lord confidence in my bonds, are more abundantly bold to preach the gospel without fear." This implies: 1. *That the ministry was then a dangerous service, for it exposed preachers to violence and death.* 2. *That the example of triumphant faith and joyful endurance cannot be without its effect.* The courage of the apostle, in a fearfully critical time, breathed new strength into "the brethren."—T. C.

Vers. 15-18.—*A significant difference among the apostle's brethren.* They were all actively engaged in preaching the gospel, but they were not actuated by the same motives.

I. **THE DIFFERENT SPIRIT OF THE TWO CLASSES OF PREACHERS.** "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will." The one class were actuated by a genuine good will to Christ and his apostle. The other class were actuated by envy and discord. They envied the popularity of the apostle among the Gentile Churches, and showed a disagreeably quarrelsome temper. They were evidently Judaists who could little brook the overthrow of the Mosaic institute and Jewish commonwealth which seemed to be involved in the triumph of the apostle's gospel. Yet they preached Christ.

II. **THE MOTIVES OF THE TWO CLASSES.** "The one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds." Notice: 1. *The pure motive of the one class—love—which ought to be the spring of all gospel action.* Love to Christ, love to the truth, love to the souls of men, ought to be the abiding motive of all preachers. These brethren had special regard for the apostle on account of his destined place in the evangelization of the world. 2. *The impure motive of the other class—a base partisanship designed to make the apostle's bonds more galling.* There are allusions to this fierce party

spirit among the Judaists in most of the apostle's writings, aggravated as it often was by intense bitterness to the apostle. 3. *Yet both classes preached Christ.* The language of the apostle is applied to both classes. It is sad to think of men preaching Christ from bad motives, especially where such motives may imply a tinge of doctrinal imperfection in the method of preaching him. Yet the Lord accepts the services of weak, imperfect, sinful men in his vineyard.

III. THE JOY OF THE APOSTLE AT THIS WIDESPREAD ACTIVITY OF THE TWO CLASSES.

1. *It might appear more natural for him to denounce these Judaists with words of sharp rebuke.* Perhaps his own enforced inactivity as a preacher may have led him to rejoice in the Christian labours of men who knew Christ "only after the flesh." 2. *His joy shows a large and forgiving nature.* "What then? only that in every way, whether with masked design or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." The conduct of the apostle teaches us: (1) That the preaching of Christ is higher truth than the secondary questions of polity and worship which often cause dissension among Christians. (2) That Christians ought to rejoice in the successes of other Christians who follow different methods of doctrine or polity. (3) That it is right to condemn the base motives or unworthy insincerities that sometimes mingle with good work. (4) That we ought to show special consideration to those who preach Christ of good will, and eschew all sorts of by-ends and manœuvres.—T. C.

Vers. 19, 20.—*The bearing of his various trials upon his salvation.* "And I know that this will turn out to my salvation."

I. CONSIDER THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR HIS OWN SALVATION. He does not refer here to his release from captivity, but to the salvation of his soul. 1. *Salvation has several significations in Scripture.* It sometimes means conversion, sometimes sanctification, sometimes glorification,—that is, some one or other of three different parts of it; or it signifies all three together. In the first sense it is a past act and complete; in the second, it is a present experience and progressive; in the third, a blessed expectation. The apostle does not use the word here in the first, but in the second and third senses. 2. *We are not to suppose that he had any doubt concerning his salvation,* but merely that he sought that spiritual growth and that enlargement of spiritual labours that would determine the degree of his blessedness hereafter.

II. HIS SALVATION WAS TO BE PROMOTED BY SANCTIFIED TRIALS. He refers here evidently to the perplexities and troubles by which ungentle and unloving brethren had tried "to raise up affliction to his bonds." 1. *Affliction has no naturally sanctifying tendency.* It embitters, it hardens, it deadens the soul. 2. *It is affliction sanctified by a loving Father that deepens and purifies spiritual experience.* (Heb. xii. 7—11.) There are two means suggested towards this end. (1) Intercessory prayer. "This shall turn out to my salvation through your prayer;" for even a great apostle was dependent upon the intercession of the humble disciples of Philippi. (2) The supply of the Spirit. "And the abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ." This supply, as the answer to their prayers, would minister to him joy, peace, holiness, strength, patience, and zeal. It is the Spirit proceeding from Christ, sent by Christ, who, taking the things of Christ, shows them unto us, and so establishes our safety.

III. THIS SALVATION IS IDENTIFIED WITH HIS SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION OF THE GOSPEL. "According to my earnest desire and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but as always, so now also with all boldness, Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or by death." 1. *The supply of the Spirit justified his desire and hope that he would boldly proclaim Christ.* He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Rom. i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 12). 2. *It would ensure the glorification of Christ in his body,* by his labours if he lived, by his edifying patience and peace if he died.

IV. HIS CONVICTION OF THIS FACT. "I know that this will turn out to my salvation." He knew it: 1. *From his knowledge of the discipline of the covenant.* 2. *From his knowledge of God's promises.* 3. *From his own past experiences of God's dealings with himself.*—T. C.

Ver. 21.—*The grand alternatives.* "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain." This elucidates as well as confirms his previous statement.

I. HIS NATURAL LIFE FINDS ITS SUPREME OBJECT IN CHRIST. The apostle does not PHILIPPIANS.

hero assert that Christ is his spiritual life, for the reference is strictly limited to his "life in the flesh." That life is supremely devoted to Christ. 1. *In all its thoughts.* There never was a man whose intellectual life was so wrapped up in his Saviour; his plans, his anxieties, his hopes, centred in him; every thought was brought into subjection to him; therefore his thoughts were not vain, or selfish, or earthly. 2. *In all its deeds.* The apostle abounded in labours more than the other apostles. Yet Christ was the object of such holy activity. His ceaseless, exhausting works of love found their spring in the love of Christ as they marked his supreme devotion. Thus Christ was his life. It ought so to be with us all. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord."

II. HIS DEATH WOULD BE GAIN. "To die is gain." 1. *This assertion seems hard to reconcile with human feeling.* Death always involves loss of some sort. To the saint it involves the loss of many pure enjoyments of life, of happy domestic ties, of the means and opportunities of working for Christ; while to the sinner it is utter, irreparable loss. 2. *The assertion is not that of a mere pessimist, who asks, "Is life worth living?"* nor of a worn-out *roué*, who has outlived the very sensation of enjoyment; nor of a holy man wearied out with exhausting labours and anxious to get quit of trials and persecutions. There is nothing in the apostle's writings to justify the conclusion that he was sour, or morose, or cynical, or merely attached to the scene of human existence at the point of duty; for he possessed hearty human sympathies and entered with spirit into all the schemes of true Christian life. 3. *His assertion marks the true connection that exists between death and the believer's gain.* Death is pure gain; for it puts an end to all the losses which so largely shake human comfort in this life, to all the evils of sin, and to all temptations to sin; and it puts the believer in possession of his full inheritance with the perfection of grace, the blessed vision of God, the society of the just made perfect. It is gain: (1) Immediate; for "absence from the body" is "presence with the Lord." (2) Incalculable; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). (3) Everlasting; for God himself is the eternal Portion of his people.—T. C.

Vers. 22—24.—*The apostle's dilemma.* The last sentence touched his more personal life; but now he thinks of his official relation to others, with its large promise of blessing to the world. This thought creates his dilemma. He does not know whether to choose life or death. Let us mark the two sides of the dilemma.

I. THE CHOICE OF LIFE. This had no relation to himself. It had exclusive relation to others. 1. *His life would be more fruitful in labours for others.* "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour." That is, his life would be fruitful through his unceasing labours. "The life of a pious minister is far more profitable for his people than his death." The Church wants him, the world wants him, his family wants him. There was no leisure in the long career of the apostle. His life was brimful of labour to the last. 2. *His life would be more advantageous to others than his death.* "Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful on your account." On the shoulders of this apostle rested the care of all the Churches; he was in the front of battle all his life; the Christians everywhere looked to him for help and guidance; while there were still many dark spots of earth to which he might carry the glad tidings of salvation. The apostle was not one of those men who live too long alike for their reputation and their happiness; he had not outlived his power of work; he had shown no signs of failure, for he was still abundant in labours and in consolations and in the strength which inspires confidence.

II. THE CHOICE OF DEATH. "I am hemmed in on both sides, having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is very far better." 1. *The desire of death is not sinful, but rather commendable, as a sign of faith and fearlessness.* There is a longing for death on the part of the miserable, who are "weary of their life," and only anxious to escape from its evils. The longing sometimes deepens into the madness that leads to suicide. This longing is sinful, because it is selfish, and seems to argue a weak trust in the Divine hand which supports our life. But there is a longing without any selfish element, that springs out of the desire to escape from sin into a state of perfect holiness. Such a desire for death argues our belief in a future state, our faith in the Lord's mercy, our love to him, and our interest in his manifested glory. 2. *Death*

*involves our immediate translation into Christ's presence.* "Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ." There is no ground for the supposition of a long sleep of the soul between death and the resurrection, however difficult it may be to conceive the conscious existence of a disembodied spirit. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." To be with Christ implies: (1) That we shall see him as he is. (2) That we shall enjoy him when we see him in the fulness of joy that is at his right hand. (3) That we shall never be parted from him. It is the glory of the heavenly state that believers "shall be for ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). 3. *Presence with Christ is far better than anything life can give.* It is better (1) in respect of exemption from sin and sorrow; (2) in respect of honour and dignity, for the saints shall reign with him; (3) in respect of profit, for they are joint heirs with him; (4) in respect of the perpetuity that is stamped upon all the realities of heaven.—T. C.

Vers. 25, 26.—*The apostle's personal conviction as to his future course.* He might be uncertain as to which he should choose, but he was fully confident as to what would befall him. Notice—

I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CONTINUANCE WITH HIS CONVERTS. "And being confidently persuaded of this [that his life would be for their spiritual advantage] I know that I shall abide, and abide with you all." His knowledge was not necessarily derived from special revelation or from mere presentiment, but represents his firm personal conviction that he would survive his present imprisonment. His assurance was eventually fulfilled, as we know by his labours during the remaining years of his life. He knew that his times were in God's hands, and that the same Lord who foretold the manner of Peter's end would fix the time of his own end. He could feel he was immortal till his work was done.

II. THE EFFECT OF HIS CONTINUED LABOURS. "For your furtherance and joy of faith." The life of a minister is intimately associated with the spiritual comfort of his flock. 1. *The apostle would be the means of increasing their faith.* (1) By his imparting of new truth; (2) by his skilful application of old truth to new circumstances; (3) by deepening the dependence of his converts on that Lord whom the twelve apostles once unanimously addressed with the words, "Increase our faith" (Luke xvii. 5); (4) by imparting spiritual gifts (Rom. i. 11). 2. *The apostle would contribute to the joy of their faith.* (1) This joy is essentially connected with faith as its source; for the God of hope fills us "with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). (2) Faith in its fulness inspires a deep joy in proportion to its thorough realization of Divine realities and blessings. "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable" (1 Pet. i. 8). (3) The apostle would thus promote their spiritual strength; for "the joy of the Lord" would become "their strength."

III. THE ULTIMATE DESIGN OF HIS CONTINUANCE. "That your matter for boasting [in the fact of your condition as Christians] may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming to you again." 1. *The element of increase in Christian living and Christian privilege is in Christ Jesus;* for it is in virtue of its connection with the head "that the body maketh increase of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16). 2. *The instrumental source of increase is "in me"—through the apostle's continued labour.* 3. It would be still more marked by his personal visits to his converts; for he would come to them in fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.—T. C.

Vers. 27, 28.—*Practical counsel for holy and consistent living.* "Only let your manner of life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

I. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS THE TRUE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN PIETY AS WELL AS "THE POWER OF GOD TO SALVATION." It is so: 1. *By virtue of the doctrines it reveals for our comfort.* 2. *By virtue of the precepts it inculcates for our guidance;* for it embodies in itself that which is at once "the law of Christ," "the law of love," "the law of liberty." 3. *By virtue of the privileges it confers to secure holy living.* 4. *By virtue of the prospects it holds out as "a recompence of reward."*

II. CHRISTIAN LIFE MUST BE ORDERED ACCORDING TO THIS STANDARD. The original term suggests membership in a society, according to the idea of privilege which makes believers "fellow-citizens of the saints." Our practice must accord with our profession. Like the gospel of Christ, we must be true and faithful, peaceful and loving, gracious

and humble. Our walk must be consistently the same, whether our religious guides are present or absent.

III. THE CHRISTIAN WALK IS TO MANIFEST ITSELF IN A FIRM AND SOLID UNITY. "That ye stand fast in one spirit." There were divergences of action, if not of thought, manifest among the pious Philippians, which made it necessary to counsel them to a steadfast unity of position and effort. We cannot grow in grace unless we live in peace, and we cannot hold our ground against the rushing tides of worldliness and sin which threaten to overwhelm us unless we are strongly rooted in Christ and his gracious gospel. This stability of position will have a twofold effect. 1. *It will enable us to fight in concert for the faith of the gospel.* "With one soul striving in concert with the faith of the gospel." If there was to be striving at all, it must not be in a way of contention, but of united endeavour to promote and defend the cause of Christ. Unity immensely enhances the power of the truth. This language implies (1) that there is "one faith;" (2) that it is worth striving for, as it contains the message of mercy to man; (3) that it is injurious to piety to undervalue truth; (4) that the stability of Churches as well as individuals depends much upon unity of faith; (5) that there may be a oneness of heart under intellectual differences. 2. *It will make you superior to the fears of adversaries.* "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries." There will be no wavering on your part, through the assaults of unbelieving Jews or Gentiles. There is a double argument or encouragement here presented: "seeing it [your fearlessness] is to them an evident token of destruction, but to you of salvation, and that of God." (1) Their fearless maintenance of the truth, implying as it did the power of the gospel in their hearts, would be a proof to the adversaries that they merit destruction by rejecting it and by continuing steadfast in their wickedness. The sentiment is parallel with that in the Thessalonian Epistle, in which the suffering endured through the envy of the Jews was "a token or proof that God will inflict heavy punishment on the adversaries of the Christian faith" (2 Thess. i. 5). (2) It was also a proof that the God who now sustained them would finally reward them. This implies (a) that suffering Christians will certainly be saved, (b) and that their salvation will be great as well as certain.—T. C.

Vers. 29, 30.—*The privilege of suffering.* There is reason given, by way of encouragement, for their steadfastness in suffering. "For unto you it was freely given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe upon him, but also to suffer for his sake."

I. THE DISPENSATION OF SUFFERING ASSIGNED TO THE SAINTS. Their sufferings fall not out by chance. They are divinely ordered. They are even divinely given. 1. *Their ability to endure these sufferings is the gift of Christ.* "In the world ye shall have tribulation; in me ye shall have peace." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." 2. *The comforts in suffering are the gift of Christ.* Thus they are led to rejoice in tribulation, for he has sent his Comforter to dwell in their hearts. 3. *The sufferings in question are profitable to themselves as well as honouring to the Lord.* He doth not afflict willingly, but for our profit. Through our suffering we may glorify the Lord by encouraging and confirming the faith of others. 4. *The sufferings will not be without reward.* "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). "Blessed are you when men persecute you . . . for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 11, 12).

II. FAITH IN CHRIST MUST GO BEFORE SUFFERING FOR HIM. "Unto you it is given . . . to believe upon him." 1. *Faith is God's gift*, as it is the first effect of regeneration, which is God's work. Christ purchased for us, not merely salvation, but all the means thereunto. It is the Lord who opens our eyes, renews our wills, and persuades and enables us to accept Christ in the gospel. 2. *It is by this faith we are enabled to suffer patiently.* Without the shield of faith we could not resist the anger of persecutors. By faith we are made strong at the root like the seaweed that grows on the rock, no matter how much it may be lashed hither and thither by the ceaseless action of the waves.

III. ENCOURAGEMENT TO PATIENT PERSEVERANCE BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE. "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." There must be a right spirit as well as a good cause to suffer for. 1. *The similarity between the sufferings of the apostle and those of his converts.* (1) *It was in the same place—*

*Philippi.* (Acts xvi. 19.) (2) *It was, probably, from the same adversaries, Gentiles and Jews.* (3) *It was a conflict in both cases trying to flesh and blood.* 2. *The sufferings of the ministers of Christ ought to encourage their people to like patience and firmness.*—T. C.

**Vers. 1, 2.—Saints, bishops, and deacons.** In the beginning of this earliest Epistle of the captivity, according to the showing of Lightfoot, the apostle does not deem it needful to declare his apostleship or to indulge in even the semblance of self-assertion. Bracketing Timotheus with himself, he simply declares that they are slaves (*δοῦλοι*) of Jesus Christ, and as such desire to address the constituents of the Philippian Church. The contents of this Epistle are eminently joy-inspiring; it is, in fact, marvellous that such consolation should come from captivity to those enjoying freedom. But God's ways are oftentimes surprising.

**I. LET US LOOK AT CHRIST'S SLAVES.** (Ver. 1.) Paul and Timothy, as the slaves of Christ, felt that they were not their own, but bought with a price. They were, therefore, bound to glorify God in their bodies, in their spirits, and in all their possessions. And to such wide responsibilities they cheerfully responded, so that it was their constant joy to live for Jesus. He was their Lord; hence the title is given to him in the second verse. But they felt this slavery to be perfect freedom, and rejoiced in the thought that the mark or brand of Christ was upon them (cf. Rom. vi. 18—22; 2 Cor. iii. 17). As the slaves of Christ, moreover, it was impossible for them to be the slaves of men (1 Cor. vii. 23). And truly it is only when we are possessed, body and soul, by Christ, and when we have merged our will in his, that we rise into lordship over ourselves and become heirs of all things. It is this slavery to Christ which proves the real emancipation of the spirit.

**II. LET US LOOK AT THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.** (Ver. 1.) Now, it was composed of saints (*ἅγιοις*). These consecrated, dedicated souls formed the staple of the Church at Philippi. While Paul does not assert that saintliness characterized them all without exception who professed membership in the Church, he plainly indicates that it ought to characterize them all. As Lightfoot expresses it, "Though it does not assert moral qualifications as a fact in the persons designated, it implies them as a duty." Moreover, Paul in his charity addresses himself to *all* these saints; so as to heal any divisions which may have arisen among them and to bind them all into a unity of spirit and of aim. The sphere of their saintliness is Christ Jesus. It is through their union with the Lord that they become the consecrated men he means them to be. But in the Church there were two kinds of officers—"bishops and deacons." That these "bishops" are synonymous with "presbyters" must be admitted by all, especially after the Bishop of Durham's candid note. They were spiritual overseers of the flock of God, and the plurality of them in such a little place as Philippi shows how desirable it is to have a plurality of persons in a congregation charged with its spiritual oversight and doing all they can to promote its spiritual welfare. Lastly, there were "deacons" in Philippi, men charged with the temporal interests of the congregations and administering these most faithfully. This "division of labour" was introduced after the experiment of the commune, and was found to work so well that it was continued in the apostolic Church long after the experiment of communism had proved a failure (Acts vi.). The simple organization of these primitive Churches is most instructive. With "saints and bishops and deacons" the congregation was complete.

**III. LET US LOOK AT PAUL'S DESIRE FOR THEM.** (Ver. 2.) Though saints in character, though bishops or deacons, as the case might be, by virtue of their office, they needed constant "grace" from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, with its resultant "peace." God establishes relations with our souls, not that we may become at any time independent of him, but that we may realize constant dependence on him. As children we are to gather round his feet and rejoice in his paternal favour. And Jesus Christ is to be our Lord, so that in submission to his holy will we may find our path of peace. It is only by this duo subordination to the Divine that we can grow in peace and enjoy life to the full. As our lives are thus united to the infinite Fountain, we can grow in all the elements of spiritual power. Such a benediction was the best experience for the saints at Philippi, as it is the best experience for Church members everywhere.—R. M. E.

Vers. 3-11.—*The apostle's intercession and assurance.* Having saluted a well-organized Church with its bishops and deacons, Paul proceeds to express his thanksgivings and his intercessions. From this Church at Philippi alone had he received supplies. By the hand of Epaphroditus they had forwarded their love-tokens to the imprisoned apostle, and he rejoiced in the sympathy this showed with the furtherance of the gospel. Accordingly he proceeds to prayer, and pours out his significant intercessions for these saints. And here let us notice—

I. **HIS INTERCESSION FOR THEIR FELLOWSHIP IN THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.** (Vers. 4, 5, Revised Version.) The intercession of the apostle was joyful. Our prayers should be less complaints than jubilations. It must have been delightful for Paul to dwell upon the missionary spirit which the saints at Philippi exhibited, and to intercede for its increase. As the firstfruits of the European mission, they entered most heartily into Paul's aspirations and did all they could to strengthen his hands. It was a missionary Church which he had established at Philippi. And after all, is not this the prime purpose which should animate every Church? A congregation is nothing if not missionary. It must die of paralysis if it is not seeking to extend the gospel. What we need is to be filled with something like the enthusiasm of the apostles in the propagation of the faith.

II. **PAUL'S INTERCESSION WAS BACKED UP BY THE ASSURANCE THAT GOD WOULD ENABLE THEM TO PERSEVERE IN THEIR BLESSED POLICY.** (Ver. 6.) The relation of assurance to intercession is one of great interest as well as importance. A certain and sure hope makes prayer joyful and prevailing. Suppose that Paul had been uncertain about the perseverance of the Philippians in the policy of evangelization, how different must his intercessions have been! But because he was certain of it, he prayed prevailingly. But we must observe the ground of his assurance. The "good work" begun in them is evidently the missionary spirit. For every one that receives the gospel is led instinctively to seek to propagate the gospel. The absence of the missionary spirit is proof positive that the gospel has only been nominally received. Well, the apostle argues that when God begins a work, he means to finish it. Incompleteness is but a promise in any Divine work of subsequent perfection. God's plans are not so poorly formed as to fail. Until the day of Jesus Christ, therefore, a spiritual work begun in men's hearts will be carried on. The poetess strikes the true note when she ends her poem on "Incompleteness" with the words—

"Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness;  
In that want their beauty lies; they roll  
Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness,  
Bearing onwards man's reluctant soul."

(Procter's 'Legends and Lyrics.')

The perseverance of the saints, therefore, in their large-hearted policy rests upon God's ability to make them persevere. Left to themselves, they could not stand or persevere an hour; but, helped by God, they continue steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

III. **THEIR SYMPATHY WITH THE APOSTLE HAD PROVED AND WAS PROVING A MEANS OF GRACE.** (Vers. 7, 8.) Between Paul and the Philippians there was the most thorough sympathy. They sorrowed over his imprisonment, they sympathized with him in all his struggles and apologies for the gospel. The hearts in Philippi beat in unison with the great heart in Rome. And this secured their spiritual progress. It was a means of grace. Paul's experience was reproduced in them. Sympathy was the means of sanctification. It is so always. When we learn to "weep with those that weep" and to "rejoice with those that do rejoice," we get a wider experience than is possible with the self-centred and self-contained. Progress in all the elements of spiritual power must result.

IV. **PAUL PRAYS STILL FURTHER FOR THEIR SYMMETRY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.** (Vers. 9, 10.) His desire is that they may grow symmetrically. Love is to abound in knowledge and in judgment; that is to say, it is to be intelligent and discriminating, so that they may test the things that are excellent, and be sincere and without offence till the day of Jesus Christ. The symmetry of Christian character is a most important fact of experience. The graces do not manifest monstrosities. They grow harmoniously.

Hence it is the desire of the progressive soul that others may experience a kindred progress, and with duly balanced powers may pass onwards towards the perfection which is to synchronize with the day of Jesus Christ.

V. AND SUCH PROGRESS IMPLIES FRUITFULNESS. (Ver. 11.) The fruits of righteousness are what God looks for. He plants the trees of righteousness that he may be glorified in their fruitfulness. His garden shall yet be filled with fruitful trees. Every barren cumberer shall yet be rooted out, that its place may be duly filled.—R. M. E.

Vers. 12—20.—*The gospel promoted by persecution.* Paul, having stated the substance of his intercession for the Philippian saints, proceeds to show how his apparently unfortunate imprisonment was being providentially overruled for what they had so much at heart, the furtherance of the gospel. It is most instructive to notice how his great heart transmutes adversity into gold, and sees encouragement where others would glean only despair.

I. AS A NOTABLE PRISONER, PAUL WAS DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF MANY TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST FOR WHICH HE SUFFERED. (Vers. 12, 13.) Persecution only draws attention to the objects of it. The Praetorian Guards at the palace and many other individuals had their attention turned to the cause for which Paul suffered, through his presence as the prisoner in Rome. In no way could the world better advertise the Christian cause. In fact, persecution emphasizes any cause. It drives it of necessity into prominence. On the other hand, the gospel shows its Divine wisdom by its tolerance. For while the gospel has an intolerant side in brooking no possible rival, it has its tolerant side in refusing to use force and in charitably claiming those not against it as for it. Now, in this abstinence from all persecution, there is in the Christian policy the subtlest wisdom. It is a refusal to make rival systems famous. It is a judicious allowance of them to die a natural death, instead of resuscitating them by emphatic opposition.

II. PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT LED TO INCREASED PREACHING OF CHRIST. (Vers. 14—18.) This happened in two directions: those who sympathized with Paul were led to show a bolder front and fearlessly to preach Christ; those who envied him and tried to checkmate him hailed his imprisonment as their opportunity, and preached Christ in hope of vexing him. It seems at first a strange notion of the gospel being faithfully preached from such a motive. But we must remember that men may be orthodox as a matter of policy and for party purposes, when they have no heart in the substance of their orthodoxy at all. The Judaizers, therefore, who troubled Paul so much seem to have taken an orthodox "fit" when he got imprisoned, thinking thereby to get the more hold over his converts. But Paul rejoices at the preaching of Christ, even though some of the preaching is from party motives. He knows how important a knowledge of that dear Name is, and how the great Spirit can acknowledge an enemy as an instrument just as well as a friend. Let the knowledge of Christ be propagated by all means. Even when his enemies undertake the work, let us rejoice in it, for souls are better to hear truth even from the lips of the poorest partisans than not to hear it at all.

III. PAUL'S SANCTIFICATION THROUGH THE PROCESS WAS ASSURED. (Ver. 19.) Paul's salvation, like ours, is a continuous process, manifesting its reality in increasing sanctification. Now, his imprisonment and its blessed results were being sanctified to him through the intercessions of his friends at Philippi and through the unfailing supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The blessed Spirit can make seeming adversities to be glorious sanctifications for his people. Paul was made by imprisonment more spiritual, more earnest, more faithful to his Master. The prison was the path upwards to heaven.

IV. HIS CONFIDENT AND CHRIST-GLORIFYING BEARING UNTO THE END. (Ver. 20.) Paul did not yet know the issue of his trial. But whether he went to the block or regained liberty, Christ would be magnified by the courageous bearing of his servant. So that he saw the glory of the Master shining clear as a star above and through his bondage. What became of Paul was nothing to him; but what the world would think of Christ was all in all. When the Lord was magnified, all was indeed well. Paul's poor "body" had now no other business in the world than to be an instrument for the magnifying of the Master. Let it be crushed or regain liberty, it would in patience or by persevering work promote the glory of him who had bought it and the

spirit it enshrined with his blood. The nobility and magnanimity of the apostle in this passage are worthy of all imitation and praise. Such a spirit deserves to succeed in the subjugation of the world for Christ.—R. M. E.

Vers. 21—26.—*Life here and hereafter.* The brave apostle, awaiting the slow issue of his case at Rome, has been speaking of the good effect of his imprisonment upon the promulgation of the gospel. He can see the good beneath the apparent evil. And now he speaks of the life he lives on earth and of the other life beyond the shadow of death. Let us notice the lessons as they are set before us here.

I. PAUL'S SELF-ABANDONMENT TO CHRIST. (Ver. 21.) He surrendered himself in a spirit of entire consecration to Jesus, that he might do as he pleased with him. As in the parallel passage, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20), Paul's life was one of *inspiration*. Christ's Spirit entered into him and took possession of it, and moulded it according to his own gracious purposes. Of course, Paul's life was not a perfect realization of this inspiration, but it was an approximate realization. "Τὸς ζῆν signifies here," says Rilliet, *in loco*, "the life *par excellence*—the life alone worthy of this name, in opposition to τὸς ζῆν ἐν σαρκὶ—this life; it is Christ, Οὐ Χριστὸς, ἀλλὰ οὐμένος (Col. iii. 4). But the Christian, so long as he is here below, so long as he lives in the flesh, possesses Christ only incompletely, and has, consequently, only an imperfect life (cf. 2 Cor. v. 6—8)." Yet there is nothing that helps this approximation more than to face honestly the ideal that our lives ought to be lives abandoned to Christ and inspired by his Holy Spirit.

II. PAUL'S GAIN AFTER DEATH. (Ver. 21.) For it is the aorist which is here used, τὸν ἀναθεάτων, and so the apostle's meaning manifestly is, to use Alford's words, that "the state after death, not the act of dying," is the gain. Death in itself is no gain, but it leads to gain beyond it. The imperfect conditions of the present state being removed, the inspiration will have freer play, and all the gain which it necessarily entails. We can only feebly image the glorious condition beyond death; but to escape sin and be filled with the Spirit of Christ must be gain incalculable.

III. PAUL'S PAUSE UPON THE BRINK. (Ver. 22.) He now speaks about the probability of his abiding some time longer in the flesh, and he shows that, if the fruit of his work depended upon this continuance in life, he dare not complainingly desire to be released. He consequently pauses and leaves the issue in the higher hands of God. So that, as one writer sententiously puts it, he was "willing to wait, but ready to go." Bengel's remark is also most beautiful: "Alius ex opere fructum querit; Paulus ipsum opus pro fructu habet." Let it be ours not to seek our reward out of our work, but always in it!

IV. PAUL'S EQUILIBRIUM. (Ver. 23.) The two desires which were so nicely balanced were—to depart and be with Christ which is very far better, and to abide in the flesh. The one would be a personal experience altogether blissful; the other would be a patience still fruitful in the welfare of others. Between the two he maintains a holy equilibrium. In either alternative he can be happy with his Lord.

V. PAUL'S ASSURANCE OF MORE WORK IN THE PRESENT WORLD. (Vers. 24—26.) Paul did not hesitate to affirm that his life was a valuable one to the Philippian Church. There was no false modesty about the man. Moreover, his work for them would be with a view to their progress and joy in believing. Especially would this be promoted if he were allowed to visit the Macedonian Church again. If, then, this be the first Epistle of the captivity, as Lightfoot seems to think, the present assurance of Paul would correspond to these *premonitions* about recovery, which the Lord's servants often have in times of sickness. Is there not often an impression that a sick person will recover because of his own confident assurance of it? And when this is allied to such a holy and wholesome desire for the fulfilment of the Lord's work among men as Paul here manifests, it becomes intensely beautiful. We thus see that the life here and the life hereafter only tally when they are consecrated to Christ. It can consequently be left to the all-wise Lord whether meanwhile he would have our service there or here. Those who by his grace are willing to serve him with their whole hearts have nothing to fear, but everything to hope for, in the unending future with all its opportunities.—L. M. E.

Vers. 27—30.—*The gifts of faith and of suffering.* Paul's release is still problematical; it is needful, therefore, that he should make provision in case he should still be absent from them. He calls them consequently to citizenship (*πολιτεύεσθε*) worthy of the gospel, and to the acceptance of those gifts which that citizenship implies.

**I. THE PHILIPPIANS ARE TO BE FAITHFUL CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM.** (Ver. 27.) Now, what is it which is prized in God's kingdom as of prime importance? It is "the faith of the gospel;" that is, the body of truth of which the gospel is the expression. It is not for territory nor for treasure God's faithful citizens fight, but for *truth*. Hence the spirit which befits the kingdom is unity in struggling for the truth as it is in Jesus. When the Philippians were able to keep this before them as the first anxiety and concern, then would they be acting in some measure worthy of their high calling. And after all, there is nothing worth fighting for but truth. Wars of aggrandizement are now discredited throughout the civilized world; and some pretext related to truth must now be set forth as the ground of war. If the citizens of this world and its kingdoms are brought to this, the citizens of the nobler kingdom should contend earnestly and only for the faith once delivered to the saints.

**II. THEY ARE TO BE FEARLESS CITIZENS AS WELL.** (Ver. 28.) In contending for truth we must expect opposition; but before our adversaries we are bound to be fearless. Courage is a grace peculiarly fitted for God's witnesses. His people can say surely "Greater is he that is for us than all they that be against us." And in this matter of Christian courage Paul and Silas had given the Philippians excellent example. Imprisoned on the occasion of their first visit, they had aroused the attention of the entire prison by singing praises at midnight as their feet were fast in the stocks. And in this more serious imprisonment of Paul out of which this Epistle came, he was illustrating that heroism which he looked for in the Philippians. It was the fearless and dauntless citizen of God's kingdom who was calling for fearlessness from his fellows.

**III. THEIR FEARLESSNESS WOULD BE A TOKEN AT ONCE OF THEIR OWN SALVATION AND OF THEIR OPPONENTS' DOOM.** (Ver. 28.) The courage and heroism of God's witnesses was a sign of coming victory and salvation. It was also a sign of defeat and doom to their adversaries. A triumphant spirit often carries the day against fearful odds. God seems to give his people assurance of victory, and then to make that assurance a most powerful element in the issue. The dauntless are carried through discouragement to triumph.

**IV. BELIEVING AND SUFFERING ARE TWIN GIFTS OF GOD.** (Ver. 29.) This arrangement brings the whole course of God's administration before us. He gives his people on Christ's behalf, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him. It is sweet to think of faith being thus the *gift* of God. The suspicion which we cherish by nature gives place to the trust which comes through grace. And with trust there comes suffering. It is a most precious gift. In Miss Procter's 'Legends and Lyrics' we have an exquisite piece entitled "Treasures," where the following verse will help to elucidate this passage:—

"Suffering that I dreaded,  
Ignorant of her charms,  
Laid the fair child, Pity,  
Smiling in my arms."

**V. THE SIMILARITY OF EXPERIENCE BETWEEN PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIANS.** (Ver. 30.) For Paul's experience had embraced the twin gifts too. He had learned to believe on Christ and to suffer for him. There had nothing happened unto him, therefore, but that which is common to men; and he wishes the Philippians to appreciate this. Our temptation is to represent our trials as unparalleled. The truth is that they can be paralleled and exceeded by the experience in the next house or next street. Paul at Philippi and Paul at Rome presents the common inheritance of faith and trial which the people of God everywhere experience. Let us consequently take kindly to what God gives—he sends us trial and he sends us faith in such blessed proportions as to ensure a character in some way worthy of his kingdom.—R. M. E.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Introduction.* This Epistle of Paul breathes throughout the tenderest affection and most passionate longing toward the Philippians. It was called forth

by a token of their affection in a contribution for his support sent by Epaphroditus. It is pervaded by a deeper tone of satisfaction than any other of his Epistles. It is characteristically epistolary in its freedom of plan and familiarity of expression. Written without a dogmatic purpose, there is one important doctrinal passage in it; and there is a breaking off to warn against two antagonistic types of error—*Judean formalism* and *antinomian licence*. With all that was commendable in the Philippians, there was something of the spirit of rivalry among them. The counteracting of this gives, in several places, a turn to the thought.

I. ADDRESS. 1. *The writers.* “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus.” The Philippians are so loyal to Paul that he does not need to make use of his official designation. He associates with himself Timothy, as both of them standing in a common subordination to Christ as Saviour. They are both his servants, *i.e.* bound to carry out the ends of his salvation. Timothy was known to the readers of this Epistle, as having assisted in the foundation of their Church and as having subsequently visited them. From the natural interest he thus had in them he was to be at no distant period Paul’s ambassador for the purpose of inquiring into their state. There can be no doubt that Paul is properly the writer of the Epistle; for, in the third verse, Timothy is lost sight of, and, when he is afterward referred to, it is in the third person. At the same time, Timothy must be regarded as joining with Paul, not only in the salutation, but in the whole sentiment of the Epistle. Written down by him, or read over by him or to him, he was of one mind with Paul in every expression he used to the Philippian Church. 2. *The persons addressed.* (1) *The members of the Church.* “To all the saints in Christ Jesus.” They were saints, not by nature, but through the cleansing efficacy of Christ’s blood. They were saints, not so much in actuality, as in idea, in aspiration. They regarded purity, separation from the world, as their distinctive badge. They were like the wearers of the white robes in the temple, appointed to dwell under the Infinite Purity. They might not be all genuine; but the apostle addresses them with a studied universality according to what they professed to be. *Locality.* “Which are at Philippi.” The city of Philippi was situated in Macedonia, on the borders of Thrace; it derived its name from the great Philip of Macedon, who, about B.C. 356, founded it on the site of the ancient Crenides, or Wells. The plain on which it was situated was watered by the Gangites, a tributary of the Strymon. In the battle of Philippi, fought in B.C. 42, between Antony and Octavius against Brutus and Cassius, the fortunes of the Roman Republic were finally lost, and the place, thus made memorable, soon afterwards became what it is styled in the Acts of the Apostles, a Roman *colony*. It is especially memorable for the Christian Church as the first place in Europe where the gospel was preached. This was about the year 53, in the course of Paul’s *second* missionary journey. Brought by a compulsion from “the Spirit of Jesus” opposite the European coast, in a night vision there appeared to Paul a man of Macedonia beseeching him, and saying, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” Without delay, he crossed the sea, and from the port of Neapolis pressed on to Philippi. On the sabbath day he sought the Jewish place of prayer, which was without the gate by the banks of the Gangites; and, sitting down, he addressed the assembled women. The baptism of an Asiatic proselytess, Lydia, and her household is mentioned as the first triumph of the gospel on European ground. The first European converted on European ground, of which the record tells us, was a Python-possessed slave-girl. And this led on to the conversion of the Roman jailor. Amid a storm of persecution Paul had to leave Philippi; at a distance of five years he paid them a double visit, and at a distance of ten years from his first visit he writes this letter. (2) *The office-bearers.* “With the bishops and deacons.” There was a regularly constituted Church at Philippi. Two orders of office-bearers are mentioned. The deacons who attended to the temporal affairs of the Church are included in the salutation, as to them it would specially fall to see to the contribution. The retention of the title “bishops” in the Revised translation is objectionable on the ground of ambiguity. No one imagines that within ten years there was a plurality of bishops, as a third order of office-bearers, in the Christian community of Philippi.

II. THE SALUTATION (same as in Ephesians). 1. *The two words of salutation.* “Grace to you and peace.” The best security for others being blessed is the Divine graciousness which makes all the Divine dealings mean peace. 2. *The twofold source to*

*which we look in salutation.* “From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Father who has blessed us bless them too. Jesus Christ, who has revealed the Father’s power to bless, as Lord dispense to them out of the stores in his Father’s house as he has dispensed to us.—R. F.

Vers. 3—11.—*Expression of interest.* I. THANKSGIVING. 1. *Whom he thanked.* “I thank my God.” As it was in connection with their matters that he thanked God, he might have said, “I thank *your* God.” As he made common cause with them, he might have said, “I thank *our* God.” As he felt personally indebted to God on their account, what he says is, “I thank my God.” 2. *Upon what he proceeded in thanksgiving.* “Upon all my remembrance of you.” This was a gracious word with which, as a wise overseer, to bespeak a hearing from them. It was the highest praise he could have bestowed upon them. His relations with them had been of the happiest nature. Not a shadow had passed over their intercourse. There was nothing in their past history as a Church that he recalled with regretfulness. His whole recollection of them made him thank his God. 3. *How he thanked God.* “Always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy.” His interest in them carried him to the throne of grace. It was his habit to pray for them, as for all the Churches he had founded. He had a means of reaching them *through heaven*. And whenever he prayed on their behalf (and this was a care which came upon him daily) the remembrance of them called forth his thanksgivings, which gave a tone of joy to his prayers. What was uniformly in his prayers could not but come out in his Epistle. And so it has been remarked by Bengel, “The sum of the Epistle is, ‘I rejoice; rejoice ye.’” 4. *For what particularly he thanked God.* “For your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now.” They were partners with him for a *holy* end. That end was to *further the gospel*. They could not accomplish this end in the same way that Paul did. But they could contribute for his support; and, thus relieving him from the necessity of working with his own hands, they put him in a better position for furthering the gospel. They also helped by the prayers they offered up to God on his behalf. They especially helped in what they evinced in their lives of the power of the gospel. That was putting a powerful argument into the mouth of the apostle. In trying to persuade others he could point to what the gospel had done for them. All that help in the gospel they had rendered him from the first day they had heard until then. He had continually been held up by them in the proclamation of the gospel.

II. CONFIDENT HOPE. 1. *To what directed.* “That he which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The good work immediately referred to was co-operation with the apostle in furthering the gospel. But the language is general, and may be referred to the work of grace as a whole. (1) *How the work can be said to be good.* (a) *It is a work wrought in us.* “In you,” says the apostle. There is a work to be wrought on external nature. We are to subdue the earth, according to the primeval command; we are to turn it to good uses. But that is really *accidental*, relative to the work that is to be wrought in us. What is *essential* is that we, the workers, the subduers of the earth, should be in our normal state. And there can be no doubt that is what will be looked into when we have done with earth and all its works. What with all our working have we wrought in ourselves? (b) *It is a work which consists in giving forms of goodness to our nature.* A man of cultivated taste can make the bare ground assume forms of beauty. He can turn it into a garden—the surface taken advantage of, the soil highly cultivated, flowers and trees disposed of with reference to season, colour, size—all so arranged as to be pleasing to the eye. So our nature has to be made to assume Divine forms. It has to be *charactered* by God—its peculiarities preserved, its powers cultivated, all so ordered under his plastic hand as to be a garden in which he can take delight. (c) *It is a work which consists in the emancipation of our nature from evil forms.* This earth of ours in its natural state needs much subduing by the iron, directed by the mind of man. Our nature is to be compared to a piece of ground in its natural wildness, which is ill to subdue to usefulness and loveliness. It needs much subduing by the grace of God, that it may be delivered from the evil that is in it, while brought forth into all goodness. Our minds need to be delivered from vanity, and brought into captivity to Christ. Our

memories need to be delivered from treacherousness, and made reliable and ready in the service of Christ. Our affections need to be weaned from the world, and set on Christ. Our consciences need to be delivered from searedness, and endued with tenderness. Our wills, especially, need to be delivered from weakness, and endued with power. It is throughout a work of liberation, emancipation, the transforming of the waste so that—

“Flowers of grace in freshness start,  
Where once the weeds of error grew.”

(2) *How God can be said to begin the good work in us.* (a) *It is to be traced to the Father's love.* Take one who has experienced something of the “good work” in his heart—what is its history? If it is traced back and back, its beginnings are to be found in the motions of the Father's love. It goes further back than even the Divine counsels. For it was the love behind, essentially belonging to him as Father, that made him think of and decree our salvation. (b) *It is to be traced to the work of the Son.* This is not going so far back as the Father's counsels; it is rather the carrying out of these counsels. The work of Christ outside of us is the *reason why* the good work can go forward in us. The Son of God, coming into our nature and grappling with all the difficulties of our position, obtained for us redemptive virtue. That is the *decisive fact* to which the good work in us is to be traced back, just as the healing of men's bodies of old was to be traced back to the *miraculous virtue* that was in Christ. (c) *It is to be traced to the operations of the Spirit.* This is God coming into closest contact with us. Lest to ourselves the redemptive work of Christ would have been a dead work. But it was followed up by the Spirit of Christ coming into our heart, producing in us the desire for salvation, holding up before us saving merit, saving truth. And the good work in us is to be traced back to his gracious working.

“And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are his alone.”

(3) *Our ground of conuincence in God that he will perfect the good work in us.* The work is emphatically God's.

“The transformation of apostate man  
From fool to wise, from earthly to Divine,  
Is work for him that made him.”

(a) *We confide in the infinitude of the Father's love.* If we had only our own interest in our salvation to look to, we might be afraid of it dying out. But sooner will light die out of the sun than love die out of the heart of God. And we have that inextinguishable love to rely upon to complete our salvation for us. (b) *We confide in the infinitude of the Saviour's merit.* If we had only our own worthiness to think of, we might often enough hide our head in the dust. But fuller than the sea is of water is Christ of merit. And infinitely beyond our need does his merit extend. And to his far-reaching merit can we look for the completion of our salvation. (c) *We confide in the infinitude of the Spirit's power.* If we had only ourselves to look to, we might well despair, considering the elements of weakness, of fickleness, that are in our hearts. But more penetrating, subduing than fire is the working of the Spirit. And when we are ready to stand aghast at the evil we discover in our hearts, let us look away to the might of the Spirit that can infinitely more than conquer it all. (4) *Our ground of confidence in God especially as having begun the good work.* (a) *He is bound by his wisdom.* When he began the good work he must have had a distinct end in view. And he must have known all the difficulties in the way beforehand, especially the badness of our hearts. In the knowledge of all difficulties he must have seen his way to the desired end all clear. To begin to build without knowing how to finish is foolishness, with which only man is chargeable. There are no half-finished worlds in God's universe. (b) *He is bound by his faithfulness.* There is the Old Testament promise, “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Such a word as this is encouraging: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may

sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And the very fact that he has begun a good work in us, apart from any word of promise, may be taken as a pledge that he will see to it being completed. *Observe the nexus of our experience.* It is when we have experienced something of the good work in us that we can assure ourselves in God that he will complete it. We have, therefore, in the first place, to satisfy ourselves about the reality of our experience. Are there the signs of a good work begun in our hearts? Is there the seeking after God for the blessing? Is there the endeavour to do the Divine will? If we cannot satisfy ourselves, we are not beyond hope while we can say—

"Love of God, so pure and changeless;  
Blood of Christ, so rich and free;  
Grace of God, so strong and boundless,  
Magnify them all in me—  
Even me."

(5) *The time toward which we look for the completion of the work.* He says not "day of our death;" for, though it is practically that to each of us, yet that signifies nothing as to the completion of the work. But he says "day of Jesus Christ," because the work is to be completed in connection with the saving power of Christ upon us; and not only so, but, more definitely, in connection with the full manifestation of the saving power of Christ upon us. For, as is said in Colossians, "When Christ who is our Life shall be manifested [as he is not now manifested], then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." 2. *Its justification.* (1) *Love resting on participation.* "Even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace." It was right for him to cherish a confident hope regarding one and all of them, because he felt the warmest love toward them. He uses a strong expression—he had them in his heart. "Open my heart," says R. Browning, "and you will see graven on it, 'Italy.'" So on the *opened* heart of the apostle to this hour in heaven may be seen graven on it, among other names, "Philippi." Grace operated in them as it did in him. In his *bonds* they helped him by their sympathy with him. In his *exertions* for the gospel they also helped him. When he stood up in *defence* of the gospel, before heathen magistrates and unbelieving Jews, he was emboldened by the thought of their unwavering confidence in him. And when he was engaged in *confirmation* of the gospel by his teaching among those who came under his influence, he was indebted to them for what he could point to in them of the power of the gospel, and especially for their spontaneously contributing to his support. They were thus in a remarkable manner partners with him in grace. And as he hoped for himself, so as confidently did he hope for them, that there would be a completion of the good work begun. (2) *Love going out in longing.* "For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus." Love longs for its object. He could call God to witness that he longed eagerly after one and all of them. This was not merely a longing to be present with them, but a longing after communion with them in the Spirit in their increasing approximation to Christ. For he longed after them in sympathy with Christ. He notes a wonderful identity; it was as though Christ were yearning in him. Christ, in Paul, had a yearning after the Philippian community, though it was not conspicuous for its numbers, and had only been ten years in existence. Does he not yearn yet after Christian societies, however humble, and through Christian hearts?

III. PETITION. 1. *For increase of love, associated with knowledge and discernment.* "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment." He has already given them credit for love in its manifestations. He here assumes that their love *abounded*. Still, he wished higher things for them in love. Especially did he wish to see it associated with *knowledge* and *discernment*. The former points more to fulness of contents; the latter more to quickness of perception. The former is used generally; the latter distributively—all discernment, *i.e.* every act of the spiritual sense, or its application to every occasion. We need not wonder that love, in order to be perfected, needs to be brought under the influence of truth. Love is *regulated* by truth. In proportion to its force it is apt to be *erratic*. We need

sometimes to drag it at the heels of duty. We need to keep it from being placed on unworthy objects. We need to keep it from seeking worthy objects in unworthy ways. Christ needed to rebuke Peter's love to him, which mistakenly forbade him to die. Love is *nourished* by truth. With imperfect knowledge our love must be starved. We need to have the field of truth ever opened up before us, that love may be fed. We must see beauty in Christ in order that we may desire him. The apostle then prayed for the Philippians, that they might have an enlarged knowledge and a finer perception, in order that their hearts might be more warmly affected, especially toward him who is the altogether Lovely. 2. *Aim in the elements associated with love.* "That ye may approve the things that are excellent." Some translate, "That ye may prove the things that differ." But the apostle is a point beyond that. The object of enlarged knowledge and a fine spiritual sense is that love may be combined with the approbation of excellent things, or things that stand out amongst the good. And is that not necessary to a rounded character? Is it not necessary in a world like this, if love would have its virgin purity and due warmth, that we should have a keen eye to detect the spurious, the base, that we should set aside for our highest approbation the things that tower up among the good? 3. *Ultimate design.* (1) *Inward state.* "That ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ." "Sincere," in its derivation, points to honey without any admixture of wax. So are we to have heavenly excellence without any admixture of earthliness. Unmixed in our motives (which is a condition of excellence), we shall not be chargeable with giving others offence, or putting obstacles in their way. Especially in view of the day of Christ does it become us to see that we are clear from the blood of all men. (2) *Outward results.* "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Righteousness is the holy habit already presupposed. He refers to it now in connection with its fruits. These Philippians had already exhibited good fruits in what they had done for the furtherance of the gospel. He wished to see the idea of fruitfulness fully realized. Let them be like trees laden with golden fruit, that fruit produced through the inflowing of the virtue of Christ-like sap into the tree, and tending to the glory of God and its due recognition.—R. F.

Vers. 12-30.—*Thoughts suggested by his captivity.* I. PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN ROME. 1. *Generally.* "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel." It might have been expected that his imprisonment, which is principally referred to, would have fallen out to the hindrance of the gospel. But Paul would have his Philippian brethren know, for their comfort and confirmation, that, though to some extent it had been a disadvantage, yet to a greater extent it had been an advantage. It was with it as with the early persecutions as a whole. They were intended by the Church's enemies to be for its destruction; but Divine wisdom overruled them for its increase. The scattering of the disciples brought about the fulfilment of the prophecy in Daniel, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." The imprisonment of the ark was the fall of Dagon. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. 2. *In two particulars.* (1) *Increased publicity.* "So that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Praetorian Guard, and to all the rest." It was by a singular combination of circumstances that this was brought about. His adversaries would have liked to have wreaked their vengeance upon him in Palestine. But, asserting his rights as a Roman citizen in appealing to Cæsar, he was delivered out of their hands. Taken to Rome, which he may have had in view in his appeal—for he had a desire to see Rome—his trial there was long delayed. And while he was awaiting his trial, he was not subjected to the worst form of imprisonment—confined in a dungeon with his feet fast in the stocks, as had been the case with him in Philippi. Nor was he subjected to the mildest form—allowed to go about, on getting a friend to answer for his appearance. But he was subjected to an intermediate form, which was known as military imprisonment. He was under the charge of the prefect of the Praetorians, or commander of the imperial regiments, who allowed him to dwell in his own hired house, with complete freedom of access to him, but appointed him to be chained day and night to a Praetorian soldier, who was responsible for his safe keeping. One Praetorian relieving another, the apostle would soon be brought into contact with many of their number, who would

speak of him to their companions, so that it would become literally true that his bonds were manifest throughout the whole Praetorian Guard. And not only were they manifest, but they were manifest in Christ, *i.e.* as endured in the service of Christ, who thus became known to the soldiers, in the way set forth by Paul in his teaching, as the Son of God who died for the salvation of all men, and rose from the dead to sit at the right hand of God, and to be the future Judge of all men. And not only were his bonds manifest in Christ throughout the whole Praetorian Guard, but it is added, indefinitely, “and to all the rest.” That is to say, through Praetorians and others, many were induced to pay a visit to Paul, and to hear from him an exposition of gospel doctrine, according to the concluding words of the Acts of the Apostles, “And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.” Thus, while Paul’s enemies got his mouth stopped in Judæa, they unwittingly became the occasion of his mouth being opened in the city that commanded the world. (2) *Increased courage in his companions.* “And that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.” The sphere of Paul’s personal activity was very large, considering that he was a prisoner. It was circumscribed in so far as he was not free to go from place to place throughout the city. His companions made up for this by being feet for him to places where he could not go. They fulfilled for him the word, “How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!” This was true of most of the brethren in the Lord. He excepts a few who, from their general character, were entitled to be called brethren in the Lord, but who had apparently yielded to the influence of fear. Of the most of those to whom he could hold out the hand of brotherhood, he could say, to their honour, that they got confidence through his bonds. The natural effect of these bonds was to terrify them, as showing them what they might meet in the service of Christ. But Divine grace made them to act contrary to their nature, and to be rather the means of imparting courage. There is an accumulation of language pointing to imparted courage. They were “more abundantly bold to speak the word of God,” *i.e.* than if Paul had not been in bonds. When their leader was bound they felt that more devolved upon them. They were “more abundantly bold to speak the word of God *without fear.*” They were raised above thinking of their own safety; they thought only of the word of God being, in all suitable places and in all suitable forms, proclaimed. Thus, directly and indirectly, was the apostle’s imprisonment, against the intentions of his enemies, a powerful instrument in the hand of God in advancing Christianity in Rome. 3. *More detailed statement in connection with the second particular.* “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and *some* also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel: but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.” The first-mentioned class here is not to be identified with the minority of the verse just considered. For they could not be characterized as brethren in the Lord, and then as insincere. But the general class of those who spoke the word being suggested, we are told of some of them that they were actuated with unfriendly feelings towards Paul, and of others of them that they were actuated with friendly feelings. It showed the strength of the gospel movement in Rome, that it drew into it even those who were not friendly to Paul. Their first feeling was that of *envy.* Who would have thought of Paul becoming an object of envy in his bonds? Yet so it was, to the praise of an all-wise God, he conducted movement in Rome from his very prison, personally and by his agents, with so much success that some were drawn into the movement from very envy toward him. Their further feeling was that of *mischievous.* As Satan, envious of our first parents, desired to destroy their bliss by introducing sin, so they, filled with envy because of the good movement carried on by Paul, desired to destroy it by introducing division. To this badness of *motive* they did not add badness of *doctrine.* If they were Judaists at heart, they did not put forward Judaism in their teaching. That would have been to have defeated their ends, in view of the strong Christian character of the movement. No, they were more cunning. They were false prophets, inwardly ravening wolves, but they knew to appear in sheep’s clothing. They preached Christ, as the others preached Christ. They were Pauline in their doctrine; but it was to gain influence, in order to use it for the subverting of Paul. The other

class mentioned here is to be identified with the majority previously mentioned. They were his brethren in the Lord, and they were brotherly toward him. Their feeling was that of *good will*. And, loving Paul and sympathizing with him in his strivings, they preached Christ. Taking the two classes in an inverted order, of the latter he now says that they preached Christ of *love*. As love is the great moving cause in God, so it was in them as under his influence. Love worked in them, along with the knowledge of the position for which Paul was destined. He was set for the defence of the gospel. He was appointed to make a stand against worldly powers, to bear the brunt of their opposition to Christ. It was a perilous position, requiring extraordinary courage, and its perilousness was not yet past; but they were willing to subserve him in it, in cheering his heart by the preaching of Christ. Turning now to the first class, he declares that their feeling was a spirit of faction, such as rules only in unregenerate hearts. They did not preach Christ sincerely, *i.e.* from love for him, or desire to extend the knowledge of his Name. But what moved them to preach Christ, or rather—for another word is now used with a slight change in meaning—to make Christ fully known, was the thought (not knowledge, as in the previous clause, and the apostle seems to indicate that it was nothing more than a thought) that it would never be realized—the thought of raising up affliction for him in his bonds, apparently by undermining his influence and forming an antagonistic party. 4. *Feelings of the apostle in view of what has been stated.* (1) *So far as Christ was concerned.* “What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” Had the persons last referred to put forward Judaism, then he would have been bound to have opposed to it the true gospel. But as they concealed their real purpose, *viz.* to counterwork Paul under the cloak of proclaiming Christ, he was not disposed to join issue with them. Nay, in the fact that, however bad their motive, the knowledge of Christ was by them extended, he found cause for rejoicing. And in the extended knowledge of Christ, however brought about, he was determined to rejoice. Let all false and true alike go on proclaiming Christ; it would rejoice his heart. (2) *As far as he was personally concerned.* (a) *Assurance that it would result in good to him.* “For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” The apostle seems to have in view the whole state of matters described. His imprisonment is in the background, and in the foreground this on which he has been dwelling, that there were around him in his imprisonment many who preached Christ from friendly feelings toward him, but some also who made the preaching of Christ only a cloak for designs against him. He knew—his tone is that of certainty—that this would turn differently from what it was in part intended to do, to his highest good. But they must give him their prayers. He needed them in the critical position in which he was placed. Yes, God, who knew all the movements that affected him, and could counterwork all the designs of his enemies, must extend his help. He must especially, through their prayers for this, supply the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Then would he be able to act, even as Christ acted, so that all that happened to him would turn—though that might not be its nature—to his good. (b) *Hopefulness as to his accomplishing his destiny.* “According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.” God had wrought for him in the past, and so he was not without hope for the future. Nay, he had an earnest expectation and hope. His eye, taken off everything else, was strained toward this, that in nothing he should be put to shame, in not exhibiting the proper spirit or carrying out his proper destiny. The proper spirit for his circumstances was boldness. God had always enabled him to be bold in the past; he would not allow him to be faint-hearted now, when he was looking forward to his trial. And his proper destiny, as he conceived it, was this, that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether that body should be preserved alive for the future service of the Master, or whether it should be given up in martyrdom. Thus through one instrumentality *viz.* Paul’s imprisonment, it was true, that God wrought various ends. Let us, even when we do not see what he is doing, trust in him as all-wise. “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” The forces of evil may seem to hold the Church in imprisonment; but let us trust that from the imprisoned Church, made to feel the cruel hand of worldliness and scepticism, there shall go forth a wider, more

glorious proclamation of Christ, as alone meeting the wants of men. And let us trust, too, that the Church shall come forth purified, saved, and more hopeful against the forces of evil. And if we feel individually as in a prison-house, from evil without or within, let us look to the all-wise God to make our prison-house the means of Christ being better known, and of our souls being blessed with more of the elements of salvation, and with more hopefulness of accomplishing our destiny to the glory of Christ.

II. HE CALMLY CONTEMPLATES THE QUESTION OF LIFE OR DEATH. 1. *He feels that the advantage to himself is in dying.* (1) *He has made Christ the end of his life.* “For to me to live is Christ.” (a) *What it is to make Christ the end of our life.* It is to make everything a means toward the advancement of the glory of Christ. This is the aspect in which it is regarded in the context, and to which the connecting word refers us. It was the ambition of the apostle that Christ should be magnified in his body by life or by death. We are to seek nearer ends, such as self-preservation, proficiency in our earthly calling, but not as ends in themselves. There is only one absolute end, and that is Christ. Everything is to be set aside as useless, impertinent, which cannot be directed to Christ. Even a life devoted to science, to philanthropy, must be rejected as unworthy, unless it is humbly lived for Christ. All our efforts, as all our prayers, must be in his Name, all the fruits of our life we must lay at his feet. We have to plan our lives differently; for that is dependent on our natural capacities and on our circumstances; but there is to be this unity in them all, that they are to be planned so that they shall bring the largest revenue of glory to Christ. Let us, then, have our end clearly in view, and let us pursue it intelligently, and with all the simplicity and abandonment with which men of the world sometimes pursue their ends. (b) *Why Christ is the end of our life.* It was Christ who was the reason for our being originally brought into existence. And as we came from his hand (for by him, as well as for him, were all things made) we were rich in opportunity. By sin, however, our existence became so heavily weighted, that, left to ourselves, it would have been better if we had not been born. We owe it to Christ that, by coming into our nature and dying for us, he has made our life worth living. He has redeemed it from the disability of sin, and has made it rich in the opportunity of everlasting glory. And on account of what he has done for us, he is entitled to be the end of our life. (c) *How Christ is fitted to be the end of our life.* (a) *He fills the imagination.* In him we have One to live for, who combines in his character every excellence, and in the superlative degree, who leaves every other immeasurably behind, who towers high above the highest flight of the strongest imagination. And while the story of his life is more wonderful than is to be found in romance, it has all the charm of reality. (B) *He appeals to the heart.* Love is the great argument by which he makes his appeal to us. He goes down to the lowest depths for us, and then, coming up, he beseeches us by his tears and agonies. In life's trials, from his own experience of them, he encourages us and beckons us on: “In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (γ) *He calls forth the energies.* Worldly objects call forth the energies of men. “Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise (that last infirmity of noble minds) to scorn delights and live laborious days.” To have a loved one to labour for has been the spur to many a man's energies, which otherwise would have flagged. It is the glory of Christ that, though he is viewless, he calls forth our energies purely, equally, in the highest degree, with the greatest pleasureableness. Paul tells us that Christ was the end of his life. When he was thirty years of age, he suddenly discovered that he had been entirely mistaken in the end of his life, and that he had lived all these years to no purpose. Then, in a miraculous manner, the claims of Christ asserted their power over him, and from that point the crucified One became the magnet of his course. To him to live was Christ. Grasping the plan of his life, he made everything subservient to the magnifying of the Saviour, in the making of him known. It was Christ who ever came into the study of his imagination. It was Christ whose Name was branded into his heart. It was his unseen Saviour who drew forth from him a power of work beyond what has ever been witnessed. (2) *Having made Christ the end of life, the advantage to himself is in dying.* “And to die is gain.” To die involves great loss. It involves the loss of all gratification through the senses, the loss of all earthly possessions, the loss of all

earthly friends. When the apostle, then, says that to die is gain, he must mean that what is gained by death more than counterbalances the loss. The result, when everything is computed, is not loss; it is gain. He does not tell us how much gain it is; but he uses the word with a certain absoluteness. It is not a mere slight excess of gain over loss; but it is gain without mention of limitation. It is gain such as swallows up the sense of loss. This is conditional on our having made Christ our end. If we have made any worldly object our final end, then to die is loss, and with a certain absoluteness of meaning. It is total earthly loss without any gain that can be set against it in the next world. It is what Christ calls the loss of the soul. It is the loss of the great end and joy of existence. But if we have made Christ the end of our life, then to die is to have succeeded in life. It is to have been climbing the mountain and to have gained the summit. It is to have been contending in the arena and to have gained the prize. It is to have been living for Christ and to have come to Christ as our supreme Reward. 2. *The consideration of advantage to others by his continuing in life makes him undecided.* "But if to live in the flesh,—if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better." He has shown a leaning to the alternative of dying. But had the other alternative, viz. living in the flesh, no hold upon him? How did it stand related to his work, i.e. the work given him on earth to do? Had he yet accomplished all the good to others that was intended by his labours? Let it be supposed that his living in the flesh was the condition of carrying out his life-task in its fruitfulness to others, then he felt at a loss which alternative to choose. He was in a strait betwixt the two. He felt the obligation of finishing his life-work with all the good that might result from it to others. But he felt, on the other hand, a desire to depart and be with Christ, which was very far better. Let the form of the desire be noted. He had a desire to depart. The reference is to breaking up a camp. Our body is the earthly tabernacle in which we live. We have a natural aversion to break up our earthly encampment. We become attached to our dwelling and its surroundings, even by long use. The apostle had triumphed over this, so as even to desire to break up his earthly encampment. Severe or long-continued sickness may bring on the desire for death. "As a servant," says Job, "earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work: so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day." Old age may make us feel that we are becoming unfitted for life. "I am this day fourscore years old: . . . can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" Or our uncongenial surroundings may make us sigh for a change. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" What had principally influence with the apostle was the attraction of the life beyond. The earthly breaking up, or what he elsewhere calls his absence from the body, would be his presence with the Lord. He felt drawn to the Lord, with whom he had vital union and communion, and to the invisible world over which he presided, and to the people who were there happy with him. He felt that to have face-to-face and affectionate intercourse with him, to have a new comprehension of his mind and a new reception of his Spirit, was better than being here. It was far better. Nay, he uses a triple comparative, and his language, deliberately chosen, is, that it is "very far better." It is to have Christ in his incomparable worth and glory disclosed to us and enjoyed by us as he cannot be here. 3. *The consideration of advantage especially to the Philippians by his continuing in life ultimately prevails with him.* "Yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all." While he had a strong tending toward the Lord, it was not an impatient, precipitate tending. He was not mutinous against the Divine disposal of him. There was wisdom in his state of mind. He saw clearly that it was for his own advantage to depart. But he saw, at the same time, that it was more needful, for such as the Philippians, that he should abide in the flesh. And when it came to be a question between personal bliss and work to be done by him, there could be no doubt on what side his decision would be given. He had enough of the spirit of the Master, like him, to forego heavenly bliss for earthly work. He was not

one to decline present duty, and to grasp at the prize without having run the prescribed race. While he was even desirous to embrace the gain of dying, he could not refuse the obedience of life. Out of the confidence that he had work to do rose the knowledge that he would abide with the Philippians, and still abide with them. The decisiveness with which he thus speaks of abiding shows that he contemplated a successful termination to his trial. He would abide after the great crisis was past. We are not to understand him speaking with prophetic certainty. He *knew* that the Ephesians would see his face no more when he parted with them at Miletus; he *knew* that he would abide for the sake of the Philippians. There is reason to think that he was mistaken in the first case, and that he was right in the second case. In both cases he simply proceeded on his own reasonings. In the former case it was anticipated evil at Jerusalem which weighed with him. In the latter case it was the consideration of work to be done especially among the Philippians. *Twofold object contemplated in his continuance.* (1) *On his part.* "For your progress and joy in the faith." (a) *Progress in the faith.* He had rendered them assistance in the past. He had introduced them into the faith of the gospel. He had, by visits to them and agents sent to them, helped them forward in the faith. He here intimates to them that it would be his object, when released from imprisonment, of which he was confident, to pay them a visit, and to present Christ so that their faith would become more enlightened, more lively, more steadfast. (b) *Joy in the faith.* This is the blessed result of believing. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." If we believe that God goes out toward us in infinite love, that in Christ he is favourable to us as sinners, and has laid up for us everlasting happiness, then there is, in what we believe, foundation for a joy which should be ecstatic. (2) *On their part.* "That your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again." He wanted for them increased matter of glorying, within Christ as its sphere and therefore of a holy nature, in him as its seat, and by his presence with them again. It would be an abundant cause for glorying to see him after his release from imprisonment, after they had prayed for his release, and in expectation of the benefit to be derived from a visit in such circumstances.

III. HE EXHORTS THEM TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES AS CHRISTIAN CITIZENS.

1. *Generally.* "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." The leading word in the original means, "perform your duties as citizens," and the further thought is that we are to perform our duties in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ which has made us members of so great a commonwealth. And it need not be wondered at that the apostle should adopt the form of expression, writing from the Roman metropolis to a city which was invested with the Roman franchise. The citizens of Philippi could appreciate the force of an appeal founded upon their possession of the political franchise. It was this ground which they took up against Paul and Silas: "These men set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, being Romans." The apostle here proceeds upon their being members of a greater commonwealth than the Roman. It was a commonwealth presided over by a greater than Caesar, even the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a commonwealth where members were admitted to greater privileges than Rome could bestow, viz. sonship with right of access to God, right of Divine protection, right of Divine direction, right of Divine strengthening, and right of dwelling with God at last. Let them perform their duties as citizens, then, in a manner worthy of the gospel which had admitted them to so great privileges.

2. *Their performance of their duties as Christian citizens to be independent of his presence with them.* "That, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state." This brings out the force of the foregoing "only." Their performance of their duties was not to be dependent on his presence with them. He proceeds upon the supposition of his being released. When released, it would be his endeavour to come and see them. But it was possible that Providence might direct his steps elsewhere. And even though he came and saw them, it could only be for a time. He could not, in justice to others, be always with them. But whether he came and saw them, or was absent, he would hear (by attraction to latter) of their state, whether they were performing their duties as Christian citizens or not.

3. *He specifies two duties which devolved upon them as citizens in connection with military service.* (1) *Unbroken unity.* "That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the

faith of the gospel." As enfranchised citizens it would devolve upon them to fight. The object for which they would have to fight was the faith of the gospel. An attempt would be made to make them believe a lie. They were to present an unbroken front to the enemy. They were to stand fast, striving for the faith of the gospel. *In one spirit* they were to stand fast. The spirit is the reason, conscience, that which governs in our nature. A common principle, the will of Christ as their Commander, was to regulate them. *With one soul* they were to strive. The soul is that which is governed in our nature. Under common regulation there was to be concordant thought, feeling, action, as in an army engaged in warfare. (2) *Undauntedness*. "And in nothing affrighted by the adversaries." Attempts would be made to intimidate them. All forms of pressure would be brought to bear upon them, to make them give up the faith of the gospel. Their very life would be placed in danger. But in nothing were they to be affrighted, turned aside in fright from what they believed. *Twofold consideration.* (a) *Their undauntedness a Divine token.* "Which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God." It was a Divine token with a double meaning. It was a token of *perdition* to the adversaries. It was a proof that they were in the wrong, seeing that, by all their threatenings and tortures, they could not make the Christians blench. And it was a token of *salvation*, of final victory, to the Christians. It was a proof to them that they were in the right, and would be shown to be in the right, seeing that their faith raised them above the influence of fear. (b) *Called to a high destiny which they shared with Paul.* "Because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." To all who deserve the name of Christians it is given to witness for Christ by their faith. To some it is given to witness for Christ by their sufferings. Of this number was Paul, who had earned the name of confessor when at Philippi, and was bearing the same name at Rome. He was in painful conflict with the powers of the world. And the same conflict these Philippian Christians endured. Let them rejoice in their high destiny, that thereby they were enrolled in the noble army of confessors and martyrs.—R. F.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Paul's salutation.* "This Epistle," says the learned Lewin, "was written during Paul's captivity, *en te tois desmois mon* (ch. i. 7), and at Rome (ch. iv. 22). And Paul had been long enough a prisoner to have produced great effects both in the Praetorium and elsewhere (ch. i. 13). The long captivity of the apostle before the date of the letter appears also from this. The Philippians had heard of his imprisonment at Rome, and had sent him pecuniary relief by the hands of Epaphroditus (ch. i. 7; iv. 18); and Epaphroditus had fallen ill at Rome (ch. ii. 27), the Philippians heard of it, and the report to that effect had gone back from Philippi to Rome (ch. ii. 26). In short, the Epistle was written when Paul was in such confident expectation of his release that he was making arrangements for his departure, and he tells us that his intentions were, immediately on being released, to send off Timothy to Philippi to learn their state and to bring back word to Paul in the West, and then both were to sail together to the East, and after some little interval Paul hoped to visit Philippi in person." In this salutation we have three subjects for thought—

1. **THE MOST DIGNIFIED OF ALL OFFICES.** "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ." The apostle does not here assert his apostleship as in some other places, but speaks of himself and Timotheus simply as the servants of Jesus Christ. Now, whilst to be a servant of some men and institutions implies degradation, to be the servant of Jesus Christ is to sustain an office the most honourable and glorious; for note the following things connected with this service:—1. *It meets with the full concurrence of conscience.* There are many services in which men are engaged, some most lucrative, some associated with worldly honours, yet they fail to enlist the full concurrence of conscience, nay, conscience often raises its protest against them, and it often happens that the protests are so strong that men have felt bound to resign. But in this service conscience goes with every effort put forth; for to serve Christ is to run with the principles of eternal right, to render to the Almighty his claims, and to all creatures their due. 2. *It affords ample scope for the full development of the soul's faculties.* In how many services have men to be engaged in this world which only

excite and employ certain powers of the mind, leaving all the others in a state of decay and torpor! Millions feel that the work in which they are engaged is so unworthy of their natures that they lack both self-satisfaction and freedom. The services make no demand upon their powers of investigation, speculation, invention, creation, and their central moral sensibilities; all is machinery. But in the service of Christ there is both an urgent demand and an immeasurable scope for the wonderful powers and possibilities of the human soul. In this service men advance with every effort, not as the mere creatures of time, but as the offspring of God and the citizens of the universe. By this service we grow up into him. 3. *It is a service that contributes to the well-being of all and the ill-being of none.* In all the selfish services of time, whilst there may be a contributing to the temporal interests of some, there is an injury inflicted on others; what one gains the other loses. What man has ever made a fortune or risen to power that has not invaded the rights and damaged the interests of others? But in this service good is rendered to all and evil to none. It is a service of universal benevolence, a service for the common weal, a service that goes against all the ills that afflict the race, and for all the blessings that can enrich and ennable. 4. *It is a service that ensures the approbation of God and of all consciences in the universe.* Does the service of the politician or the ecclesiastic or the warrior secure the approval of Almighty God? Not as such; nor do they secure the approbation of universal conscience. But the service of Christ does. He says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" and all consciences with every effort echo the approval. Policy, passion, and prejudice often condemn the genuine servants of Christ, but their consciences never. The law of their moral constitution compels them to say, "Well done!" to the right. 5. *It is a service whose worth is determined, not by result, but by motive.* The service of a man in the employ of human masters is estimated, not by motive, but by results. If the motive be corrupt, utterly selfish, so long as the results contribute to the interests of the master, the servant is pronounced a good one. Not so with the service of Christ. Motive is everything; though a man may effect in Christianity what may be considered wonderful success, prophesy in abundance, and cast out devils by hosts, he is deemed utterly worthless, only as stubble and fit for the fire. "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity," etc. What service, then, approaches this, ay, is comparable to this, in its sublime dignity? To be a servant of Christ is to be the sublimest of prophets, the most Divine of priests, the most glorious of kings.

II. THE MOST EXALTED OF ALL STATES. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." "Bishop" and "presbyter" are equivalents in the apostolic Epistles, though the two terms have different origins—the one, presbyter, or elder, a Jewish title; the other, bishop, or overseer, of heathen origin, used in classic Greek for commissioner. Deacons we find the origin of in Acts i. 6, 7. Now, while it is noteworthy that the Philippian Church had its two officers—the bishop and the deacon—these officers were spiritually in the same state as the private members. What was that state? "In Christ Jesus." The distinction between them and the others was not a distinction of state but simply of service or of office, and unless their state had been identical their office would have been invalid. A true Church and all its members must be in Christ Jesus. What does this mean? It is an expression of very frequent occurrence in the writings of the apostle. *In Christo.* What meaneth it? We can attach three intelligible ideas to the expression. 1. *In his affections as his friends.* When we say that a child is in the heart of its parent, or such a sister is in the heart of her brother, or such a wife in the heart of her husband, we know what it means. In fact, all that we really love live in our hearts; they often prompt us to thought and inspire us to act. Now, Christ loves all men, and all men are in his heart; but his love for his friends is special, deep, and tender. "Ye are my friends." Every genuine disciple is in the heart of Christ. 2. *In his school as his pupils.* Christ is a Teacher of absolute truth, a Teacher of humanity. He has established a school, and to all he gives the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Now, all who enter this school are his disciples. What a Teacher is Christ! "Never man spake like this Man." What an inexpressible privilege to be in this school! 3. *In his character as their Example.* Without figure man every-

where lives in the character of man. The present age lives in the character of the past, and so back; the millions of unrenewed men live in the character of Adam, imbibe his selfishness, and practise his disloyalty. All regenerate men live in the character of Christ, appropriate his grand ideas, cherish his spirit, and imitate his Divine virtues; thus they become like him. Much more is included in being *in Christ*, but this is sufficient to indicate and to show that it is the most exalted of all states. The man who is in Christ has broken away from the entralling influence of materialism, is rising to a mastery over external circumstances, and over his carnal passions and lusts, is towering higher and higher into the regions of unclouded light and of ineffable joys and imperishable delights.

III. THE MOST PHILANTHROPIC OF ALL ASPIRATIONS. “Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is Paul’s general salutation, and is found in almost every Epistle. It is also often employed by Peter and John. “Grace” means favour, and the wish expressed by the apostle is that the Divine favour and peace may flow to them from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. What greater blessings than these—God’s favour and God’s peace! And what wishes more philanthropic than these can be conceived of! Most men express philanthropic wishes towards their fellow-men at times: some wish health, riches, long life, and great enjoyment; but he who wishes the favour and peace of God wishes infinitely more than all these. The patriot wishes men to be free, the total abstainer wishes men to be sober, the religious denominationalist wishes men to join his sect; but Paul’s wish here is grander, more comprehensive and Divine than these—he wishes men to have the favour and the peace of God. “Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

CONCLUSION. The fundamental question which presses on us is—Are we “*in Christ Jesus*”? Not—Are we in this system or that, in this Church or that? but—Are we “*in Christ Jesus*”? If so, we are secure from all dangers, ripe for all worlds, and for futurities, on the march of everlasting progress, light, and blessedness.

I would live my life in Christo,  
In his holy thoughts and love,  
I would cherish his high purpose,  
In his Spirit live and move.  
I would fight my foes in Christo,  
They are many, they are strong;  
In his strength I’ll bear the contest,  
Striving ever ‘gainst the wrong.  
Aid me, Lord, to live in Christo;  
Oh! in Christo let me live.

I would find my joy in Christo,  
Joy which earth cannot afford;  
I would drink of that life-river  
Streaming from his quickening Word.  
I would gain my rights in Christo—  
Rights of freedom and of peace;  
From my guilt and from my bondage  
He alone can give release.  
Aid me, Lord, to serve in Christo;  
Oh! in Christo let me serve.

I would die my death in Christo,  
Breathing in his love I’m blest;  
When this frame to dust returneth,  
I shall enter into rest.  
In that rest I shall adore him  
In the strains of sacred love,  
With the ransom’d of all races  
Gather’d in the heavens above.  
Aid me, Lord, to die in Christo;  
Oh! in Christo let me die.

Vers. 3—5.—*Paul's gratitude for good men.* “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” There are two things noteworthy here at the outset. 1. A minister's *hearty recognition of the moral worth of his people.* “I thank my God upon every remembrance.” This implies on the writer's part a very high appreciation of the spiritual excellence of those to whom he wrote. The recognition of worth in others is the indication of a generous nature, an incumbent obligation, and in truth is a rare virtue. So selfish is human nature that the majority of mankind not only ignore the virtues of others, but eagerly mark and magnify their imperfections. It is said that Enoch had this testimony, that “he pleased God,” and we, like our Maker, should readily bear testimony to worth wherever it appears. 2. A minister's *lively vigilance over the interests of his people.* “Upon every remembrance,” and “in every prayer,” “for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” He watched over them, not with the eye of curiosity or censorship, anxious to discover and expose their defects, but with the eye of tender love, yearning, as it were, for the sight of moral beauty, and heartily thankful whenever it appeared. There are two things connected with Paul's gratitude as here disclosed, very remarkable and worthy of imitation.

I. It was gratitude to men **EXPRESSED IN PRAYER TO ALMIGHTY GOD.** It is common to express our gratitude for services to others by florid utterances or kindly offices, but somewhat rare to give it voice in prayer to Almighty God. “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy” or, as it would be better rendered, “I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you at all times in every prayer of mine for you all.” **Mark: I.** The *fervour* of the prayer. What intense earnestness breathes through this utterance! the man's soul seems aglow with devout, philanthropic zeal. **2.** The *universality* of the prayer. “For you all.” A similar expression Paul uses in relation to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 2): “We give thanks to God always for you all.” There is not one of you for whom we—that is, Paul and Timotheus—do not give thanks. Now, what better way is there to show gratitude to men than by interceding for them all with the common Father? There is no way more *practicable.* We may be too poor or too weak to return their favours, but none are too poor or weak to pray. There is no way more *effective.* If the all-merciful Father confer on them his favour they will have more than worlds can bestow.

II. It was gratitude to men on **ACCOUNT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMON GOOD.** “For your fellowship in the gospel,” or towards the gospel. Dr. Samuel Davidson renders it, “For your fellowship in respect of the gospel.” What is meant is, I presume, for your fellow-working or your working with us in the fellowship of the gospel. Some suppose that the special reference is here to the contribution that they made towards his temporal needs as referred to in ch. iv. 15, “Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.” But if he refers to this specially, the high probability is that he also refers to their co-operation with him in the general service of the gospel. The apostle felt that, whatever services they rendered him, they were rendered, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the grand cause in which they were mutually interested. As a private disciple it mattered little or nothing to him whether he fared well or ill, died of starvation or martyrdom; but inasmuch as he was entrusted with the gospel he felt the continuation of his existence of some moment to the common good. “Nevertheless,” he says, “to abide in the flesh is more needful for you; and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith” (vers. 24, 25). His gratitude, then, was not on account of any favour they had shown to him as an individual saint, for personal comforts, but to him as a public man labouring for the common good. What a lofty gratitude is this: so unselfish, so sublimely generous! When will the time come when men shall be thankful to each other, not merely for personal benefits, but for the services they rendered to the general weal? Every man who helps on the cause of truth, Christly virtue, and human happiness in the world, whether he belongs to our nation, our Church, or not, deserves our gratitude. In truth, the best way for us to serve ourselves as individuals is to serve the race by

diffusing that system of moral and remedial truth which alone can crush the demon ills and create the Divine beatitudes of the race. Never can we be sufficiently thankful to Heaven for the mere existence of *good men* in this world of ours. They are the "salt of the earth," counteracting that corruption in which all impenitent souls find their hell. They are the ozone in the moral atmosphere of life. They are the highest revelation of God on this earth and the highest exemplification of duty. Like stars, they reveal the infinite above us, and throw light upon our path below.—D. T.

Vers. 6-8.—*Personal Christianity.* "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." These words bring under our notice *personal Christianity*.

I. In this the greatest apostle **HAD THE STRONGEST CONFIDENCE**. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it." The apostle seems to have had confidence: 1. In its *character*. It is "a good work." Genuine religion is in every sense a good thing. (1) Good in its *essence*—supreme love to the supremely good. (2) Good in its *influence*. In its influence on *self*, elevating the soul to the image and the friendship of God. Good in its influence on *society*, ameliorating the woes of the race by enlightening the ignorant, healing the afflicted, enfranchising the enthralled. Whatever of goodness is found in Christendom unknown in heathen lands to-day must be ascribed to this "good work." 2. In its *internality*. "In you." Some would read, "amongst you," supposing the reference to be to the influence of Christianity on Philippi and its neighbourhood; but there is no authority for this. It is "*in you*." Christianity is a good thing outside of us, yet unless it enters into our natures, permeates, inspires, dominates, etc., it is of no service—no more service than the noontide sun is to the man whose eyes are sealed in darkness. 3. In its *divinity*. "He which hath begun a good work." He, undoubtedly the all-loving Father. Every good in the universe begins with the good One. The first good thoughts, sympathy, volitions, aims, principles of action in the human soul, originate with him, from whence comes every "good and perfect gift." Personal Christianity in a man is a Divine thing; it is the eternal Logos made flesh. 4. In its *perpetuity*. "Will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." "The day of Jesus Christ." "So also in ch. i. 10; ii. 16; and in 1 Cor. i. 18, 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; ' in all other Epistles, 'the day of our Lord' (as in 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 2), or still more commonly both in Gospel and Epistles, 'that day.' As is usual in the Epistles, the day of the Lord is spoken of as if it were near at hand. St. Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 2 declines to pronounce that it is near, yet does not say that it is far away, and only teaches that there is much to be done even in the development of anti-Christian power before it does come. It is, of course, clear that, in respect of the confidence here expressed, it makes no difference whether it be near or far away. The reality of the judgment as final and complete is the one point important, the times and seasons matter not to us" (Dr. Barry). Whatever period is here pointed to, it must not be supposed as conveying the idea that this "good work" terminates at that period, "until the day." It does not say that then it will become extinct. The idea it suggests rather to me is that, having existed up to that period under most inauspicious circumstances, struggling with awful difficulties, after that, when all that is unsavourable is removed, it will go on for ever. The doctrine of final perseverance, as it has been called, has engaged immense discussion, often foolish, sometimes acrimonious, seldom useful. It should not be looked upon as a doctrine, but rather regarded as a *duty*, and as a law of spiritual life.

II. With this the greatest apostle **FELT THE INTENSEST SYMPATHY**. "Even as it is meet [right] for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace;" or rather as in the margin, "partakers with me of grace." His sympathy with them is shown by the fact that: 1. They occupied his thoughts. "Even as it is meet;" *division*, that is just, or right, to have this prayerful confidence.

According to a law of mind, we must always think of those with whom we have the deepest sympathy. The chief object of love is ever the chief subject of thought. 2. *They filled his heart.* “I have you in my heart.” And the reason he assigns is because of their hearty identification with him in his ministry. “Inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.” What a blessed thing it is for a man to have himself in the heart of a true-hearted, truly generous one! 3. *They inspired his Christliness.* “For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.” The word “bowels” should be translated “heart”—“I long after you all in the heart of Christ Jesus” (Dr. Samuel Davidson). In another place the apostle says, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Perhaps what the apostle means here is—All that I have in me of the ideas, spirit, and aim of Christ are excited to a yearning for your good when I think of you. It is a characteristic of a genuine disciple that he is under the inspiration and control of the same great moral passion as his Master; viz. disinterested, self-sacrificing, all-conquering love. “All real spiritual love is but a portion of Christ’s love which yearns for all to be united to him” (Dean Alford).—D. T.

Vers. 9—11.—*The augmentation of Christly love ensures the improvement of the whole man.* “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” Here again the apostle prays that that love for Christ, which they had shown in their deep, generous, and practical sympathy for him as Christ’s minister, might not merely continue, but abound yet more and more. “The original verb here,” says Dr. Barry, “signifies to overflow, a sense which our word ‘abound’ properly has, but has in general usage partially lost; and St. Paul’s meaning clearly is that love shall not only primarily fill the heart, but overflow in secondary influence on the spiritual understanding.” The words suggest that the *augmentation of Christly love ensures the improvement of the whole man.* It secures—

I. **THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTELLECT.** It promotes: 1. *Knowledge.* “And this I pray, that your love may abound . . . in knowledge (*epignosei*).” The knowledge here must be regarded as spiritual knowledge—the knowledge of God in Christ. “Here St. Paul singles out the kind of love—the enthusiasm of love to God and man, which he knew that the Philippians had—and prays that it may overflow from the emotional to the intellectual element of their nature, and become, as we constantly see that it does become, in simple and loving characters, a means of spiritual insight in knowledge and all ‘judgment,’ or rather, all perception.” Love is the inspiration of all true knowledge. As we love an object, the more stimulus has the intellect to inquire into everything concerning it or him. The more love for God abounds, the more earnest will the intellect be in “inquiring in his temple” and the universe. 2. *Perception.* “And in all judgment (*aisthesei*).” This means, perhaps, discernment or insight. There is evidently a distinction between mere intelligence and intuition. I may know all the facts of a man’s life, and yet not possess that insight into his inner springs of action necessary to understand him. There are great technical theologians, who lack the spiritual eye to peer into the underlying, eternal, principles of truth. It is love that opens and quickens this eye of “judgment,” or spiritual discrimination. 3. *Shrewdness.* “That ye may approve things that are excellent;” margin, “that ye may try things that differ.” Shrewdness is that faculty of the mind which enables a man almost without the use of the critical power to see the *reality* under all the forms with which it is invested. There are many intelligent men—men, too, of intuition, who are not shrewd, not quick and accurate in the discernment of the worth of things. Now, love to God promotes this intellectual shrewdness of soul, the shrewdness that guards it from all imposture. This is an age in which men talk much of intellectual improvement, and numerous mechanical methods are proposed. But here is the infallible one. Let men’s love to God abound more and more, and all the wheels of intellect will be set agoing.

II. **THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE CONSCIENCE.** Here the language of the text implies that this love improves the conscience. 1. *By giving it a sympathy with the true only.*

“Things that are excellent.” The original constitution of conscience was to do this evermore. It does this in heaven; it once, perhaps, did this on earth; but now, alas! throughout the greater portion of the race in all lands, its sympathies are not with “the things that are excellent.” So awfully has it been corrupted that it yields its concurrence to idolatry, cruelty, priesthoods, frauds, and falsehoods of endless kinds. When true love to God acts upon it, nothing but “the things that are excellent” will do for it: it rejects, spurns, and damns all others. 2. By *making it thoroughly sincere.* “That ye may be sincere (*eikrinesis*).” This word is only used here and in 2 Pet. i. 3; and the corresponding substantive, “sincerity,” in 1 Cor. v. 8; 2 Cor. i. 12; ii. 17. It signifies purity tested and found clear of all base mixtures, a genuine, incorruptible conscience—a conscience that leads a man to sacrifice all he has, even life itself, rather than swerve an iota from the right and the true. Love to God promotes such a conscience. It did so with the apostles, with all the holy martyrs, and with the Divine Man himself. 3. By *securing it from blameableness.* “Without offence.” In the Acts we read of a “conscience void of offence towards God and man.” It is essential that such a conscience should rule the entire man, and that itself should be ruled by the will of the great God. According to the law of mind, the object we love most becomes our moral monarch: when God becomes the paramount object of our affection, he becomes the Ruler of our conscience. This state of conscience is to be “till the day of Christ.” It does not mean that it will end afterwards, but that after that it is sure to be perpetuated.

III. THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIFE. “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness,” etc. Paul’s language in Rom. vi. 22 may be taken as a commentary on this expression: “Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Observe: 1. That a righteous life comes to us through Christ. “The fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.” Men are only made morally right by faith in Christ. Philosophically there is no other way of doing so. Christ came into the world to make man morally right, or, to use Old Testament language, to establish rectitude or judgment on the earth. 2. That a righteous life redounds to the glory of God. “Unto the glory and praise of God.” It is the highest manifestation of God—it is God “manifested in the flesh.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” But the “fruits of righteousness,” or a righteous life, are ensured only by the abounding and the overflowing of love to God in the soul. All must be love. Love is not only the inspiration of God, the root of the universe, but the fountain of all virtue and happiness. Let love, then, abound.—D. T.

Vera 12—18.—*A grand principle and a splendid example.* “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” In all probability the Philippian Christians, as well, perhaps, as most other of the existing Churches that he had planted, would fear that his imprisonment at Rome would prevent the spread of the gospel. Here he assures them of the contrary, and tells them that it had “fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” In these words we discover two very important subjects of thought.

I. A GRAND PRINCIPLE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. What is the principle? *The overruling of evil for good.* Nothing would seem a greater evil in the early dawn of Christianity than the imprisonment of St. Paul. There, banished from his own country, bound in bonds, imprisoned by the Praetorian Guard, chained day and night to some Roman soldier, utterly unable to go beyond the limited scene of his imprisonment, or to address—as he had often done—vast multitudes. There he was for two long years. During that period it would seem as if the sun of Christianity had gone down

to rise no more, leaving the world to go back into Jewish and Gentile darkness, intolerance, and superstition. But here the apostle says it was not so. It helped, not hindered, the onward march of gospel truth. He indicates here how it tended in this direction. 1. *By extending its knowledge in the imperial city.* “So that my bonds in Christ [margin, ‘for Christ’] are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places.” Or, as Dr. Samuel Davidson renders it, “So that my bonds became manifest in all the Praetorian Guard, and in all the rest.” All the Praetorian regiments, who, of course, were the most numerous and influential men in the imperial city—the city which conquered the world—would, of course, guard the apostle by turns, and to each and all who were in special connection with him at the time he, of course, would not only reveal his own morally noble and soul-commanding character, but earnestly expound that grand system of world-wide philanthropy for which he was in bonds. In this way the gospel would spread in Rome from soldier to soldier, and from the soldiers to the civilians. Perhaps there could have been no way more effective of spreading the gospel than this. 2 *By encouraging the work of propagation.* “Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” “There is,” says Dr. Barry, “a twofold sense here, corresponding to the two-fold division of preachers made below. Those who preached Christ ‘of contention’ trusted in St. Paul’s captivity as giving them scope; those who preached of ‘good will’ found in it a striking example of evil overruled for good, and so gained from it fresh encouragement.” The expression, “many of the brethren,” of course implies not all, and those who did not were Judaizing Christians and were affected with enmity towards Paul, and would preach in their own spirit and in their own way; whilst the others, “the many,” would by the noble conduct of Paul as a prisoner, and by the constantly extending circulation of the gospel through the Praetorian regiments take encouragement and catch inspiration. Here, then, is an example of the principle of evil being overruled for good. “A strange chemistry of providence this,” says Matthew Henry, in his quaint way, “to extract so great a good as the enlargement of the gospel out of so great an evil as the confinement of the apostle.” Three remarks may be offered in relation to this principle. (1) *That the known character of God authorizes the inference that this would be the principle on which he would proceed in the moral management of the universe.* It is scarcely possible to entertain the belief that a Being of infinite holiness, possessing a wisdom that nothing can baffle, and a power that nothing can resist, would allow evil to run riot for ever in his empire, and make no effort to subordinate it to the advancement of spiritual excellence and happiness. Shall error triumph over truth, wrong over right, the devil over God? Incredible. Antecedently I am bound to conclude that a time will come when the sun of goodness shall scatter from the heavens every cloud of evil, however widespread and dense. (2) *That the Bible supplies abundant statements to support this belief.* We read that the little stone—that is, goodness—shall not only shatter the colossal image—that is, evil—but shall itself grow till it becomes a mountain to fill the whole earth. We read of the knowledge of God covering the earth as the waters cover the channels of the great deep. We read of the “restitution of all things.” We read of the “kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;” and of things being put into subjection to Christ; of “all things working together for good to them that love God,” etc. (3) *That the history of the world is a grand exemplification of this principle.* The introduction of sin into the world is a tremendous evil; but how much good has come out of it! What glorious manifestations it has occasioned of God! what moral heroes it has been the means of creating amongst men! The crucifixion of Christ was evil in the most gigantic form; but to what good has the infinitely good One turned it! “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” I rejoice to believe in this principle of good overruling evil; it inspires in me the hope that the time will come when every human intellect shall be freed from error, every human conscience from guilt, every human heart from pain, when all the groans of the human creation shall be hushed in eternal silence, and the flames of all hells extinguished for ever.

II. **A SPLENDID EXAMPLE FOR THE IMITATION OF PREACHERS.** “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will,” etc. Observe: 1. The apostle speaks of two classes in his day. One preached from a factious, or a party,

spirit. They preached from "envy and strife." This shows beyond question that the Judaizing party—the bitter antagonists of Paul—were at work in Rome, preaching in their way the gospel; preaching it, not from pure love to Christ and souls, but to gratify their own factious spirit and to serve their own little sect. A sectarian preaching of the gospel has, alas! ever been common; it is rampant to-day in England—men preaching for sects rather than for souls. The other class of preachers in Rome were those who preached of "good will" and "of love." These had in them that love of Christ which constrained them to proclaim the gospel. They had no factious spirit; they were neither of the party of Cephas nor of Paul, but of Christ only; they knew "nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Oh that we had more of such preachers in this age! John Wesley, in modern times, was one of the splendid examples of this class of preachers; he broke himself off from all sects, and would, I have no doubt, have recoiled with pain at the idea of a sect ever being formed bearing his name. 2. The apostle's *sublime magnanimity in relation to all preachers*. "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." He overlooks the motives that prompt men to proclaim Christ in his exultation in the fact that Christ was preached. The motives belong to God, and he will deal with them; the message is for humanity, and its proclamation by every tongue would render service. Should we not enter into this spirit? If the gospel is preached, whether by Papists or Protestants, Ritualists or Evangelicals, Churchmen or Dissenters, what matters to us so long as it is preached? So long as the clarion sends its blast to warn those who have never before heard of the approaching danger, what matters it whose lungs supply the breath? Let us try to catch the magnanimous spirit of Paul, and to imitate his splendid example in this respect.

"I saw one man, armed simply with God's Word,  
Enter the soul of many fellow-men,  
And pierce them sharply as a two-edged sword,  
While conscience echoed back his words again,  
Till, even as showers of fertilizing rain  
Sink through the bosom of the valley clod,  
So their hearts opened to the wholesome pain,  
And hundreds knelt upon the flowery sod,  
One good man's earnest prayer the link 'twixt them and God."

D. T.

Vers. 19, 20.—*The magnifying of Christ the supreme end of life.* "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." Here the apostle expresses the belief that all the endeavours of his enemies, especially of those who, he said, sought to add "affliction to his bonds," will turn out to his deliverance. The word "salvation" here does not refer to salvation of the soul, but to Paul's temporal rescue and security. In the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses of this chapter he utters very clearly his assurance that he should be delivered from his enemies and continue with the Philippians for their "furtherance and joy of faith." It is now many years ago, when a boy, I attended the ministry of Rev. Caleb Morris, at Fetter Lane Chapel, and the sermon he preached the Sunday previous to my first entering his church was on this text. It was his first discourse after a dangerous and protracted illness, and the proposition he drew from the passage and laid down was that "usefulness is the aim of every genuine evangelical ministry." He then went on to remark that the passage suggested that, in order to be useful, three things were necessary. 1. To magnify Christ. "Christ shall be magnified in my body," etc. 2. To render all the circumstances of life subservient to that end. 3. To have supplies of the Spirit of Christ. I proceed, in a somewhat modified form, to give some of the beautiful thoughts of that distinguished preacher.

I. The supreme purpose of life is to **MAGNIFY CHRIST**. "Christ shall be magnified." Every living man is either an injury or a blessing to creation—every bad man is an

**injury, every good man is a blessing.** Goodness is at once the cause, the evidence, and the measure of moral usefulness. But how is this usefulness achieved? By *magnifying Christ*. But how are you to magnify Christ? Not by making him *greater* than he is. This would be impossible. His "name is above every name." He is Lord of all; "Of him, and to him, and through him, are all things." All heaven feels that he is the greatest; there he is seen as he is; is supremely worshipped and adored. Hell, too, feels his greatness: "The everlasting destruction with which the lost are punished, comes from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." It is to be done: 1. By giving him the pre-eminence in *your own soul*. Putting him on the throne of your being, and crowning him Lord of all, having all the activities and faculties ruled by him as the moral Monarch of the soul. 2. By promoting his sovereignty over *others*. Seeking to establish his kingdom, the kingdom of peace and truth and righteousness over all contemporaries. Sad, terribly sad, it is that many who profess to magnify him *degrade* him. They degrade him by flippant and irreverent repetitions of his holy Name, by misrepresenting his work. They speak of him as a poor Victim on the cross rather than as a triumphant Victor—One who, in his sufferings, is to be pitied rather than applauded. They speak of him as a Purchaser of Divine love for man rather than as its grand Messenger and omnipotent proof. They represent him as One who seems to be in deep need of man's humble services; and in their hymns they call upon their hearers to "Stand up and fight for Jesus," as if Jesus were in difficulties and wanted their help to relieve him. They seem to trade in his holy Name. The crafty priest employs him in order to gain power over the people, mercenary preachers and authors in order to get gain. These magnify themselves under the pretence of magnifying Christ. "The false teachers to whom the apostle refers in this chapter were guilty of this, as are not a few in the nineteenth century. For instance, they who take up Christianity with a view to amass wealth, to gain honour, or to subserve political designs. This is very wicked. It is to betray Christianity with the kiss of treachery, in order to deliver it up to the fury of its foes. It is to purchase earthly toys with the blood of souls. It is to drink damnation from consecrated vessels."

II. In order to magnify Christ, **THE WHOLE OF OUR LIFE SHOULD BE CONSECRATED TO THAT PURPOSE.** Observe: 1. The *circumstance* of life here indicated. "In my body, whether it be by life or by death." (1) *Life* must be consecrated to the work. All its energies should be directed to it; all its faculties should be employed in its interest; all the circumstances, in fact, should be subordinated to its advancement. "For me to live is Christ," says Paul. "I long," said Bernard, "to be as a flame of fire, continually glowing for the service of the Church, preaching and building it up to my latest hour." Paul here specifies affliction. "I know that this"—that is, his imprisonment—"shall turn to my salvation." "Time spent in affliction is not lost. To a man who stands on the margin of eternity the world appears in its proper light. How worthless its smiles! How absurd its fashions! How trifling its all! Never does the better country appear so inviting as when we linger on its borders, expecting every hour to plant our feet on its happy soil. The odours wafted from its shore refresh us before we land." (2) *Death* should subserve this spiritual usefulness. "Whether by life or by death." So die—die with such calmness, resignation, holy serenity, as to command Christ to the spectators of the event. 2. The *intense desire* that it should be so is here indicated. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body." This was his "earnest expectation"—an expression which implies an intense and painful longing, not only expectation, but hope. There may be expectation where there is not hope. Hope implies *desire* for an object as well as a probability of obtaining it. "That in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always," etc. This was his grand purpose, and he would not have that purpose frustrated so as to be ashamed, but would, with wonted boldness and courage, struggle on to its ultimate triumph.

III. In order to consecrate the whole of our life to that purpose we require **THE INTERCESSION OF THE GOOD, AND A SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST JESUS.** 1. *The intercession of the good.* "Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." This overruling of all enmity to his safety he hopes for, through the interces-

sion of the Philippian Church (comp. Philem. 28) and the fresh supply of grace which, through such intercession, may be given to him. For the word "supply" in this sense, see Eph. iv. 15; and comp. Gal. iii. 5; Col. ii. 19. "Through your prayer." By an instinct of our nature involuntarily we breathe intercessions to heaven on behalf of those in whom we are most vitally interested. This is natural; this is right. Whether intercessions of any kind secure direct answers or not, the assurance of them is always most encouraging to their object. If I know that a good man is earnestly interceding for me in my mission, I have an assurance that he will use every effort to contribute to my success. Hence Paul always felt encouraged by the prayers of the good. 2. *The supply of the Spirit.* "Of the application of this name to the Holy Ghost we have instances in Rom. viii. 9; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. iv. 6; 1 Pet. i. 11. Of these the first is the most notable, since in two clauses of the same sentence we have first the Spirit of God and then the Spirit of Christ. But the name has always some speciality of emphasis. Thus the whole conception of the passage is of Christ: 'For me to live is of Christ; ' hence the use of this special and comparatively rare name of the Holy Ghost" (Dr. Barry). These two things Paul felt would enable him to consecrate his whole life to the life of Christ—"the intercessions of the good," and the "supply of the Spirit of Christ."—D. T.

Ver. 21.—*An ideal life blooming into a happy death.* "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Paul, having expressed in the close of the preceding verse his supreme resolve that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death, here describes the life he was determined to live, and the death which he was certain to realize. The subject of these words is—*An ideal life blooming into a happy death.* Here is—

I. **AN IDEAL LIFE.** "For to me to live is Christ." An utterance this terse and pithy, carrying the divinest idea of life. The meaning may be thus expressed: *living, I shall live Christ.* I shall live as he lived, with the same master purpose and inspiration. In relation to this life two remarks may be made. 1. It is *sadly rare*. Indeed, it is rare to *live* at all; *living* and *existing* are widely different conditions of being. All who breathe, sleep, eat, drink, follow out their animal instincts, exist; but none but those who have some dominant purpose that fires their passions and concentrates their faculties, live. To live means earnestness in some pursuit or other; the pursuit may be political, martial, mercantile, literary, artistic, or religious, and all who are earnest in their quest may be said to live. But this kind of life is *rare*. Millions exist on this earth for seventy years, and do not in this sense live one day; whereas those who have lived earnestly have become grey and old in a single night. The martyr, the night previous to his execution, *lives* years in a few hours. The thoughtless thousands who bowed to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, *existed*; the three Hebrew youths *lived* an age the night before they were thrown into the fiery furnace. Saul of Tarsus *lived* the three days and three nights after he was divinely smitten with the conviction of sin, while he lay still and sightless. Indeed, to be earnest in anything is to live. If you take a census of those who *exist* on the earth, you have only to count the numbers that breathe, and they are legion; but if you take the census of those who *live*, you must count the souls that are *really* in earnest, and they are in a terrible minority. But whilst it is rare for men to live at all, it is far rarer for men to *live to Christ*, to live the ideal life, the life in which all bodily impulses are governed by the intellect, and all the intellectual faculties governed by the conscience, and all the powers of the conscience ruled by the will of God. To live as Christ lived is to become incarnations of him. This was the life that Paul determined to live, and with this determination he brought all the rivulets issuing from the heart-ocean of his being into the majestic stream of a Christly philanthropy and devotion. Alas! again, how rare this life! If the masses of men who are really in *earnest*, and who therefore *live*, were to express their belief, they would say, "For us to live is wealth, power, science;"—no more. Christ is no more to them than any of the gods of Olympus. 2. It is *manifestly imperative*. It is urged on every man by the authority of reason, conscience, and the gospel.

II. **An ideal life BLOOMING INTO A HAPPY DEATH.** "To die is gain." To whom? To the man whose *life* is Christly. It is not gain to those who live to sensual enjoyments and

worldly interests. No; by it they lose all that makes tolerable the existence. But to the Christly man it is "gain" on two accounts. 1. On account of what it *takes away*. Physical afflictions, secular anxieties, mental imperfections, moral depravities, spiritual temptations; in one word, all that pains the body, deludes the judgment, saddens the heart, and deadens the conscience. 2. On account of what it *bestows*. Perfection in his being, character, friendships, worship, enjoyments. Death is indeed then "gain." Shall the Christ-living man dread it? Shall the diseased man dread the hour in which he leaves his couch of suffering and weakness, and goes forth into the green fields of nature with vigorous limbs and buoyant health? Shall the exile dread the hour when the bark that bears him from the scenes of long banishment shall touch his native shores? Shall the prisoner under the sentence of death dread the hour, promised by the clemency of his sovereign, when his fetters shall be struck off, and his dungeon door be opened, and he shall go forth to family and friends again? Sooner may this be than a Christ-living man dread death.

**CONCLUSION.** How often preachers exhort their hearers to prepare for death, urging sometimes with marvellous animal vehemence most utilitarian considerations! Let them cease this work, and urge them to prepare to *live* Christ: right living ensures happy dying. The ideal life lived out will bloom and fructify into a blessed immortality.—D. T.

**Vers. 22—26.—*Self-love and social love.*** "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not," etc. Dr. Samuel Davidson's rendering of this passage, which is as follows, is evidently an improvement on our own version: "But if to live in the flesh this is some fruit of work; and what I shall choose I know not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire towards departing and being with Christ, for it is very far better: but to abide in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes. And of this I am confidently persuaded, that I shall abide, and abide with you all for the advancement and joy of the faith: that in me your matter for glorifying may abound in Christ Jesus through my presence again with you." There are three loves in all human souls—*self-love*, which concerns itself with one's own interest; *social love*, which concerns itself with the good of others; and *religious love*, which concerns itself with the claims of God. Being constitutional, they are all good and designed to answer useful purposes in the full and perfect development of our nature. They, however, separately considered, are not of equal value. The second, social love, is greater than the first; the third, religious love, is greater than either—it underlies both, and is intended to be the inspiration and ruler of both. Society is greater than the individual, and God is infinitely greater than both. He is the *all*. Bishop Butler, if I recollect rightly, in one of his sermons on human nature, expounds the nature and relative importance of the two loves—the love of self and the love of society. These two are set forth in the text as working in the mind of the apostle.

I. Here is **SELF-LOVE DESIRING EXIT** from the world. "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Observe two things. 1. Paul's idea of the *nature* of his death. (1) He speaks of it as a departure; *analusai*, to loose anchor (2 Tim. iv. 6). He seems to have regarded his mortal life as a vessel intended and fitted to plough the ocean and visit distant shores, fastened and confined to the port, and death as the unfastening of all that binds it down. A sublimely elevating idea of death is this. (2) He speaks of it as being with Christ. "To be with Christ." This mortal life, he felt, kept him to some extent away from Christ, and that death would conduct him more immediately into his presence, and he expresses the highest delight. What greater joy can we imagine than to be with the object of our supreme affection? For this the heart is ever craving. Death, then, does not terminate existence, but gives it more freedom and a wider range; does not take us away from the Object we love most, but conducts us more consciously into his presence and fellowship. 2. Paul's idea of the *advantage* of his death. "Far better." Is not the noble bark better out on the boundless sea, with its sails unfurled, filled by the propitious breeze, and moving under the smiles of a sunny azure, than tied up in the dusky docks? Is it not better to gaze into the eye and listen to the living voice of the object of our chief affection than to be leagues away as a matter of consciousness? Hence

Paul desired death; his self-love yearned for it. So far as he himself was concerned it would be in every way an advantage.

II. Here is **SOCIAL LOVE URGING CONTINUANCE** in the world. "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." To promote the gospel amongst them, and to diffuse it amongst his contemporaries, was an object very dear to Paul's heart. But he felt that if he were not to remain in the flesh, but to depart into the great spirit-realm, his power in this direction would be at an end. And this I take to be: 1. A *solemn* fact. We can only serve our fellow-men while we are in the flesh. There is no proof that one of all the millions of departed saints has been able, by personal agency, to render any good whatever to any left on earth, however near and dear to his heart. All personal communications seem to cease at death. 2. A *practical* fact. This fact should influence every man to do the utmost he can to render spiritual service to his fellow-man during his life. When Paul departed, society lost the influence of his personal *presence*, and the personal presence of a good man is always most beneficent. And more, he lost his personal *agency* too—he delivered no more speeches, he wrote no more letters, his voice was hushed, his pen was stilled for ever. Earth alone is the sphere in which we can serve our fellow-men. Pious parents can no more help their children when they are gone, pious pastors cease to serve their congregations when they have passed away. Hence any work we have to do must be done now and here. Here, then, were the two principles, the love of self and the love of society, working in the mind of the apostle, one urging him to depart and the other to remain, so that he says, "What I shall choose I wot not." I am in suspense. "I am in a strait betwixt two," that is, between the aspirations of the two loves.

III. Here is **SELF-LOVE OVERCOME BY SOCIAL LOVE**. "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." "I know." That is, it is my present feeling. The knowledge sprang from his desire, the wish was father to the thought. On the whole, his choice was to remain. In reaching this decision he felt assured of two things. 1. That he would have *trying work*. "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour." "If I live, my life will be one continuous labour, productive of much fruit, keeping me back from my reward, but useful to you" (Lewin). 2. That he should *render useful service*. "And continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus for me by my coming to you again." Most heartily did he desire such a joy in their faith, that they might abundantly rejoice in the continuation of his presence and work amongst them.

**CONCLUSION.** Paul's experience here is sublime and exemplary. His love of self was submerged in his philanthropy, his love for his contemporaries. He sought not his own things, but the things of others. He said, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." It is the Christly spirit, the spirit of self-sacrificing love, and this alone is genuine Christianity.—D. T.

Vers. 27—30.—*A life of consistency, unity, and courage.* "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ," etc. The apostle here means that, whether he should come to them or not—for he was not certain on the point—they should be careful to pursue a certain course of conduct. "By supposing," says Bengel, "this or that future contingency men may persuade themselves that they will be such and such as they ought to be. But it is better always without evasion to perform present duties under present circumstances." Their obligation to live a Christly life was independent of the contingency of the circumstances of his life. He might visit them or he might not; he might remain in the flesh or he might depart. In any case he urges on them consistency of conduct, unity of life, and fearlessness of soul. He urges on them—

1. **CONSISTENCY OF CONDUCT.** "Let your conversation (*politeuesthe*) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." I take this to mean, fulfil your duties as citizens, worthy of the gospel of Christ. This is a most comprehensive view of the duty of those who profess to believe in the gospel; it means, act worthy of your profession, be consistent. You profess to believe in a God: act worthy of that profession, be reverent, be devout, be thankful. You profess to believe in Christ: walk worthy of a true disciple, be docile, be studious, be loyal. You profess to believe in future retribution: regulate your

present conduct in accordance with that faith, subordinate the world to the soul, and consecrate the soul to almighty love. In ch. iii. 20 Paul says, "Our conversation is in heaven;" that is, our citizenship is in heaven. The genuine disciple of Christ is now a citizen of heaven, he is ruled by the laws of heaven, he enjoys the rights of heaven. This being so, how super-worldly and morally stately should be our deportment here! The discrepancy between the creed of Christian men and their daily conduct is a terrible sin and a tremendous curse.

II. **UNITY OF LIFE.** "That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Here is: 1. **Unity of heart.** "In one spirit, with one mind [soul]." Unity of heart consisteth not in uniformity of opinions or beliefs, but in identity of supreme purpose and love. There is only one meeting and mingling place of souls, and that is in the object of paramount affection. 2. **Unity of labour.** What is the labour? "Striving together for the faith of the gospel," or more properly, "with the faith of the gospel." (1) The united labour must be *steadfast*. "Stand fast." One fixed, irrevocable purpose; no vacillation, no distraction. Let the union of heart be so complete, and the souls so welded together, that the united purpose shall be immovably fixed. (2) The united labour must be *earnest*. "Striving together." The metaphor is drawn from the games, and whether the games were those of wrestling or racing, they involved almost an agony of earnestness. In Christian work all labour without earnestness is morally worthless in its character, and useless if not pernicious in its results. (3) The united labour must be with *one instrument*. "Striving together for [with] the faith of the gospel." There is no destroying evil, "putting away sin," and promoting true virtue and holiness only with the gospel. Philosophy, legislation, and literature have tried and failed. The gospel is the "power of God." Here is true unity—unity of heart, unity of labour, unity of instrument in the work.

III. **FEARLESSNESS OF SOUL.** "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." "Terrified." "The original word is strong—starting or flinching, like a scared animal. This fearlessness in the absence of all earthly means of protection or victory is a sign of a Divine strength made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. xiii. 9), not a complete and infallible sign (for it has often accompanied mere fanatic delusion), but a sign real as far as it goes, having its right force in harmony with others. The effect which it had on the heathen themselves is shown even by the affected contempt with which the Stoics spoke of it as a kind of 'madness,' a morbid habit, a sheer obstinacy" (Dr. Barry). Two remarks are suggested concerning this Christian fearlessness. 1. *It bodes good to its possessor, but evil to its adversaries.* It is "an evident token of perdition" to the opponents of the gospel, but "salvation" to its genuine disciple. A man who has well-founded moral fearlessness of soul is safe amidst hostile hosts, and his very fearlessness will make hostile hosts fear and tremble. 2. *It is well founded and often nobly developed.* It is the gift of God, it is not an inherent Stoical self-sufficiency. It is given as a provision for the suffering condition to which Christians are subject. It is given to Christians, not only "to believe on Christ, but also to suffer for his sake." "In the world ye shall have tribulation," etc. How splendidly developed was this fearlessness of soul in Paul! "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." They saw his sufferings (Acts xvi. 24). "None of these things move me."

**CONCLUSION.** Such was the course of life which this apostle in the prospect of death urged on the Philippians—consistency of conduct, unity of life, and fearlessness of soul; and all these are as binding on us and as necessary for our good as they were in the case of the Philippian Church.—D. T.

**Vers. 1, 2.—*The Philippian Church (the firstborn Church of Europe) a type of the Catholic Church.*** I. **IT IS IN THE WORLD.** Philippi, a city of importance as a centre of trade and traffic. A Roman colony reproducing on a minute scale the institutions of the empire city.

II. **IT IS NOT OF THE WORLD, BUT IN CHRIST.** In him its life is hidden. Three times in these two verses are its members reminded of him. The Church is nothing except so far as it is the living body of Christ and partakes of his grace and peace.

III. **IT IS CATHOLIC.** We possess a particularly full account of the first preaching of the gospel at Philippi (Acts xvi.). Three of its earliest converts are remarkable—

Lydia, a Jewish proselyte; a Greek slave; a Roman jailor. These may be taken to represent the three leading divisions of the human family, all of which are to be embraced by the Catholic Church. Their conversion also illustrates the truth that in Christ Jesus there is no distinction of male or female, bond or free.

IV. **IT TRANFIGURES HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS INTO DIVINE.** It is of the Church at Philippi that it is especially recorded that the faith was received, not merely by individuals, but by whole families (Acts xvi. 15, 33). The family is the Divine unit in God's natural organization of mankind. May not this fact in some measure account for the singular freedom of the Philippian Church from the grosser forms of error, and for the simplicity of its faith and love?

V. **IT IS APOSTOLIC.** It receives its teaching from the mouth of the apostles and is in communion with them.

VI. **IT IS AN ORDERLY AND ORGANIZED COMMUNITY, WITH ITS BISHOPS AND DEACONS.**

VII. **IT ABIDES.** Being the possessor of a life which it derives from the spiritual world, it outlasts the visible and external order of things. The city of Philippi has long since ceased to be; it is almost impossible to trace any reminiscence of its former importance. The Church of Philippi lives still in the words of this Epistle, and exercises a power and an influence which can never cease to be.—V. W. H.

Ver. 4.—*Christian joy not dependent upon outward circumstances.* I. 1. The outward circumstances of St. Paul's life, at the time of his writing this Epistle, were singularly joyless. A prisoner in Rome, awaiting his trial, deprived of the power of freely preaching the gospel when and where he would, compelled to be in the society of his Roman guard night and day. 2. Notwithstanding these untoward conditions he is inwardly full of joy. The key-note of the Epistle is *rejoice*. 3. The joy which fills him is not merely a selfish joy at his own acceptance with God; it is a sympathetic joy which rejoices in the growth of God's kingdom. This is the joy of the angels. This is the joy of Jesus himself. This is the joy which he promises to bestow upon his disciples (John xv. 11; xvii. 13). This is the joy of the Lord into which they who have used well the talents entrusted to them are to enter. This joy is not mere selfish exultation in our own rescue from the pains of hell, but a sense of bliss at the victory which God has won, and a joy at being permitted to minister more entirely to his glory.

II. 1. We can *possess* this joy here and hereafter if we are filled with the unselfish desire that others should be blessed and that God should be glorified in them. We deprive ourselves of it if we are guilty of envy at the spiritual progress which they are making, and at the evident tokens of God's grace working in them. 2. We can *contribute* to this joy. By our own steadfastness in the faith we add to the treasury of joy which is the possession of the whole Church. We give joy to the angels. We are able to increase the joy even of our Lord, who, seeing of the travail of his soul, is satisfied.—V. W. H.

Ver. 6.—*The truest guarantee of perseverance.* Note—

I. **ST. PAUL'S CONFIDENCE THAT THESE PHILIPPIANS WOULD PERSEVERE UNTO THE END.**

II. **THE GROUNDS ON WHICH BE RESTS THIS CONFIDENCE.** 1. *That it is God's work.* If we know that God is working in us we can trust him to complete his work. 2. *God's work demands man's co-operation.* St. Paul recognizes in the zeal which these Philippians displayed in the furtherance of the gospel (ver. 5) the best evidence of their co-operation with God, and therefore the best guarantee of their perseverance.

III. **WHAT THIS ZEAL IS NOT.** It is not the same as anxiety for the victory of a party, of a particular set of views, or of our own personal influence. It is not a devotion to the merely external aspects of religion.

IV. **WHAT THIS ZEAL IS.** It is joy at the progress of God's kingdom in human souls by whatever methods that progress may have been brought about. It is readiness to bear witness for Christ and to work for him.

V. **THIS ZEAL FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL IS:** 1. *Apostolic* (Acts xi. 23). 2. It is *angelic* (Luke ii. 13, 14). 3. It is *Divine*.

VI. **THIS WITNESS-BEARING IS IN ITSELF AN ELEMENT OF STRENGTH,** and therefore of perseverance (Rom. x. 10).

VII. If you lack perseverance, remember its secret, which is that it is to be found in GENUINE CO-OPERATION IN GOD'S WORK for mankind.—V. W. H.

Ver. 7.—*The communion of saints.* I. COMMUNION IN SUFFERING. “In my bonds.” These Philippians had to endure hardship in the cause of the gospel. Every Christian has to endure such hardships, either external or internal. Such conflicts are necessary links which unite us to the family of God. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”

II. COMMUNION IN MINISTRY. "In the defence and confirmation of the gospel." The little which we can do, each in our own restricted sphere, for the furtherance of God's kingdom, partakes of the character of the work of even a St. Paul, and brings us into communion with him.

III. COMMUNION IN SYMPATHY. "I have you in my heart." However humble may be the work which we can do for God, or the sufferings which we can endure for him, if they are done or borne according to the ability which he has given us, they bring us into sympathy with all who in every age have sought to do like work and to endure like sufferings.

IV. COMMUNION IN GRACE. "Ye all are partakers of my grace." As all the faithful are blessed with faithful Abraham (Gal. iii. 9), even although their faith is but a faint shadow of his, so all workers and sufferers in God's service share in the blessing which has been bestowed upon apostles and martyrs.

V. COMMUNION IN CHARITY. St. Paul speaks as if the fact that "all" were partakers of his grace depended upon his being able to speak thus of them "all." The want of unity among Christians deprives them of the full benefits of the communion of saints (Matt. xviii. 20; Acts ii. 1; iv. 32).—V. W. H.

Vers. 9-11.—*The life of God in the soul of man.* I. THE ELEMENT WHICH IS PECULIAR TO IT AND WHICH BETOKENS ITS PRESENCE—LOVE. “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren” (1 John iii. 14). “Love is the fulfilling of the Law.”

II. **Its MANIFESTATION.** If this love is the genuine fruit of God's Spirit within us, it will lead us to the *knowledge* of him and to the *discernment* of that which is pleasing in his sight. Being of God, it reveals God, so that new experiences of him are being constantly vouchsafed to the soul that possesses it. Being thus taught of God, the soul turns naturally to the things that are excellent, as the bee turns naturally to the honey-bearing flowers. Thus in the difficult task of deciding which to choose of two apparent but opposing duties, the soul indwelt by God is guided by a Divine instinct.

**III. ITS RESULT.** The preservation of the whole man from the power of evil, so that both in his inner being and in his external conduct he is blameless and brings forth the fruit which is natural to a condition of righteousness.

**IV. THE SOURCE OF ITS POWER—CHRIST.** The righteousness thus worked in us is not the righteousness of self-improvement, or of self-discipline, or of adherence to a law, but the righteousness which is imparted to us by the indwelling Christ.

V. ITS ULTIMATE AIM—THE GLORY OF GOD. (Ver. 11.)—V. W. H.

Vers. 12-14.—*The benefits conferred upon men by the steadfast confession of our faith.* I. ON THE UNCONVERTED. To such it is an evidence of the truth. No witness is more effective than the consistent faithfulness of a professing Christian. Such witnesses for Christ by bravely resisting all inducements to abandon him, and of Christ by manifesting his strength in human weakness. Thus it witnesses to him. It is by such witness that Christ is now to be manifested to the heathen. The Church is the Epiphany star. We cannot now appeal to the evidence of miracles, but we can show the moral miracle of a sinner saved. So long as the Church possesses the Spirit of Christ, so long can we speak the invitation of Philip, "Come and see."

II. ON OUR FELLOW-CHRISTIANS. It encourages them to join us in our confession and thus strengthens their grasp of the power of Christ.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGING OUR ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST. By such the world will be convinced that he is a living power and not merely a name upon our lips. By such they who are young in faith will be emboldened to declare themselves more positively on his side, and will thus receive more of him.—V. W. H.

Ver. 15-18.—*The spirit of faction.* I. **WHAT IT IS.** Like nearly all human errors, it has its origin in a good trait in our nature which has become corrupted by the introduction of evil motives. It springs from the desire men have to act in common. The Christian development of this desire is the communion of saints. The ideal of redeemed mankind is that it is the body of Christ, which is not a fortuitous concourse of atoms, but a living organism, each part necessary to the whole. Faction corrupts this grand idea and breaks up men into fragments, each of which is indwelt, not by the Spirit of Christ, but by the spirit of envy.

II. **WHAT IT MAY BECOME.** A corrupter of religion; using the subject-matter of the gospel, not as a means for building up souls into Christ, but of magnifying self.

III. **HOW IT MAY BE DEALT WITH.** St. Paul is ever hopeful of human nature. He sees even in its degradation elements of better things. Just as men's well-meant actions never do all the good they anticipate, so their evil deeds do not do all the harm they appear calculated to do. The mixture of human motives and the insufficiency of human powers have their blessings as well as their curse.

IV. **HOW TO BE FREE FROM THIS SPIRIT OF FACTION.** St. Paul evidently was free from it. He longs (ver. 20) not that Christ should magnify him, or that he should magnify Christ, but that Christ should be magnified in him; i.e. that Christ should use him as he wills, exalting him or humiliating him, making him serviceable or discarding him, just as it may prove most to his glory.—V. W. H.

Ver. 21.—*The gain of death.* I. **TWO MOODS IN WHICH PEOPLE FEEL THAT TO DIE IS GAIN.** 1. *The wrong mood, but the more usual one.* When it is an expression of weariness and a desire to escape from suffering, responsibility, labour, temptation. This desire is a selfish one, and may mean no more than that he who expresses it is living for himself. 2. *The right mood.* When "to live is Christ." This is the mood in which St. Paul speaks. Christ had so taken possession of him that he was no longer living a separated life, but Christ's life was being lived in him. This is a hard life, but a joyous one. They who experience it find that it includes his cross, his yoke, his peace, his joy.

II. **HOW CAN IT BE GAIN TO DIE, IF TO LIVE IS CHRIST?** To die cannot be more than Christ! But it can be more of Christ. To the Christian death is a closer union with Christ, and is to find a higher life in him. To Jesus to die was gain, and in the Christian, in whom Christ lives, the experience of Jesus is reproduced. He finds in death, not more of Christ crucified, but more of Christ risen, which is the exaltation of Christ crucified. Note how the "Nunc Dimittis" breathes this same spirit. Spoken by one who had seen the salvation of God, and to whom, therefore, to live was Christ, he is ready to depart, knowing that he will thereby see more of Christ. Only when we can say, "To live is Christ," can we say, "To die is gain." Only when Christ is in our arms and in our hearts can we say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."—V. W. H.

Ver. 22-24.—*Fruit and gain.* St. Paul is balancing the comparative advantages of death and life. He is doubtful which to choose. To die is gain; to live is to be fruitful. When he has put the question in this form his doubts vanish. *Gain* for himself is not to be considered in comparison with *fruit* for his Master and for mankind.

I. **THE END OF CREATED NATURE IS THE PRODUCTION OF FRUIT.** It is through fruit that the life of nature is prolonged, for the fruit is also the seed. The purpose of grace is that it should be fruitful. The Lord desired that his disciples should glorify God in bringing forth much fruit. It was in seeing his seed that he was to prolong his days. When the harvest of the world is ripe it will be reaped. When the number of the elect is complete the end will come.

II. **FRUIT CAN ONLY BE PRODUCED BY THE SURRENDER OF LIFE.** The corn of wheat must die if it would bring forth fruit. The vine must be purged. The exuberant natural growth of the plant must be checked if it is to be fruitful. The tree which bears leaves only is not merely useless, it is doomed to destruction, since it has no power of reproducing the life which has been bestowed upon it.

III. Our prayer should be, not that we may *GAIN* salvation for ourselves, but that we may bring forth *FRUIT* for our Master's service.—V. W. H.

**Vers. 27—30.—Exhortation to unity:** (1) *motives for it.* I. **LOVE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LABOURED FOR US IN THE GOSPEL.** Many can feel this love who are not yet capable of rising to a sense of love towards God. This lower affection may lead to the higher love of which it is a reflection.

II. **THE DISCOMFITURE OF THOSE WHO ARE HOSTILE TO THE GOSPEL.** This need not be opposed to love. The gospel is set for the fall of many as well as for their rising again. It is good for the wicked to be brought low, for only in thus falling is there any hope of their being finally saved.

III. **A FEELING OF PRIDE THAT WE ARE CONNECTED WITH THE GREAT ONES OF THE CHURCH.** The communion of suffering is ever part of the communion of saints. St. Paul is not here appealing to the highest motives, but to motives which are common to our human nature, and which may properly be used on the side of faith. Everything which is truly human is from God and is to be enlisted in his service.—  
V. W. H.

**Ver. 1.—An ancient letter.** We not only miss the drift of many parts of the Bible, but we also lose much of the interest they might excite in us, when we fail to observe the circumstances under which they were written. In the Epistle to the Philippians, for example, we have a letter addressed by a remarkable man under very touching conditions to a community of people in whom he felt deep interest. The primary, historical purpose of the writing is determined by these facts.

I. **THE WRITER.** St. Paul. Though Timothy is also mentioned in the salutation, he could have had little or nothing to do with the contents, because the apostle speaks throughout personally and individually. His authority not being questioned at Philippi, St. Paul has no need to assert his apostleship, and in genuine humility he writes of himself equally with his young companion, Timothy, as a servant of Jesus Christ. 1. The greatest Christian humbles himself as a bondservant before Christ. 2. The most independent mind in the Church when true to the gospel bows in obedience to the mind of Christ. 3. It is the function of Christian ministers not to seek their own advantages and not to be men-pleasers, but to serve Christ.

II. **THE PEOPLE ADDRESSED.** 1. The letter is sent to the whole Church at Philippi—"all the saints," as well as the officers. The Bible is for all Christians. St. Paul knew nothing of esoteric doctrines. 2. Differences of official position are recognized—saints, bishops, deacons. Order, discipline, instruction, and administration required such organization from the first, and require them in some form now. 3. Christians are called saints, because (1) they are consecrated men, and (2) inward holiness is begun in them. Unless a man is better in character for being a Christian his profession is a mockery. 4. Christians are "in Christ." Personal relation to Christ, the ingrafting of the olive branch, is the primary requisite of the Christian life.

III. **THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITER AND RECEIVERS OF THE LETTER.** 1. The writer is a prisoner awaiting trial on a capital charge. The martyr's lofty self-sacrifice and solemn joy characterize the Epistle. 2. The people addressed are feeble, poor, and persecuted. Yet their beautiful character immortalizes them. There is no Church that we could point to with more satisfaction as the model of primitive Christianity. Thus an obscure and humble community of Christians may be an example to the great Churches.

IV. **THE CHARACTER OF THE LETTER.** 1. It is uncontroversial. St. Paul was often forced into controversy. But his choicest thoughts come out in calmer moments. 2. It is personal. Nowhere else does the apostle reveal so fully his own private convictions and spiritual experiences. It is difficult to do this humbly, truly, and wholesomely. But when well done it is of rare interest. Hence the value of the private letters of great and good men. 3. It is unusually full of tender feeling. St. Paul was no mere intellectual teacher, and no hard-souled man of energy. His greatest ideas were saturated with emotion. In this Epistle he reveals the tenderness, sympathy, and joy of the deepest Christian experience. 4. It is a grand witness to the power of the gospel (1) in the transformation of the fiery persecutor Saul into this tender-hearted Apostle Paul; (2) in infusing all-absorbing devotion to Christ; (3) in kindling brotherly love between Christians; and (4) in sustaining the soul under the heaviest troubles with a resignation that faith raises to joyous confidence.—W. F. A.

Ver. 6.—*Begun, continued, and ended in God.* This phrase describes the first essential condition of the Christian life.

I. CHRISTIANS HAVE A GOOD WORK GOING ON WITHIN THEM. 1. Christianity is first of all *internal*. What is in us is the matter of chief importance. 2. A *work* is going on in the heart of the Christian, creating, developing, training, pruning, purging, building up. 3. This work is *good*. It is good for the soul to be brought from death to life, and for others that sympathy may be shown them and active good done as was the case with the Philippians in their relations to St. Paul.

II. THIS WORK IS AS YET ONLY IN THE BEGINNING. A perfect Christian is the result of years of training. The new birth produces a babe in Christ. Much spiritual nourishment and education are required to develop the full-grown man.

III. THE WORK IS BEGUN BY GOD. 1. It begins in a new creation. God only can create. So great a change as is required in turning from a life of selfish sin to a life of self-sacrificing holiness can only be effected by a Divine influence. That influence is put forth so that the greatest sinner may become the greatest saint. 2. Though the work is conditioned by our *faith*, still that is “not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.”

IV. THE FACT THAT GOD HAS BEGUN THE GOOD WORK IS A GROUND FOR THINKING THAT HE WILL COMPLETE IT. 1. The *character* of God implies this. He is not fickle that he should change, nor weak that he should fail. 2. The *nature* of the work implies this. The first step is the hardest. Every stage in the Christian progress is a prophecy of future stages. The force of habit which was before set against the good work becomes increasingly engaged in supporting it.

V. THE OBJECT OF COMPLETING THE GOOD WORK IS THAT IT MAY BE READY FOR THE DAY OF CHRIST. 1. That day is a day of *trial*. In the first age it came with the destruction of Jerusalem and consequent troubles. We need to be strengthened in the time of *calm* that we may stand firm in the storm. 2. *Glorious victory* follows the trouble of the day of Christ. Christians should be ready to share in that triumph.

VI. THE GOOD WORK WILL ONLY BE BEGUN, CONTINUED, AND ENDED IN GOD WHEN WE CO-OPERATE. That is not stated here. But it is stated elsewhere (e.g. ch. ii. 12). St. Paul is “persuaded” of success with the work in the Philippians partly on account of what he knows of their disposition and behaviour. We must exercise faith and obedience in the strength of God and for the reception of God’s work in us.—W. F. A.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The things that excel.* St. Paul prays that his readers may have that finer spiritual perception (*aisthesis*) which is produced by an increase of love in order that they may discern the greater worth of those good things which differ from other good things in being more excellent. The high endowment would not be necessary for the discrimination of the coarser contrasts of good and evil, light and darkness, etc. It is plain, therefore, that different shades of goodness, gradations of worthiness, successive ranks of spiritual merit, are what the apostle desires us to be able to appreciate.

I. GOOD THINGS STAND IN DIFFERENT BANKS OF EXCELLENCE. In nature some things are better than others, being more beautiful, or more delicately organized, or capable of serving higher ends. When God created the world he saw that everything was good; yet the dog is superior to the worm, and man to the dog. In spiritual things differences exist even among things wholly good in themselves. 1. *In the being of God.* If we may dare to compare mysteries so high and sacred as the attributes of God, we may see how they range themselves in rank and order—all glorious, yet mounting one above another to the supernal height of glory. To the Mohammedan, God is chiefly known as Almighty; the Alexandrian Jew thought most of his wisdom; the prophets of the Old Testament upheld his awful righteousness; Christians see him chiefly as One whose name is Love. Now, omnipotence is good, and supreme wisdom is better, and the moral excellence of righteousness is better still; but love is best of all. 2. *In the blessings of the gospel.* Christ healed sick bodies, and some poor folk were content with that blessing; but he also healed sick souls, and this was a higher blessing. The gospel delivers us from the doom of guilt; but it also saves the soul from its own internal corruption, which is a greater good. It offers peace and comfort; but it also inspires patience in suffering and faithfulness in toil, and these are better things. 3. *In our own religious aims.* To be saved is good; to glorify God is better. It is well to seek the purest blessings for ourselves; it is better to deny ourselves in

love to God and man, etc. 4. *In prayer.* Good earthly gifts may be sought; spiritual graces are more desirable. But the highest prayer will be for reconciliation with the will of God. 5. *In the Bible.* It is foolish to read the Bible straight through indiscriminately. All of it is not of equal value. We should discover and use most the best parts. 6. *In literature, society, and innocent human affairs.* 7. *In the use of our time, money, etc.* We may be doing no harm; but are we making the best possible use of these things?

II. THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE OF THE BETTER THINGS CAN ONLY BE DISCERNED BY THAT FINER SPIRITUAL SENSE WHICH COMES WITH AN INCREASE OF LOVE. It is not that they are artificially hidden. Christianity knows of no esoteric doctrines jealously guarded from the uninitiated. It is that we have not the faculty to discern them. 1. Though we may see at once the general characteristic differences, we need spiritual insight for the application of them to *particular cases.* 2. Though we may know the difference of value intellectually, we cannot at first *realize it in feeling and life.* If while a man knows that Beethoven's sonatas are infinitely superior to street songs, he still prefers the latter, to him, practically, these are the better. He must have higher musical gifts or training to appreciate the good music. In like manner we need spiritual training for the discerning of the best spiritual things. This training is not intellectual. It is the growth of love. For love is the eye of the soul. Love of God will help us to understand him. Love of Christ will explain to us the true worth of the gospel. Love of men will help us to appreciate the best pursuits in life. Love of heavenly things will enable us to seek the best of them.—W. F. A.

Vers. 12—14.—*Christianity promoted by being persecuted.* It might naturally have been thought that the arrest of the missionary journeys of St. Paul, and the shock of his imprisonment, would have seriously checked the spread of the gospel. The apostle is anxious that his readers should understand that these apparently untoward events have had the very opposite effect, and this in two ways.

I. THE WORK OF ST. PAUL WAS RENDERED MORE EFFECTIVE BY THE VERY PERSECUTIONS HE SUFFERED. 1. *The area of his influence was extended.* He had long wished to preach the gospel in Rome (e.g. Rom. i. 8—15). Persecution sent him there. The particular circumstances of his residence in Rome further gave him an opportunity of reaching classes of people who would have been almost inaccessible to him if he had gone there as a free visitor. Living among Praetorian soldiers, if not in the Praetorian camp itself, St. Paul was able to preach Christ to the cream of the Roman army. The prisoner became a missionary to his guard, and was successful in winning converts among those stern soldiers. 2. *The force of his influence was intensified.* He always preached Christ by his life, but never more eloquently than when in bonds for the sake of his great Master. The sight of the brave old man awaiting trial on a capital charge, not only possessing his soul in patience, but rejoicing in tribulation, and earnestly preaching the gospel beneath the very shadow of Nero's palace, was enough to strike the attention of the most thoughtless.

II. OTHER CHRISTIANS WERE INSPIRED WITH GREATER CONFIDENCE AND ENERGY BY THE SIGHT OF THE PERSECUTED APOSTLE. They were made confident through his bonds. 1. *The example of St. Paul inspired them.* Courage rouses courage. Noble self-devotion calls forth responsive echoes in the hearts of others. We feel ashamed of standing idle while our brother is toiling in the midst of danger and suffering. 2. *The success of St. Paul encouraged them.* Half-heartedness in missionary efforts comes of unbelief in the real utility of them. When we see the fruitfulness of these efforts we are urged to extend them. 3. *The independent action of St. Paul excited the jealousy of some.* In Rome, which was a stronghold of Judaic Christianity, the great apostle of the Gentiles preached his more liberal gospel. This greatly disturbed some of the prevailing school. But, unlike their brothers in Corinth, they did not directly oppose the work of St. Paul. They rather proclaimed their own version of the gospel more zealously. In so doing they, being true followers of Christ as well as the apostle they suspected, preached Christ. Thus sectarian rivalry may be overruled for the extension of the gospel.—W. F. A.

Ver. 18.—*Christ preached in sectarian jealousy.* It is scarcely possible to conceive

of a more magnificent breadth of charity, a more heroic self-abnegation, or a more ardent devotion to Christ than St. Paul here manifests. His preaching at Rome appears to have excited opposition in the Judaizing section of the Church there. In jealousy of the influence gained by the great apostle, this party was roused to more earnest missionary enterprise on their own account. Their motive was miserably narrow and ungenerous. But they little understood the spirit of the man whom they thought to annoy. The last thing that mean and selfish men can comprehend is the larger heart of a better nature. St. Paul completely triumphed over this miserable attempt at raising up afflictions for him in his bonds. Instead of being irritated at the injury done to himself, he utterly forgot that injury in his joy that a fresh impetus was given to the preaching of Christ. What a noble example for all Christians!

I. **THE PREACHING OF CHRIST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK OF THE CHURCH.** There were truths dear to the heart of St. Paul which the Judaizing party denied, and it was part of the life-work of the apostle to vindicate these truths. But he clearly saw that they were subsidiary to the great, common Christian gospel. Therefore he would rather see the gospel preached by men who were at the same time resisting those truths, than that the secondary truths should triumph but missionary work be less zealously promoted. We are all in danger of losing theological perspective. We are inclined to magnify our own special views to the neglect of the truth that is common to all Christendom. To make Christ known—not to preach this or that doctrine about Christ, but to reveal Christ himself in his beautiful life, death, and resurrection—this is to preach the gospel, and all else is of minor importance.

II. **CHRIST MAY BE PREACHED IN A GREAT VARIETY OF WAYS.** The more illiberal Christians set forth the gospel in a very different way from St. Paul's method. Yet he had insight to see that the essential truth was proclaimed by them. 1. Because men do not pronounce our "shibboleth," let us not refuse to recognize that they preach our Christ, the one Christ. 2. Moreover, note that, as a rule, the grounds on which Christians agree are far more important than those on which they differ. 3. Observe also that, though the spirit and motive of the preacher are important, the truth of the gospel is of more importance; so that, though this be proclaimed with an unworthy motive (as here in very spite to St. Paul), yet, being proclaimed, it may reach the hearts of men and do its own work.

III. **DIVISIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS MAY LEAD TO THE MORE ZEALOUS PREACHING OF CHRIST.** We naturally deplore these divisions. They are very injurious to Christian charity. They generate sectarian bitterness of spirit and narrowness of thought. They lead to much waste of effort in controversy and to a scandal in the eyes of the world. On the other hand, they undoubtedly excite greater zeal in propagating the gospel. The sects provoke one another to good works. The motive may not be the highest; still, the result is that the gospel is preached more energetically and with more variety, so as to reach different classes of mind. And often the emulation is not unworthy. Each party is honestly desirous not to be found wanting, and is stimulated by the example of the rest. Competition, which greatly encourages efficiency in study and in business, is not without its influence in religion. Competitive Christianity may be, indeed, a low form of religion, but it is much better than lifeless Christianity.

IV. **THE TRUE SERVANT OF CHRIST WILL VALUE THE PREACHING OF CHRIST MORE THAN THE EXTENSION OF HIS OWN VIEWS AND INFLUENCE.** It is exceedingly difficult really to rejoice at efforts which weaken our own particular cause while they promote the great cause of Christ. But this is because we think more of ourselves than of Christ. Greater devotion to Christ will issue in larger charity to rivals and enemies. When we can say, "To me to live is Christ," we shall be able to experience the grand feeling of St. Paul in rising above the provocation of jealous opposition to himself with the joy of witnessing a more earnest preaching of Christ.—W. F. A.

Ver. 21.—" *To me to live is Christ.*" Here is the secret of the wonderful life of St. Paul and the ideal of the true Christian life everywhere. In so far as we approach this ideal we are Christian. The whole scope and aim and energy of Christianity are included in the conception of "living Christ."

L CHRIST GIVES THE PATTERN FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Christianity is Christ-

likeness. Only they who have the Spirit of Christ are his. The one call of Christ is "Follow me." St. Paul carries this truth out very fully in his descriptions of the assimilation of the Christian to Christ through every stage—birth (in the new birth), humiliation, self-denial and service in life, death (to sin and the old life), resurrection (to the newer spiritual life), and ascension (the setting our affections on heavenly things). We must beware of mere servile imitation in following the footsteps of our Lord. We are to seek to have the *mind* that was in him. If our circumstances are different from those of the first disciples, we have to inquire, not simply what was done in Galilee in the first century, but what would Christ do in England in the nineteenth century?

II. CHRIST INSPIRES THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. The Christian is the servant of Christ. His object in life should not be to seek his own welfare, but to do Christ's work. It may be that he will suffer personal loss. That will not stand in his way if his spirit is right. For if Christ has died for us the least we can do is to live for him; and even though hardships ensue, we have to remember that we have only to be like Simon, bearing the cross, whilst Christ was nailed to it. So long, therefore, as our object is simply to secure the salvation of our own souls, to be sure of peace here and of heaven hereafter, we have not learnt the very alphabet of the Christian life. That life consists in denying ourselves and living for Christ.

III. CHRIST INSPIRES THE POWER NECESSARY FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. To live as Christ lived! To deny ourselves and serve Christ! These are hard things, impossible simply as duties to be performed in our own strength. But the gospel of the cross is "the power of God." Morally, the influence of the love of Christ constraining us is great. Spiritually, the power of the indwelling Christ is the real secret of the Christian life.—W. F. A.

Vers. 23, 24.—*A strait.* St. Paul is in a strait between his personal desire to depart and be with Christ, and his unselfish willingness to remain on earth for the good of the Church.

1. THE PERSONAL DESIRE TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST. This is no mere sentimental yearning for death, such as very young people sometimes dream about. St. Paul is an old man, and old men commonly cling to life. He is in bonds, however; he has fought a good fight; he feels the weariness of a life of extraordinary hardship and toil; soberly, earnestly, reverently, he longs to be with Christ. 1. *St. Paul had a grand faith in the future life.* He was not simply resigned, he longed for the great change. His was not Hamlet's wish—

"To die,—to sleep,—  
No more; and, by a sleep, to say we end  
The heart-ahe, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to."

Many have devoutly wished for this consummation, longing only to be at peace, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." St. Paul's great desire was positive—life with Christ. 2. *The essential Christian blessedness is to be with Christ.* We know exceedingly little about the future life. When we pass from rhetorical images to distinct facts, the chief, almost the only, thing we know is that Christians will be with Christ (John xiv. 3).

"My knowledge of that life is small,—  
The eye of faith is dim;  
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,  
And I shall be with him."

Note: (1.) Only they who have followed Christ on earth can dwell with Christ in heaven. (2.) Only they who have loved Christ on earth can rejoice to depart and be with Christ in heaven. It is far better to depart, just because, and only because, Christ is far dearer than all earthly things; for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

II. THE UNSELFISH WILLINGNESS TO REMAIN ON EARTH TO SERVE THE CHURCH. St. Paul was resigned to life. His conception of Christianity was unselfish service. Men sometimes ask—Why are not Christians taken straight to heaven out of the troubles and temptations of this world? One reason for remaining here is their own discipline. Another is the work they have to do. As Christ came into the world to bless mankind,

Christians are retained in the world that they may be the salt of the earth. But they should remember that they are pilgrims and strangers; in the world, but not of it; serving the world, but looking for their greatest joy above it. Let every man ask himself—Is it for the good of my fellow-men that I should be continued in life? How many useful lives are cut down! How many cumberers of the ground are spared by the long-suffering mercy of God, in the hope that they may yet bear fruit, though at the eleventh hour!—W. F. A.

Ver. 29.—*Suffering in behalf of Christ.* St. Paul feels peculiar sympathy for the Philippians on account of the fact that they are like himself in suffering persecution on account of Christ. Common sufferings promote common sympathies. Only they who have suffered themselves can understand the sufferings of others. Thus it seems to be part of the mission of pain to enlarge and deepen our sympathies.

I. CHRISTIANS MAY BE CALLED TO SUFFER IN BEHALF OF CHRIST. Let a man count the cost. To be a Christian is not only to believe on Christ. It may involve loss, pain, death. 1. We may suffer *through our connection* with Christ. Thus was it with the persecuted. Now, we may have to give up lucrative but un-Christlike occupations, and to meet with ridicule or opposition in our attempt to serve Christ faithfully. 2. We may suffer *for the cause of Christ.* We may serve him by our suffering. Faithful endurance is itself a grand witness to Christ. The martyr preaches Christ as truly as the missionary. Even the patient endurance of pain because it is Christ's will that we should bear it does honour to Christ. Many a helpless sufferer, who thinks his life a useless burden to others, teaches such high lessons by the spirit of faith and love with which he endures, that he serves Christ more effectually in his sick-chamber than others by the most vigorous activity in wide fields of enterprise.

II. IT IS A REAL BLESSING TO BE PERMITTED TO SUFFER IN BEHALF OF CHRIST. St. Paul regards the fact with joy. 1. It is *proof of fidelity.* Not being “affrighted by the adversaries,” the persecuted have their faith confirmed in their trials. 2. It is *a means of serving Christ.* It is an honour and a joy to serve Christ in any way, and most of all where the service is most effective. 3. It is a proof of *peculiar distinction.* The best soldiers are selected for the hardest service. The martyrs are the flower of the Christian army. It will lead to the *greatest reward*, (1) because the most arduous task will justly receive the richest recompense; and (2) because the peace and joy of heaven will be intensified by contrast with the pain and war of earth. Only the toiler can know the true sweetness of rest, and only the sufferer the deep blessedness of heaven.—W. F. A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1.—*If there be therefore, any consolation in Christ.* Mark the fervour of the apostle. “*Ορα πῶς λαταρῶς, πῶς σφοδρῶς, πῶς μετὰ συμπαθειῶν πολλῆς* (Chrysostom). He appeals to the Christian experience of the Philippians; if these experiences are real, as they are; facts verified in the believer's consciousness; not talk, not mere forms of speech,—then fulfil ye my joy. *Consolation*; perhaps “*exhortation*” is the more suitable rendering in this place: if the presence of Christ, if communion with Christ, hath power to stir the heart, to stimulate the emotions, to constrain the will. *If any comfort of love;* comfort springing out of love. Love is the subjective result of the presence of Christ as an objective reality, and with love comes comfort (comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 3 and 1 Thess. ii. 11). *If any fellow-*

ship of the Spirit. If the indwelling of the Holy Ghost be true, a felt reality in the Christian life. Not, as some understand, “*If there be any fellowship of spirit among themselves.*” If any bowels and mercies. Bowels (see note on ch. i. 8), the seat of the feelings of compassion; mercies, those feelings themselves. The pronoun “any,” according to the reading of all the best manuscripts, is masculine singular; the word “bowels,” being neuter plural: *εἴ τις σπλάγχνα*. If St. Paul really wrote thus, we must suppose that the warmth of his feelings suddenly led him to substitute *σπλάγχνα* for some other word originally in his thoughts. “Under any circumstances,” says Bishop Lightfoot, “the reading *εἴ τις* is a valuable testimony to the scrupulous fidelity of the early transcribers, who copied the text as they found it, even when it contained readings so manifestly difficult.”

Ver. 2.—**Fulfil ye my joy.** St. Paul has already (ch. i. 4) spoken of his joy derived from the life and conduct of the Philippian Christians; now he asks them to complete his joy by living in unity. There were disagreements among them (ch. iv. 2). **That ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** The apostle's earnestness leads him to dwell on the idea of unity, clothing the one thought again and again in different words. *Βαβαί*, says Chrysostom, *ποσάκις τὸ αὐτὸν λέγει ἀπὸ διαλέξεως πολλῆς.* “Having the same love:” loving and beloved; *δοκοὺς καὶ φιλεῖν καὶ φιλεῖσθαι* (Chrysostom). “Being of one accord (*σύμψυχοι*)” Bishop Ellicott renders more literally, “With accordant souls minding the one thing.”

Ver. 3.—Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory. Not “strife,” but “faction,” as R.V. The word is the same as that rendered “contention” in ch. i. 16, where see note. Party spirit is one of the greatest dangers in running the Christian race. Love is the characteristic Christian grace; party spirit and vain-glory too often lead professing Christians to break the law of love. But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. In *your* lowliness; the article seems to have a possessive sense, the lowliness characteristic of Christians, which you as Christians possess. *Ταπεινόφροστην* is an exclusively New Testament word: the grace was new, and the word was new. The adjective *ταπεινός* in classical Greek is used as a term of reproach—abject, mean. The life of Christ (“I am meek and lowly in heart”) and the teaching of Christ (“Blessed are the poor in spirit”) have raised lowliness to a new position, as one of the chief features in the true Christian character. Here St. Paul bids us, as a discipline of humility, to look at our own faults and at the good points in the character of others (comp. Rom. xii. 10).

Ver. 4.—Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Translate, “looking,” as R.V., not making one's own interest the one only object of life, but regarding also the interests, feelings, wishes, of others. Each man must in a measure look at his own things,—the *kai* implies that; but he must consider others if he is a Christian indeed.

Ver. 5.—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; literally, according to the reading of the best manuscripts, *mind this in you which was also (minded) in Christ Jesus.* Many manuscripts take the words “every man” (*ἕκαστοι*) of ver. 4 with ver. 5: “All of you mind this.” The words, “in Christ Jesus,” show that the corresponding words, “in you,” cannot mean “among you,” but in yourselves, in your heart. The apostle refers us to the supreme example of

unselfishness and humility, the Lord Jesus Christ. He bids us mind (comp. Rom. viii. 5) the things which the Lord Jesus minded, to love what he loved, to hate what he hated; the thoughts, desires, motives, of the Christian should be the thoughts, desires, motives, which filled the sacred heart of Jesus Christ our Lord. We must strive to imitate him, to reproduce his image, not only in the outward, but even in the inner life. Especially here we are bidden to follow his unselfishness and humility.

Ver. 6.—Who, being in the form of God. The word rendered “being” (*ὑπάρχων*) means, as R.V. in margin, being *originally*. It looks back to the time before the Incarnation, when the Word, the *λόγος οὐσίας*, was with God (comp. John viii. 58; xvii. 5, 24). What does the word *μορφή*, form, mean here? It occurs twice in this passage—ver. 6, “form of God;” and ver. 7, “form of a servant;” it is contrasted with *σχῆμα*, fashion, in ver. 8. In the Aristotelian philosophy (*vide* ‘De Anima,’ ii. 1, 2) *μορφή* is used almost in the sense of *εἶδος* or *τὸ τι ἦν εἶναι*, as that which makes a thing to be what it is, the sum of its essential attributes: it is the form, as the expression of those essential attributes, the permanent, constant form; not the fleeting, outward *σχῆμα*, or fashion. St. Paul seems to make a somewhat similar distinction between the two words. Thus in Rom. viii. 29; Gal. iv. 19; 2 Cor. iii. 18; ch. iii. 10, *μορφή* (or its derivatives) is used of the deep inner change of heart, the change which is described in Holy Scripture as a new creation; while *σχῆμα* is used of the changeable fashion of the world and agreement with it (1 Cor. vii. 31; Rom. xii. 2). Then, when St. Paul tells us that Christ Jesus, being first in the form of God, took the form of a servant, the meaning must be that he possessed originally the essential attributes of Deity, and assumed in addition the essential attributes of humanity. He was perfect God; he became perfect Man (comp. Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 4). For a fuller discussion of the meanings of *μορφή* and *σχῆμα*, see Bishop Lightfoot's detached note ('Philippians,' p. 127), and Archbishop Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament,' sect. lxx. Thought it not robbery to be equal with God; R.V. “counted it not a prize [margin, ‘a thing to be grasped’] to be on an equality with God.” These two renderings represent two conflicting interpretations of this difficult passage. Do the words mean that Christ asserted his essential Godhead (“thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” as A.V.), or that he did not cling to the glory of the Divine majesty (“counted it not a prize,” as R.V.)? Both statements are true in fact. The grammatical form of the word *ἀπαγγέλως*, which properly implies

an action or process, favours the first view, which seems to be adopted by most of the ancient versions and by most of the Latin Fathers. On the other hand, the form of the word does not exclude the passive interpretation; many words of the same termination have a passive meaning, and ἀπταγμός itself is used in the sense of ἀπταγμός by Eusebius, Cyril of Alexandria, and a writer in the 'Catena Possini' on Mark x. 42 (the three passages are quoted by Bishop Lightfoot, *in loco*). The Greek Fathers (as Chrysostom, 'Ο τοῦ Θεοῦ υἱὸς οὐκ ἐφοβήθη καταβῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀξιώματος, etc.) generally adopt this interpretation. And the context seems to require it. The aorist ἤγκαρτο points to an act, the act of abnegation; not to a state, the continued assertion. The conjunction "but" (ἀλλὰ) implies that the two sentences are opposed to one another. He did not grasp, but, on the contrary, he emptied himself. The first interpretation involves the tacit insertion of "nevertheless;" he asserted his equality, but nevertheless, etc. And the whole stress is laid on the Lord's humility and unselfishness. It is true that this second interpretation does not so distinctly assert the divinity of our Lord, already sufficiently asserted in the first clause, "being in the form of God." But it implies it. Not to grasp at equality with God would not be an instance of humility, but merely the absence of mad impiety, in one who was not himself Divine. On the whole, then, we prefer the second interpretation. Though he was from the beginning in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped, a prize to be tenaciously retained. Not so good is the view of Meyer and others: "Jesus Christ, when he found himself in the heavenly mode of existence of Divine glory, did not permit himself the thought of using his equality with God for the purpose of seizing possessions and honour for himself on earth." The R.V. rendering of the last words of the clause, "to be on an equality," is nearer to the Greek and better than the A.V., "to be equal with God." Christ was equal with God (John v. 18; x. 30). He did not cling to the outward manifestation of that equality. The adverbial form ἵνα implies the state or mode of equality rather than the equality itself.

Ver. 7.—**But made himself of no reputation**; rather, as R.V., *but emptied himself*; not, indeed, of the Godhead, which could not be, but of its manifestation, its glory. This he did once for all, as the aorist implies, at the Incarnation. The word "emptied" involves a previous fulness, "a precedent plenitude" (Pearson on the Creed, iii. 25). The Divine majesty of which he emptied himself was his own, his own rightful prerogative; and his humiliation was his own

voluntary act—he emptied himself. "He used his equality with God as an opportunity, not for self-exaltation, but for self-abasement" (Alford). "Manebat plenus, Joh. i. 14, et tamou perinde se gessit ac si inanis esset" (Beugel). And took upon him the form of a servant; rather, as R.V., *taking the form*. The two clauses refer to the same act of self-humiliation regarded from its two sides. He emptied himself of his glory, taking at the same time the form (*μορφὴν*, as in ver. 6, the essential attributes) of a servant, literally (*ὑπάρχων*) in the form of God; he took (*λαβὼν*) the form of a slave. The Godhead was his by right, the manhood by his own voluntary act: both are equally real; he is perfect God and perfect Man. Isaiah prophesied of Christ (Isa. xl ix. and lli.; comp. Acts iii. 13, in the Greek or R.V.) as the Servant of Jehovah; he came to do the Father's will, submitting his own will in all things: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (comp. Matt. xx. 27, 28; Mark x. 44, 45). And was made in the likeness of men; translate, *becoming*, or, as R.V., *being made* (aorist participle). This clause is another description of the one act of the Incarnation: he *was* God, he *became* man. Form (*μορφὴ*) asserts the reality of our Lord's human nature. Likeness (*δημοτικά*) refers only to external appearance: this word, of course, does not imply that our Lord was not truly man, but, as Chrysostom says ('Hom.', viii. 247), he was more than man; "We are soul and body, but he is God and soul and body." *The likeness of men*; because Christ is the Representative of humanity: he took upon him, not a human person, but human nature. He is one person in two natures. As Bishop Lightfoot says, "Christ, as the second Adam, represents, not the individual man, but the human race."

Ver. 8.—**And being found in fashion as a man**. He humbled himself in the Incarnation; but this was not all. The apostle has hitherto spoken of our Lord's Godhead which he had from the beginning, and of his assumption of our human nature. He now speaks of him as he appeared in the sight of men. The aorist participle, "being found (*εἴπεθεις*)" refers to the time of his earthly life when he appeared as a man among men. Fashion (*στιχῆμα*), as opposed to form (*μορφὴ*), implies the outward and transitory. In outward appearance he was as a man; he was more, for he was God. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; translate, as R.V., *becoming obedient*. The participle implies that the supreme act of self-humiliation consisted in the Lord's voluntary submission to death. The obedience of his perfect life extended even unto death. "He taketh away [literally,

'beareth,' *αἴπερ*] the sin of the world;" "The wages of sin is death;" therefore he suffered death for the sin which, himself sinless, he vouchsafed to bear. Here we may remark in passing that this connection of death with sin must have made death all the more awful to our sinless Lord. **Even the death of the cross.** No ordinary death, but of all forms of death the most torturing, the most full of shame—a death reserved by the Romans for slaves, a death accursed in the eyes of the Jews (Deut. xxi. 23).

Ver. 9.—Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. The exaltation is the reward of the humiliation: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Better, as R.V., *highly exalted*. The aorist (*τετέρψωσεν*) refers to the historical facts of the Resurrection and Ascension. And given him a Name which is above every name; read and translate, as R.V., *and gave unto him the Name*. The two aorist verbs, "highly exalted" and "freely gave" (*ἐχαρισταρο*), refer to the time of our Lord's resurrection and ascension. He voluntarily assumed a subordinate position; God the Father exalted him. We must read, with the best manuscripts, *the Name*. This seems to mean, not the name Jesus, which was given him at his circumcision, in accordance with the angel's message; but the name Lord or Jehovah (comp. ver. 11), which was indeed his before his incarnation, but was given (comp. Matt. xxviii. 18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth") to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son, God and Man in one Person. Or more probably, perhaps, the word "Name" is used here, as so often in the Hebrew Scriptures, for the majesty, glory, dignity, of the God-head. Compare the oft-repeated words of the psalmist, "Praise the Name of the Lord." So Gesenius, in his Hebrew lexicon on the word *שם*, explains the Name of the Lord as (b) Jehovah as being called on and praised by men; and (c) the Deity as being present with mortals (comp. Eph. i. 21; Heb. i. 4).

Ver. 10.—That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; translate, *in the name*, not *at* (comp. Isa. xlv. 23, quoted in Rom. xiv. 10, 11). The words may mean, either that all prayer must be offered to God in the name of Jesus, through his mediation; or that all creation must offer prayer to him. Both alternatives are true, and perhaps both are covered by the words; but the second seems to be principally intended (comp. Ps. lxxiii. 4, "I will lift up my hands in thy Name." Comp. also (in the Greek) Ps. xlili. 9; civ. 3; 1 Kings viii. 44; also the common Septuagint phrase, *Ἐπικαλεῖσθαι ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου*). Observe, the words are, not "the name Jesus," but "the name of Jesus;" the name, that is, which God freely gave to him (ver. 9). It is the name which

is above every name, that is, the majesty, the glory of Jesus, which is to be the object of Christian worship. The end of the whole passage being the exaltation of Jesus, it seems more natural to understand this verse of worship paid to Jesus than of worship offered through him to God the Father. Observe also that the words (Isa. xlv. 23) on which this passage is formed are the words of Jehovah: "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." They could not be used without impiety of any but God. Of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Perhaps the angels, the living, and the dead; or, more probably (comp. Rev. v. 13 and Eph. i. 21, 22), all creation, animate and inanimate, is represented as uniting in the universal adoration.

Ver. 11.—And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every tongue; all creatures endowed with the gift of speech. The word rendered "confess" is commonly associated with the idea of thanksgiving, as in Matt. xi. 25, and generally in the Septuagint. Every tongue shall confess with thankful adoration that he who took upon him the form of a slave, is Lord of all. To the glory of God the Father (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 28, "That God may be all in all"). The glory of God the Father, from whom, as the original Source, the whole scheme of salvation proceeds, is the supreme and ultimate object of the Saviour's incarnation.

Ver. 12.—Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. St. Paul passes to exhortation grounded on the Lord's perfect example. "Ye obeyed" (*ὑπήκοούσατε*) answers to the *γενόμενος ὑπήκοος* of ver. 8, and *τὴν ἐαυτῶν ἵστημι* corresponds with the Saviour's exaltation described in vers. 9—11. He encourages them by acknowledging their past obedience; he urges them to work, not for the sake of approving themselves to their earthly teacher, but to think of their unseen Lord, and to realize his presence all the more in St. Paul's absence. Work out your own salvation. Complete it; God has begun the work; carry it out unto the end. Comp. the same word in Eph. vi. 13, "having done all." Christ's work of atonement is finished: work *from* the cross: carry out the great work of sanctification by the help of the Holy Spirit. *Your own*: it is each man's own work; no human friend, no pastor, not even an apostle, can work it for him. With fear and trembling (comp. 2 Cor. vii. 15 and Eph. vi. 5). "Servi esse debetis exemplo Christi" (Bengel). Have an eager, trembling anxiety to obey God in all things, considering the tremendous sacrifice of Christ, the unspeakable depth and tenderness of

his love, the immense importance of a present salvation from sin, the momentous preciousness of a future salvation from death.

Ver. 13.—For it is God which worketh in you. "Præsens vobis," says Bengel, "etiam abente me." *Worketh* (*ἐργάζων*); not the same word as "work out" (*κατεργάζεσθε*) in ver. 12: acts powerfully, with energy. *In vobis*: not merely among you, but in the heart of each individual believer. Both to will and to do; translate, with R.V., to work; the same word as before, *ἐργάζειν*. "Nos ergo volumus, sed Deus in nobis operatur et velle: nos ergo operamur, sed Deus in nobis operatur et operari" (Augustine, quoted by Meyer). The grace of God is alleged as a motive for earnest Christian work. The doctrines of grace and free-will are not contradictory: they may seem so to our limited understanding; but in truth they complete and supplement one another. St. Paul does not attempt to solve the problem in theory; he bids us solve it in the life of faith (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 24, "So run that ye may obtain;" and Rom. ix. 16, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy"). Of his good pleasure (*εὐδοκίας*). As the glory of God is the ultimate end (ver. 11), so the good will of God is the first cause of our salvation: "God will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4).

Ver. 14.—Do all things without murmurings and disputings. Obedience must be willing and cheerful. The word rendered "murmurings" (*γογγυσμάτων*) is that constantly used in the Septuagint of the murmurings of the Israelites during their wanderings. *Διαλογισμοί* may mean, as here rendered, "disputings," or more probably, in accordance with the New Testament use of the word, questionings, doubtings. Submission to God's will must be inward as well as outward.

Ver. 15.—That ye may be blameless and harmless; read, with the best manuscripts, *that ye may become*; an exhortation to continued progress. "Harmless;" rather, pure, simple; literally, *unmixed*. The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; rather, *children*, without the article. "The slave may murmur," says Chrysostom, "but what son will murmur, who, while working for his father, works also for himself?" Substitute "blameless" for "without rebuke," and "generation" for "nation." There is a close resemblance here, especially in the Greek, and an evident reference to Deut. xxxii. 5. The Philippians are exhorted to exhibit in their lives a contrast to the behaviour of the rebellious Israelites. *Among whom ye shine as lights in the world*; not "shine," but, as R.V., *are seen or appear*. *Lights*; literally, *luminaries*. The word is used in Gen. i. 14, 16 of the sun and moon. Comp. Eccles. xliv. 7 and

Wisd. xiii. 2, "where φωτῆπες δύρανον is exactly equivalent to φωτῆπες ἐν κοσμῷ here, the κοσμός of this place being the material world, the firmament; not the ethical world, which has been already expressed by the crooked and perverse nation" (Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament').

Ver. 16.—Holding forth the word of life. Holding out to others. Meyer translates "possessing," and others, as Bengel, "holding fast." This clause should be taken with the first clause of ver. 15, "That ye may be blameless," etc., the words, "among whom," etc., being parenthetical. That I may rejoice in the day of Christ; literally, *for matter of boasting to me against the day of Christ*. He boasts or glories in their salvation. "The day of Christ," says Bishop Lightfoot, "is a phrase peculiar to this Epistle, more commonly it is 'the day of the Lord.'" That I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain; translate, *did not*. The verbs are aorist. He looks back upon his finished course (comp. Gal. ii. 2).

Ver. 17.—Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith. He again compares the advantages of life and death, as in ch. i. 20—25. In the last verse he was speaking of the possibility of looking back from the day of Christ upon a life of prolonged labour. Here he supposes the other alternative. The form of the sentence, the particles used (*εἰ καὶ*), and the indicative verb, all imply that the apostle looked forward to a martyr's death as the probable end of his life of warfare: Yea, if I am even offered, as seems likely, and as I expect. *Offered*; the word means "poured out" as a libation or drink offering. St. Paul regards his blood shed in martyrdom as a libation poured forth in willing sacrifice. See 2 Tim. iv. 6, 'Εγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδομαι, "I am already being poured forth: the libation is commencing, the time of my departure is at hand." Compare also the similar words of Ignatius, 'Rom.' 2, and the words of the dying Seneca (Tacitus, 'Annals' xv. 64). Some think that the apostle, writing, as he does, to converted heathen, draws his metaphor from heathen sacrifices: in those sacrifices the libation was a much more important element than the drink offering in the Mosaic rites; and it was poured *upon* the sacrifice, whereas the drink offering seems to have been poured around the altar, not upon it. On the other hand, the preposition *ἐν* is constantly used of the Jewish drink offering, and does not necessarily mean upon, but only "in addition to," or "at;" the drink offering being an accompaniment to the sacrifice. *Services* (*λειτουργία*). This important word denotes in classical Greek (1) certain costly public offices at Athens, discharged by the richer citizens in rotation; (2) any service or fun-

tion. In the Greek Scriptures it is used of priestly ministrations (Hob. viii. 6; ix. 21; comp. also Rom. xv. 16). In ecclesiastical Greek it stands for the order of the Holy Communion, the ancient liturgies; it is sometimes used loosely for any set form of public prayer. The analogy of Rom. xii. 1, where St. Paul exhorts Christians to present their bodies a living sacrifice, suggests that here the Philippians are regarded as priests (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 5), offering the sacrifice of their faith, their hearts, themselves, in the ministrations of the spiritual priesthood; St. Paul's blood being represented as the accompanying drink offering. Others, comparing Rom. xv. 16, where also sacrificial words are used, regard St. Paul himself as the ministering priest, and understand the metaphor of a priest slain at the altar, his blood being shed while he is offering the sacrifice of their faith. I joy, and rejoice with you all. Meyer, Bengel, and others prefer "congratulate" as the rendering of *συγχαλω*, "I rejoice with you."

Ver. 18.—For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me; or, as R.V., *in the same manner*. Their joy is to be like his, to mingle with his joy. The second clause may be rendered, as in ver. 17, "and congratulate me."

Ver. 19.—But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you; read and translate, with R.V., *I hope in the Lord Jesus*. He had urged them, in ver. 12, not to depend too much on human teachers; but "much more in my absence work out your own salvation;" still he will give them what help he can—he will send Timotheus. *In the Lord Jesus* (comp. ch. i. 8, 14; ii. 24). Bishop Lightfoot has a beautiful note here: "The Christian is a part of Christ, a member of his body. His every thought and word and deed proceed from Christ, as the centre of volition. Thus he loves in the Lord, he hopes in the Lord, he boasts in the Lord, he labours in the Lord. He has one guiding principle in acting and forbearing to act, 'only in the Lord' (1 Cor. vii. 39)." That I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. Timothy is both to assist the Philippians by his presence and counsel, and to comfort St. Paul by bringing back tidings of their Christian life.

Ver. 20.—For I have no man like-minded; literally, *of equal soul* (comp. Deut. xiii. 6, "Thy friend, which is as thine own soul"). "Timotheus," says Bengel, "is a second Paul: where he is, there you should think that I myself am present." Others, not so well, explain the words, "I have no one like Timothy." The expression must, of course, be limited to those present at the moment, and available for the mission: it cannot include St. Luke. Who will naturally care for your state (*σορτις*); such as will care.

*Naturally* (*γνητῶς*: comp. 1 Tim. i. 2, where St. Paul calls Timothy "mine own son in the faith," *γνήτορ τέκνον*); with a true, genuine affection. Timothy's love for St. Paul as his spiritual father will inspire him with a genuine love for those who were so dear to St. Paul. *Care* is a strong word, *μερισμός*, will be anxious (comp. Matt. vi. 31).

Ver. 21.—For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. *All of them*, he says (*οἱ πάντες*): Timothy is the one exception. He calls those about him brethren in ch. iv. 21; but, it seems, they were not like St. Paul, not willing to spend and to be spent for the salvation of souls. It was a great sacrifice in one who so yearned for Christian sympathy to submit to the absence of the one true loving friend. St. Paul's spiritual isolation increases our wonder and admiration for the strain of holy joy which runs through this Epistle.

Ver. 22.—But ye know the proof of him. Ye recognize from your former experience (Acts xvi.) his approved character. That, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel; translate, with R.V., *that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel. Served* (*έδούλευσεν*); as a slave. He was both a son and servant to St. Paul, and also a fellow-worker with St. Paul, both being slaves of God.

Ver. 23.—Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. *Presently*; rather, *forthwith*, as R.V. Dr. Farrar translates, "As soon as I get a glimpse." The oldest manuscripts here read *ἀφίδω* (remarkable for the aspirate) instead of *ἀπίδω*.

Ver. 24.—But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly. Notice the variations of tone respecting his prospects of release. "I know" (ch. i. 25), "I hope" (Philem. 22, in the Greek), "I trust" here. The apostle was subject, like all of us, to changing currents of thought, to the ebb and flow of spirits; but his trust was always in the Lord. "Behold," says Chrysostom, "how he makes all things depend upon God." His hope, in all probability, was fulfilled (see Titus iii. 12).

Ver. 25.—Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus; translate, *but I count it necessary*. *Ὑησάυρη* here and *ἐπεμψα* in ver. 28 are epistolary aorists; they point, that is, to the time of reading the letter, not to that of writing it; and are therefore to be rendered by the English present. Epaphroditus is mentioned only in this Epistle. Epaphras is the contracted form, but the name is a common one, and there is no evidence of his identity with the Epaphras of Colossians and Philemon. He seems to have been the bearer of this Epistle. St. Paul felt that to come himself, or even to

send Timothy, might possibly not be in his power; he thought it necessary, a matter of duty, to send Epaphroditus at once. **My brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier.** Mark how the epithets rise one above another; they imply fellowship in religion, in work, in endurance. **But your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.** "Your" refers to both clauses; "your messenger, and (your) minister to my need." Epaphroditus had brought to St. Paul the contributions of the Philippians (ch. iv. 18). Some think that the word rendered "messenger" (*ἀπόστολος*, literally "apostle") means that Epaphroditus was the apostle, that is, the bishop of the Philippian Church. It may be so (comp. ch. iv. 3. and note); but there is no proof of the establishment of any diocesan bishops, except St. James at Jerusalem, at so early a period. The word *ἀπόστολος*, both here and in 2 Cor. viii. 23 (*ἀπόστολος ἐκκλησῶν*), is probably used in its first meaning in the sense of messenger, or delegate. The Greek word for minister, *λειτουργός*, seems to imply, like *λειτουργία* in ver. 30, that St. Paul regarded the alms of the Philippians as an offering to God, ministered by Epaphroditus. (But see Rom. xiii. 6, also 2 Kings iv. 43; vi. 15, etc. in the Greek.)

Ver. 26.—**For he longed after you all.** The verb is strengthened by the preposition: "was eagerly longing." Perhaps it should be rendered, "is longing;" like "I count it necessary," in ver. 25. **And was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.** "Full of heaviness" (*ἀδημωνῶν*) is the word used of our blessed Lord in his agony (Matt. xxvi. 37). Some derive it from *ἴδημας*, away from home; others, more probably, from *ἴδην*, in the sense of loathing, weariness, satiety. The word implies heart-sickness, restless, unsatisfied weariness, produced by some overwhelming distress.

Ver. 27.—**For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.** St. Paul recognizes the thankfulness of Epaphroditus for the recovery of his health: he shares that thankfulness himself. **Mark his human sympathies;** he had a "desire to depart," but he rejoices in the recovery of his friend. St. Paul does not seem to have healed Epaphroditus. The power of working miracles, like that of foreseeing the future (comp. ch.

i. 25, and note), was not, it seems, continuous; both were exercised only in accordance with the revealed will of God and on occasions of especial moment.

Ver. 28.—**I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful; rather, I send him (epistolary aorist, as ver. 25), I send him with the letter.** Perhaps "again" is better taken with the following clause: "that when ye see him, ye may again rejoice." Note St. Paul's ready sympathy with the Philippians: their restored joy will involve a diminution of his sorrow. Mark also the implied admission that sorrows must still remain, though spiritual joy brightens and relieves them. "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. vi. 10).

Ver. 29.—**Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: In the Lord (see note on ver. 19; comp. Rom. xvi. 2).** With joy on every account. Notice the constant repetition of the word "joy," characteristic of this Epistle.

Ver. 30.—**Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death.** The readings vary between "Christ" and "the Lord." One ancient manuscript reads simply, "for the work's sake." The work in this case consisted in ministering to the wants of St. Paul. Translate the following words, with R.V., *he came nigh unto death. Not regarding his life; rather, as R.V., hazarding his life*, which translation represents the best-supported reading, *παραβολευσάμενος*: the verb literally means "to lay down a stake, to gamble." Hence the word *Parabolani*, the name given to certain brotherhoods in the ancient Church who undertook the hazardous work of tending the sick and burying the dead in times of pestilence. The A.V. represents the reading *παραβολευσάμενος*, consulting amiss. **To supply your lack of service toward me; rather, as B.V., that which was lacking in your service.** The Philippians are not blamed. Epaphroditus did that which their absence prevented them from doing. His illness was caused by over-exertion in attending to the apostle's wants, or, it may be, by the hardships of the journey. *Τιμῶ* must be taken closely with *ὑστέρημα*, the lack of your presence. St. Paul, with exquisite delicacy, represents the absence of the Philippians as something lacking to his complete satisfaction, something which he missed, and which Epaphroditus supplied.

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1—4.—*Exhortation to unity.* I. **ST. PAUL'S EARNEST DESIRE FOR THE UNITY OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH.** 1. *He desires that unity because he loves them.* His happiness is bound up with their spiritual welfare. "Fulfil ye my joy," he says; he

had learned to look upon the things of others; his deepest joy depended, not on his own personal comforts, but on the spiritual progress of those whom he loved. The remembrance of the Philippians (ch. i. 3, 4), the thought of their Christian love, brought joy to his heart. He asks them now to fulfil his joy, to increase, to complete it; and that not by gifts (gifts they had sent again and again), but by living together in holy love, by keeping "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." 2. *He desires that unity because Christ desires it.* He longed for the Philippians "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." His life was Christ, "Christ liveth in me," he said; therefore he loved with the love of Christ, and Christ prayed for the unity of the Church. That unity (the Lord Jesus said) should be the mark and badge of his disciples (John xiii. 35); it should be the means of leading the world to believe in his mission, in his gospel (John xvii. 21, 23). 3. *He shows the earnestness of his desire by dwelling on the thought of unity.* He repeats his exhortation again and again. "Mind the same things," he says; have the same motives, the same desires, the same circle of thoughts. Have the same love; set your love on the same Lord Jesus Christ; regard for his sake with a common love all who are called by his Name. Let your souls be knit together in a similarity of affections, wishes, feelings. Let the central thought, the aim of your lives, be one; the one thing needful, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

II. THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD URGE CHRISTIANS TO FOLLOW AFTER UNITY. These are to be found in the inner experiences of the Christian life. 1. *The indwelling presence of Christ.* That presence stimulates, quickens, encourages. It is the life of the Christian soul; and that life is diffused through all the members of the one body, through all the branches of the one Vine. Their spiritual life is one; unity aids its development; discord checks its growth. 2. *The felt comfort of Christian love.* Love is the bond of unity; the mutual love of Christians binds together the Christian Church. The truest joy springs out of love. Love comforts, blesses with a holy joy, the heart that entertains its sacred influences. The experience of the blessedness of Christian love should draw Christians nearer to one another in ever closer union. 3. *The gift of the Spirit.* The one Holy Spirit of God, in whose gifts and graces all in varying degrees participate (1 Cor. xii. 4—12), knits together all the members of Christ into one communion and fellowship. The presence of that one Spirit in each individual Christian constitutes the inner unity of the Church. That inner unity should find its natural expression in outward agreement. 4. *The tender feelings of the Christian heart.* The life of Christ in the soul, the presence of the blessed Spirit, lead the disciple to imitate his Lord, to learn of him tenderness and compassion. St. Paul asks the Philippians to show their love, their compassion for him by living in unity. If these spiritual truths are real facts to you, he says, verified in your own experience, fulfil ye my joy; be one in spirit and in heart.

III. UNITY IMPLIES HUMILITY. It is pride, self-conceit, that leads to strife and debate; avoid party spirit, avoid vain-glory. 1. *Party spirit* (*ἐπιθεῖα*) is one of the works of the flesh. (Gal. v. 20.) Party spirit arrays men in factions against one another; they think more of their party than of Christ, more of party triumphs than of the progress of the gospel. This evil tendency soon found a place in the Church. Christians began early to say, "I am of Paul, and I of Cephas." "Is Christ divided?" St. Paul asks in indignant sorrow; there is one body in Christ. 2. *Humility is essential for the preservation of unity.* Vain-glory must be wholly excluded from the motives and thoughts of the true Christian. Human ambitions are empty and vain; the one true ambition is to please God. We are ambitious (*φλογωμόνεθα*), says St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 9), to be well-pleasing unto him. It is vain-glory that distracts the Church and rends the body of Christ. So far as it intrudes itself into the motives, it destroys the truth and inner beauty of the religious life. Humility is a Christian grace, a product of Christianity. The example of Christ has shed a halo round a word which to the heathen spoke of meanness and cowardice. Holy Scripture has taken it and filled it with a new and blessed meaning; it suggests to the Christian the deepest piety, the inmost reality of personal religion. Humility lies at the very basis of the Christian character. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," is the first of the beatitudes. There is no true holiness that is not grounded on humility; for "God giveth grace to the humble." Therefore "let each esteem other better than themselves." The highest saints feel and own themselves to be the chief of sinners. The nearer they draw to the Sun of

righteousness, the more clearly they see their own guilt and unworthiness. "He that abaseth himself shall be exalted." Hence the value of St. Paul's rule to esteem others better than ourselves. We are tempted to magnify our own virtues and the faults of others. True wisdom reverses this. We are to consider others, not for self-exaltation, but for self-abasement. We are to look on our own faults to correct them, on the good points in others to imitate them. 3. *True humility implies unselfishness.* The Christian must not put himself first; he must not regard his own wishes, his own interest, as the one thing to be thought of. He must consider the feelings of others, their desires, their wants. Only true humility will enable him to do this. But it is a hard lesson; there is need of more than words; there is need of a strength not our own; there is need of the stimulating influence of a great example.

**LESSONS.** 1. Learn to search your heart for the realities of Christian experience; you will find them there, if you are indeed living in fellowship with Christ. 2. Pray for grace to feel real joy in the religious progress of others. 3. Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4. Be on your guard against party spirit and vain-glory. Strive to be first in humility and self-abasement; it is the secret of Christian joy and Christian growth.

**Vers. 5-11.—*The example of the Lord Jesus.*** I. **THE IMITATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONE RULE OF CHRISTIAN PRACTICE.** 1. *In the outward life.* He pleased not himself; he sought not the high places of the world; he did not choose a life of ease, comfort, pleasure. He lived for others; he went about doing good; he cared for the temporal needs of the sick and poor. He cared for the souls of all. 2. *In the inner life of thought and feeling.* The Christian must mind the things which the Lord Jesus minded; his thoughts, wishes, motives should be the thoughts, wishes, motives which filled the sacred heart of Jesus Christ our Lord. Holy Scripture bids us purify ourselves even as he is pure. The standard is very high, above us, out of our reach. But it is the end to which the high calling of the Christian points; it should be the object of all the longings of our hearts, to know Christ, to love Christ, to be made like unto Christ—like him in the outward life of obedience, like him in the inner life of holy thought.

II. **THE EXAMPLE DRAWN OUT IN ITS DETAILS.** Christ looked not upon his own things—his Divine glory, his equality with God the Father. He looked upon the things of others—our helplessness, our danger, our need of a Saviour. 1. *What he was.* He was God; the Word was God in the beginning, "God only begotten" (the reading of the most ancient manuscripts in John i. 18), begotten of his Father before the world was. When God only was, and there was none but God; before the ages were, the Word was God. "Before Abraham was, I am," the Saviour said, in John viii. 58, where he vindicates his right to the incommunicable Name, Jehovah. He was God, then, by nature, by inalienable right, one with the Father, being "the Brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his person;" possessed of all the fulness of the Godhead; all the splendour, the glory, the omnipotence, all the essential attributes, of Deity. Thus he was in the form of God, on an equality with God. But he did not count this inconceivable glory a thing to be grasped, to be clung to. He looked on the things of others, blessed be his holy Name! 2. *What he became.* He emptied himself of that effulgence which flesh could not behold and live. He took the form of a servant, the likeness of humanity. In outward fashion he became as one of us, though he ceased not to be God. His whole humiliation, from the Incarnation to the cross, was his own voluntary act: "I lay down my life of myself." That stupendous act of self-sacrifice wholly transcends the reach of human thought. The difference between the greatest king and the meanest slave is absolutely nothing compared with the abyss that separates humanity from Deity. That abyss beyond measure is the measure of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. 3. *Still he looked not on his own things; he chose the lowest place upon earth.* He despised not the carpenter's shop at Nazareth; he shed a new dignity on honest labour by his own example; he gave a new glory to humility which had no glory hitherto; he was content to obey: "Not my will, but thine, be done." He humbled himself and became obedient. His obedience extended through every detail of his most holy life; he sought not his own glory; it culminated in his death: it could reach no further; he became obedient unto death. And that

death was the death of the cross—the cruel, lingering, shameful death reserved for slaves and the worst of criminals. Life has many strange contrasts—wealth and abject poverty, joy and utter misery. There never was contrast like this—omnipotence and seeming helplessness, the glory-throne on high and the awful cross. He loved us so very dearly. That astonishing love is set before us as our example.

III. HIS EXALTATION CONSEQUENT UPON HIS HUMILIATION. 1. *Christ humbled himself, wherefore God highly exalted him.* Wherefore; it is a great word, it expresses a law of God's kingdom. Exaltation follows on self-abasement, glory on humility. It was so with Christ our Lord. God exalted him, the incarnate Son, Jesus, perfect God, but also (blessed be his holy Name!) *perfect Man*, high above all heavens. He became obedient unto death; wherefore God gave unto him the name which is above every name. Unto Jesus, God and Man, all power is given in heaven and in earth, all the unutterable glory, all the majesty of the Godhead. 2. *Therefore all prevailing prayer is made in his Name.* “If ye shall ask anything in my Name, I will do it.” All prayer is offered through his mediation. We plead before the throne of grace his perfect obedience, his precious death, his atoning blood, the blood that cleanseth from all sin. “Through Jesus Christ our Lord” is the prevailing close of every Christian prayer. 3. *He himself is the object of Christian worship.* All creation in heaven and earth and under the earth bows the knee to him in adoration. All tongues must confess with thanksgiving that he is Lord. Worship offered to him redounds to the glory of God the Father, for it is God who exalted him.

IV. THE DISCIPLE IS AS HIS MASTER, THE SERVANT AS HIS LORD. The life of Christ, in a sense, repeats itself in each one of his elect. They share his humiliation, his cross; they shall share his glory, his throne (Rev. iii. 21). 1. *I am crucified with Christ.* We must imitate him in his humiliation, emptying ourselves of pride and self-indulgence. We must deny ourselves, mortifying the old man, crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, dying through the power of the most holy cross to the world and to the flesh. 2. *So shall we rise with him*—now, unto newness of life; hereafter, to behold him in his glory, to sit with him in his throne. “He that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Self-abasement must come first, then the glory; first the cross, then the crown.

LESSONS. 1. Learn never to let a day pass without meditation on the great Example. Contemplate with wondering thankfulness the great mystery of the Incarnation. Strive with all the energy of your spirit to fix your thoughts in awe, in penitence, in adoring love, upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Intense meditation on that tremendous sacrifice is the greatest help towards a holy life. 2. Pray for grace to imitate him in his humility, in his unselfish love.

Vers. 12, 13.—*What should be the result of Christ's example?* 1. OBEDIENCE. 1. *Christ became obedient even unto death.* The Philippians have hitherto been obedient; they were obedient when the apostle called them to faith and repentance; let them be obedient now. 2. *That obedience is due to God who seeth the heart.* We must not depend too much on human teachers, whether present or absent; we must look to the unseen Saviour who is ever present, and work out, each one for himself, our own salvation.

II. EARNEST EFFORT TO SAVE OUR SOULS. 1. *Because our salvation was the end of Christ's humiliation.* He came into the world to save sinners. The greatness of his self-sacrifice shows the momentous importance of the object for which he humbled himself. The cross of Christ throws a bright light on the tremendous alternative—life or death, salvation or damnation. 2. *Because if salvation is lost, all is lost.* The word *σωτηρία* means simply safety—safety from anything that may harm us, from danger, sickness, death. In Holy Scripture it means the safety of the soul, (1) from sin, which is the sickness of the soul; (2) from death, the death of the soul, which is eternal death. It is a precious word, for it points to unspeakable blessedness; an awful word, for it suggests a fearful alternative. It reminds us of that condemnation, that horror of eternal despair, which must be the portion of the lost. That great danger threatens us; we need to be saved from it, and therefore from sin. 3. *Because our salvation must be wrought out by ourselves: no other man can do it for us.* The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour; he is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. “By grace ye are saved, . . . and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

Our salvation is the work of God. But there are two sides to the same great truth. It is his work, and yet it is ours. Both views of the one truth are presented to us in Holy Scripture. Both are true; they meet somewhere above our heads. Now we know in part; our standpoint is not high enough to command a connected view of all God's dealings with men. But we can see far enough to guide us on our way to heaven; we know enough for the needs of the Christian life. We know that Christ is our only Saviour; he came into the world to save sinners; he died for all. But Holy Scripture bids us to carry out the work of salvation in our own souls, to complete it, working from the cross, in the faith of Christ. There is need of persevering energy. Others may guide, comfort, exhort; but each man must work out his own salvation for himself in the depths of his spirit,—it cannot be done by deputy. We must work, for God bids us; we must work, for we have an irresistible consciousness of power to choose the good and to avoid the evil. But we must trust wholly in Christ. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. It is he that saves us, not we ourselves.

III. **A TREMBLING ANXIETY TO PLEASE GOD.** 1. *If we are in earnest, there must sometimes be fear and trembling in our religious life.* The work is so very momentous; it is no matter for indifference or lukewarmness. We must pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, for we were “redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ.” The greatness of the ransom shows the greatness of the danger. We must pray for grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for true religion involves a deep, awful reverence for the majesty of God. Reverence is an essential element in true holiness. “Hallowed be thy Name” is the first petition in the prayer which the Lord himself hath taught us; and with reverence must be mingled holy fear—the fear of undue familiarity intruding itself into our solemn worship; the fear of displeasing God who will judge us, who gave his blessed Son to die for us, by unfaithfulness in our daily lives. 2. *The ground both for fear and for encouragement.* God worketh in us. It is a ground for fear; for if it is God that worketh in us, then to take part with the flesh is to strive against the Most High, to resist the Holy Ghost—a most awful danger. And it is a ground for encouragement; for if it is God that hath begun the good work within us, we may be confident that he will carry it on. His strength, if only we persevere, will be made perfect in our weakness. Man can do nothing without God, and God will do nothing without man. He bids us work out our own salvation, because he worketh in us both to will and to do. Holy desires and just works alike proceed from him. Yet, though he willeth that all men should be saved, all are not saved; for they will not come unto him that they might have life. The problem is insoluble in theory; it is solved in the religious life. If we live in the faith of the Son of God, the very sense of entire dependence upon him will urge us to work out to the end the salvation which he hath wrought for us by his precious blood-shedding, which he is working within us by the gift of his Holy Spirit.

**LESSONS.** 1. You work hard in your outward calling; work hard in your religious life. 2. The alternatives at issue are of stupendous moment; work with fear and trembling. 3. But remember, Christ died for you, God worketh in you. Work from the cross; trust in God, not in your own efforts, however earnest.

**Vers. 14—18.—*The salvation of the Philippians the apostle's joy.*** I. **THEIR OBEDIENCE MUST BE THE READY OBEDIENCE OF LOVE.** Christ died for them, God worketh within them. They have the great gift of reconciliation with God through the precious blood of Christ; they have the indwelling presence of God the Holy Ghost. Therefore: 1. *It is their duty to be cheerful, to render to God a loving service.* A Christian who knows that the Son of God loved him and gave himself for him, has no right to be gloomy and melancholy. There must be no murmurings. The Christian life is a pilgrimage, like the journey of the Israelites from the house of bondage to the promised land, but we must not resemble the Israelites in their constant murmurings against God. Do all things, each duty as it comes, without murmuring. Have a steadfast faith in God as your Father, “who maketh all things work together for good to them that love him;” and in the trustful spirit of a loving faith learn to say, “Thy will be done.” Neither should there be doubtings in the Christian life. The intellect, as well as the will, must submit itself. Our knowledge is imperfect, our mental reach is limited; we can see only a very little way into the mysteries of the

Divine government; we know in part. We must be content with that partial knowledge; we must not venture to question the love, the goodness, the wisdom of God. When harassing doubts arise, we must go, like Asaph the psalmist, into the house of God; then we shall understand as much as we need to know of God's dealings with mankind. These things are hidden from the wise and prudent, but they are *revealed unto babes*. 2. *Cheerful obedience leads to growth in holiness*. If they obey God in all things gladly and lovingly, they will become blameless; others will find no ground of censure in them; their own inner lives will be pure and sincere, without mixture of evil or selfish motive. Simplicity of character is essential, for God seeth the heart. Thus they will be children of God indeed, like those little children of whom is the kingdom of heaven; a contrast to the crooked and perverse generation among whom they live. 3. *They must set a good example*. They are lights in the world—others watch them; they attract by their lives the attention of the surrounding Gentiles; they must hold out to others the Word of life. They must exhibit its influence in their lives, in their conversation. They must preach by word and by example, for Christianity is essentially a missionary religion.

II. SUCH CONDUCT WILL FILL THE APOSTLE WITH JOY. 1. *It will prove that his labour was not in vain*. He glories, not in his own successes or popularity, but in the faith, the love, the obedience of his converts. Such glorying does not fade away; it endures unto the day of Christ. Then, when the apostle presents the Philippian Christians to the Lord, what holy glorying will be his as he looks upon the fruit of his labours! 2. *He is ready for such an end to lay down his life, and that with joy*. He will rejoice to shed his blood as a drink offering to accompany the sacrifice offered by his converts. That sacrifice is their faith; faith is trustfulness, entire dependence upon God, self-surrender. The sacrifice of faith is the sacrifice of self; the spiritual sacrifice which the children of God, as a royal priesthood, are bound to offer. "We offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee." Thus, and thus only, can we work out our own salvation. Such devotion in the Philippians will fill St. Paul with holy joy, though it cost him his life-blood. He rejoices himself at the prospect, he bids them rejoice with him.

LESSONS. Learn: 1. To be cheerful always, never to murmur. 2. To be simple, sincere, truthful, single-minded. 3. To set a good example to others. 4. To rejoice in the salvation of souls.

Vers. 19—24.—*Timothy*. I. *Martyrdom* may come soon; if it comes, the apostle will welcome it with joy; *IF HE LIVES, HE WILL SEND TIMOTHY*. 1. *He hopes to send Timothy almost immediately; he trusts himself to come shortly*. Observe, he hopes *in the Lord*, and he trusts *in the Lord*. "Behold how he refers all things to the Lord," says St. Chrysostom. He submits his hopes and desires, even where the spiritual welfare of his converts seems to be concerned, wholly to the higher will of God. His life was Christ. "Christ liveth in me," he said. Therefore his desires were the desires of Christ, whose abiding presence filled his heart. He hopes in the Lord, in conscious communion with the Lord; his hopes are guided and quickened by the indwelling Saviour. "Only in the Lord" is the rule of the highest Christian life. 2. *He hopes to send Timothy, not for their sakes only, but for his own also*. His own happiness is bound up in the spiritual welfare of his converts; like St. John, he had no greater joy than to hear that his children were walking in the truth. Mark the depth of his Christian affection; how fully he had learned the lessons of his own sweet psalm of love in 1 Cor. xiii.!

II. THE CHARACTER OF *TIMOTHY*. He had his faults; he was timid, nervous, shrinking from opposition. But: 1. *He was a man of God, a man of unfeigned faith and deep Christian love*. Of all St. Paul's companions none was so dear to him as Timothy, "mine own son," as he calls him. 2. *He is like-minded with St. Paul*. St. Paul can trust him wholly; he will act as the apostle himself would have acted; the Philippians should regard his presence as equivalent to the apostle's presence; he is a second Paul. He will seek no selfish ends; he will have a true, genuine anxiety for their welfare. He will be really anxious to do all he possibly can to help the Philippians in their religious life. And that anxiety will be real and sincere, not in

words only, not merely official, but deep-seated in the heart, genuine. Timothy was a true Christian; the Philippians knew him; he had already worked among them; he had been proved, he had laboured with St. Paul, and that for the gospel's sake. Others have selfish aims—they seek their own interests; he will seek the things that are Jesus Christ's, the interests (so to speak) of Christ, that is, the salvation of souls. It is the character of a true Christian minister.

III. ST. PAUL'S LONELINESS. Timothy is the only true friend at hand; Luke and others are absent; those present with him, except Timothy, are half-hearted; all of them, he says, seek their own. St. Paul's whole nature craved for sympathy; his one earthly comfort and support was the sympathy, the love of Christian friends. Once he bitterly felt being left at Athens alone (1 Thess. iii. 1). Now his anxiety to hear the state of the Philippians, his love for them, makes him willing to part with Timothy, and to be left alone in his Roman captivity. We may well wonder at the intensity of his love, the completeness of his self-sacrifice.

LESSONS. 1. The great aim of the Christian life should be to live wholly in the Lord, in his presence, in the constant effort to please him in all things. 2. Communion of Christians with Christians is one of the greatest helps, as it is one of the greatest comforts, in the religious life. 3. Pray to be genuine, absolutely truthful and real; to be, not to seem. 4. A true saint of God can endure isolation. "Who hath the Father and the Son, may be left, but not alone."

Vers. 25-30.—*Epaphroditus.* **L** HIS NAME MEANS "LOVELY." It was not uncommon; it was assumed by the dictator Sulla; it was the name of a freedman of Nero, the master of the philosopher Epictetus. It is derived from the name of the goddess Ἀφρόδιτη, like the corresponding Latin word *venustus* from Venus. But the character of this Epaphroditus was evidently: 1. "Lovely" in the *Christian sense*. He seems to have been, like Jonathan, lovely and pleasant in his life. Like Daniel, he was a "man of loves," full of love both towards St. Paul and towards his friends at Philippi. He was a man of very tender feelings, almost too tender, we might think. But: 2. *He was as brave as he was tender.* St. Paul calls him his brother and companion in labour and fellow-soldier. He was not only a brother in love, a fellow-Christian, but he shared the apostle's labours; he threw himself, heart and soul, into the work of spreading the gospel at Rome; he worked hard, probably in an unhealthy season. He was also the messenger of the Philippians; he readily undertook the long journey, with all its perils and hardships, to minister to the apostle's wants. Doubtless he regarded those ministrations (as St. Paul himself regarded them; see note on ver. 25) as an offering offered gladly unto God. He knew that in ministering to the apostle he was ministering unto God. To relieve the necessities of the saints, to help them by alms, by sympathy, is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. He was a brother in danger, too, a fellow-soldier. He hazarded his life; he shared the apostle's dangers; he willingly exposed himself to risk for the work's sake; his dangerous illness was in some way caused by his unselfish exertions. Yet he was very tender-hearted. He longed after the Philippians; he could not bear the thought of their sorrow and anxiety on account of his sickness and danger. He is an example of that union of seemingly opposite virtues which is sometimes conspicuous in Christ's saints, as it was in Christ himself.

II. HOW PRECIOUS IS THE LIFE OF HOLY MEN! Epaphroditus was evidently one of the bishops (see note on ch. i. 1), possibly the presiding bishop of the Philippian Church. His life was valuable. "God had mercy on him." Perhaps his longer life was necessary for himself, to perfect his repentance; for the Philippians, to carry on the good work which he had begun; for St. Paul, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow. "God had mercy on him." Sometimes in mercy God spares the life of his servants; sometimes in mercy he takes them to himself. We are in his hands, and he is the Most Merciful. He knows better than we what is for our real good. We may pray for health and longer life for our friends, for ourselves, if the prayer is offered in submission to the higher will of God.

III. SUCH MEN SHOULD BE HELD IN REVERENCE. St. Paul bids the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus with every joy—joy on every account, for his sake and for theirs. They were to honour him; for to honour good men is to honour God, the source of all goodness; and reverence for goodness elevates and refines the character.

LESSONS. 1. Learn from the example of Epaphroditus that to minister to God's saints is a high privilege; he risked his life to supply the needs of St. Paul. 2. His love for the apostle did not weaken his love for the Philippian Christians. We must love *all* God's people, not only his highest saints. 3. We may pray that our sick friends may recover their bodily health, *if* it be God's gracious will.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Christian like-mindedness.* It seems strange that the apostle, knowing the difficulty of getting a thousand minds to agree in the reception of intellectual truth, should yet counsel them to seek a unity of opinion. There is nothing strange in the fact when we consider how much the intellect of man is influenced by his moral nature.

I. THE NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF THIS LIKE-MINDEDNESS. “That ye be like-minded, having the same love, with accordant souls minding the one thing.” 1. *It must include a certain intellectual agreement as to matters of doctrine.* It is not possible to understand what may have been the diversity of opinion on points of doctrine which made this counsel necessary. The Philippians are not censured for heresy; but the apostle knows that the “men of the concision” are not far off, and the warning to keep to “the sound doctrine” is neither premature nor unnecessary. 2. *It includes an agreement as to methods and aims.* There were symptoms of jealousy, leading to quarrel, manifest in the conduct of two ladies of this Church (ch. iv. 2), and it is difficult to say how far these women, holding an influential place in the little community, may have disturbed its unity. 3. *It implies an agreement working along the lines of a common love.* Love is a bond—“the bond of perfectness”—just as hatred separates man from man. It produces that harmony of feeling and interests that leads to unity of service.

II. THE TRUE GROUNDS OF THIS LIKE-MINDEDNESS. “If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies.” The apostle grounds his appeal to the Philippians upon their undoubted possession of certain spiritual experiences. 1. “Consolation in Christ.” What stores of consolation are in Christ! “I will not leave you comfortless.” 2. “Comfort of love.” Love has comfort in it, especially when it has a sure resting-place. 3. “Fellowship of the Spirit.” This fellowship involves “the fellowship of the Father and the Son,” and carries with it all the experiences and fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23). It involves unity as one of its essential ideas. 4. “Bowels and mercies.” A tender and compassionate spirit is helpful to unity.

III. THE MINISTER'S JOY PROMOTED BY THE LIKE-MINDEDNESS OF HIS FLOCK. “Fulfil ye my joy.” As nothing so depresses the mind of a minister as intellectual or social dissensions among the members of his flock, so his joy is fulfilled alike in their unity of thought and in the harmony of their feeling and affection.—T. C.

Vers. 3, 4.—*The qualities of Christian like-mindedness.* I. WARNING AGAINST FACTION AND VAIN-GLORY. “Let nothing be done through faction or vain-glory.” True unity of spirit is inconsistent alike with the exaltation of party and the exaltation of self. Faction carries men beyond the bounds of discretion, and rends the unity of the brotherhood. “The beginning of strife is as the letting out of water” (Prov. xvii. 14). It should be “an honour for a man to cease from” it (Prov. xx. 3). Vain-glory, personal vanity, carries men into many follies and sins. “For men to search their own glory is not glory” (Prov. xxv. 29). “There is more hope of a fool than of” such a one (Prov. xxvi. 12). We ought, therefore, to pray, “Remove far from me vanity and lies.”

II. THE ESTIMATE OF A HUMBLE-MINDED MAN. “In humbleness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” This implies: 1. *That we have modest thoughts of ourselves.* (Prov. xxvi. 12.) 2. *That we have a just idea of others' excellences.* (1 Pet. ii. 17.) 3. *That in honour we are to prefer one another.* (Rom. xii. 10.) The reasons for this command are: (1) If we excel others in some things, they may excel us in others (Rom. xii. 4). (2) We know not but others are more dear to God than

ourselves, though they seem inferior to ourselves. (3) It is a good way of preserving peace, as pride causes division among men (Prov. xiii. 10) and separation from God (1 Pet. v. 5).

III. AN UNSELFISH INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF OTHERS. "Not regarding your own interests, but also the interests of others." There is nothing here said inconsistent with the most careful and conscientious discharge of the duty we owe to ourselves. The injunction of the apostle is profoundly Christ-like. It implies: 1. *That we are to desire one another's good.* (1 Tim. ii. 1.) 2. *That we are to rejoice in one another's prosperity.* (Rom. xii. 15.) 3. *That we are to pity one another's misery.* (Rom. xii. 15.) 4. *That we are to help one another in our necessities.* (1 John iii. 17, 18.) It reiterates the command of Christ: "Love one another." No other command can be performed without this one (Rom. xiii. 10); we cannot love God without it (1 John iii. 17); and this is true religion (Jas. i. 27).—T. C.

Vers. 5—8.—*Jesus Christ the supreme Example of humble-mindedness.* "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ." The exhortation to mutual concord is strengthened by a reference to the example of Christ's humiliation on earth.

I. CONSIDER HIS ESSENTIAL PRE-EXISTING GLORY. "Who, subsisting in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." 1. *This language evidently describes Christ before his incarnation, in his Divine glory;* for the pregnant expression, "existing in the form of God," can be understood only of Divine existence with the manifestation of Divine glory. It is similar to the expression, "Who, being the Brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his person" (Heb. i. 3). As to be in the form of a servant implies that he was a servant, so to be in the form of God implies that he was God. The emphatic thought is that he was in the form of God before he was in the form of a servant. 2. *This language exhibits likewise his own consciousness of the relations which subsisted between him and his Father.* "Who counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." The expression, "being in the form of God," is the objective exposition of his Divine dignity; the second expression is the subjective delineation of the same thing. It asserts his conscious equality with God.

II. CONSIDER HIS HUMILIATION. "But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." There is a double humiliation here involved, first objectively, then subjectively, described. 1. *The first is involved in his becoming man.* (1) "He emptied himself." Of what? He did not cease to be what he was, but he emptied himself in becoming another; he became man while he was God; a servant while he was Lord of all. (2) "He took upon him the form of a servant." This marks his spontaneous self-abasement. "O Israel, thou hast made me to serve with thy sins." It is more than an assertion that he assumed human nature, for it is that nature in a low condition. What condescension! "He who is Master of all becomes the slave of all!" (3) "Being made in the likeness of men." He was really the "Word become flesh" (John i. 14), made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), that he might be qualified for his sin-bearing and curse-bearing career. The language of the text explodes all Docetic notions of a mere phantom-body. (4) "Being found in fashion as a man." As the apostle formerly contrasted what he was from the beginning with what he became at his incarnation, so here he contrasts what he is in himself with his external appearance before men. In discourse, in conduct, in action, in suffering, he was found in fashion as a man. 2. *The second humiliation is involved in his obedience to death.* "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This marks his subjective disposition in the sphere in which he placed himself as a servant, with all the obligations of his position (Matt. xx. 28). There was the form of a servant and the obedience of a servant. (1) His abasement took the form of obedience. (a) It was not an obedience necessitated by obligations natural to himself, but was undertaken solely for others in virtue of the covenant in which he acted as God's Servant (Isa. xlii. 1). (b) It was a voluntary obedience. The idea of inevitable suffering, in a world altogether out of joint, is out of the question, for no one could take his life from him, nor inflict suffering of any sort without his will (John x. 18). His vicarious obedience was perfectly free. (2) His abasement involved death. "He

became obedient unto death." It was an obedience from his birth to his death, for it was *unto* death. His obedience was in his death as well as in his life, and he was equally vicarious in both. (3) His abasement involved a shameful death, "even the death of the cross." It was a death reserved for malefactors and slaves. There was pain and shame and curse. Yet "he endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 2). Mark, then, at once, the transcendent love and the transcendent humility of Jesus Christ! What an example to set before the Christians of Philippi! "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."—T. C.

**Vers. 9—11.—*Christ's reward.*** There is a relation between work and reward signified in our Lord's own announcement: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xiv. 11).

**I. CHRIST'S EXALTATION.** "Wherefore also God highly exalted him." This exaltation is associated with his resurrection, his ascension, and his sitting at God's right hand. It was the reward of his obedience unto death, as the Surety-Head of his people. It was a part of his exaltation that God "gave unto him the Name which is above every name"—not Jesus, nor the Son of God—but rank and dignity, majesty and authority.

**II. THE PURPOSE OF THE EXALTATION.** "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Thus is declared the honour paid to Jesus. 1. *Worship.* He is the Object of adoration to all intelligences in heaven, in earth, and under the earth. Christianity is the worship of Jesus Christ. 2. *Open confession of his lordship.* "The knee is but a dumb acknowledgment, but a vocal confession—that doth utter our mind plainly." The lordship thus acknowledged by every tongue has a vast import, both for the Church and for the world. Jesus Christ "died and revived, that he might become Lord both of the living and of the dead" (Rom. xiv. 9). Thus the whole obedience of Christian life is grasped by that lordship, which at the same time controls all the events of human life for the good of the Church.

**III. THE END OF HIS EXALTATION.** "To the glory of God the Father," whose Son he is; their honour and glory being inseparable.—T. C.

**Vers. 12, 13.—*Christian salvation a working out what God works in.*** The apostle, after commanding the Philippians for their obedience to God in his absence, counsels them to continue in that course, working out their salvation for themselves. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

**I. CONSIDER THE MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT.** "Your own salvation." 1. *Salvation is an essentially individual thing between each man and his God.* It is the supreme concernment of every man. Green shows it was the glory of Puritanism that "religion in its deepest and innermost sense had to do, not with Churches, but with the individual soul. It is as a single soul that each Christian claims his part in the mystery of redemption." 2. *Though salvation is God's work, it is yet consistent with Scripture and fact that it should be man's work likewise.* The salvation to be worked out is supposed to be already possessed in its principle or germ; for the apostle addresses this counsel, not to unconverted sinners, but to "saints in Christ Jesus." The breadth of the word "salvation" is to be carefully estimated. Sometimes it is used in Scripture, as we have already seen, as equivalent to justification or pardon; sometimes as equivalent to sanctification; sometimes as equivalent to the final deliverance at death or judgment. Thus it may be regarded as either past, present, or future. It is in the second sense that the apostle uses the expression, for he has special regard here to the development of the Christian life in believers.

**II. THE PROCESS OF WORKING OUT THIS SALVATION.** "Work out your own salvation." 1. *This implies that Christian life is not a mystic and indolent quietism which moves neither hand nor foot, but a state of conscious activity and struggle.* There are theories of sanctification in our day which teach the doctrine of the soul's passivity, as if it lay in the arms of Jesus without effort or almost conscious thought. Such an idea would need a recasting of the whole phraseology of Scripture to justify it. Christian life is always represented in Scripture as a life of watching, of struggle, of

combat. "So run that ye may obtain" (1 Cor. ix. 24); "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air" (1 Cor. ix. 26); "Striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily" (Col. i. 29); "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (ch. iii. 14); "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10). 2. *It implies that God has already worked in what we are to work out.* If we work out anything else, it will be of nature or the devil. If, therefore, we have faith, hope, or love, let us work it out. If we have been begotten again with the incorruptible seed of the Word, work out its imperishable principles in all the lovely consistencies of a holy life. 3. *It implies a constant and faithful use of all the means appointed by God for this end.* (Matt. vi. 33; Acts xiii. 43; Rom. xii. 12.)

III. THE REASON OR ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ENERGY IN THIS WORK. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." 1. *Consider how the encouragement operates.* The believer strives because he is assured of Divine co-operation in the work. There is a spirit of dependence in human life which tends to produce weakness and sterility; but dependence on God is the true spring of all effort, strength, and heroism. Divine grace has no tendency to supersede human effort, but rather to stimulate it to greater results. The fact that an army is led by a matchless general does not make soldiers less, but more, resolute in carrying out his commands. Wellington regarded the presence of Napoleon Bonaparte at the head of his army as equal to a hundred thousand additional bayonets. Let the Christian, then, work out his salvation; for he has God working in him every result involved in it. 2. *Consider the sphere of God's working.* "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The Divine operation touches the first impulse of the will as well as the final achievement that flows from it. Augustine says, "Therefore we will, but God works in us also to will; therefore we work, but God works in us also to work." How natural, then, that believers should attribute everything good in them to Divine grace! 3. *Consider the end and direction of this working.* "Of his good pleasure." God delights in this work, even in the perfection of his saints. It is his good pleasure that they should be holy, pure, loving. 4. *Consider the mystery of the double working here implied.* The apostle does not attempt to explain the blending of the two activities in one glorious work, so as to indicate where the one ends and the other begins. In other words, he does not attempt to reconcile the doctrine of man's freedom with the doctrine of God's sovereignty. This is a deep mystery, which faith can accept, but the philosophies of earth have tried in vain to unravel.

IV. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH BELIEVERS ARE TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION. "With fear and trembling." With an inward distrust of our own power and an anxious solicitude for the constant action of Divine power. There is a fear and a trembling that have a true place in the Christian life, in consideration of our sins and our weaknesses, yet that lead us to cling all the closer to the Ark of our strength. Fear has its place even by the side of faith, pointing its finger to possible dangers. "Thou standest by faith: therefore be thou not high-minded, but fear." But the fear is not that which is hostile to full assurance, but to carnality and recklessness; while the trembling is not that of the slave, but of the child of God, tremblingly alive to all his responsibilities and to the fear of vexing God's Holy Spirit.

V. CONSIDERATIONS WHY WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO DO THIS WORK. 1. *God commands it.* (Acts xvii. 30.) 2. *He shows us how to do it.* (Micah vi. 8.) 3. *He works with us and in us to do it.* 4. *It is the most pleasant work.* (Prov. iii. 17.) 5. *It is most honourable.* (Prov. xii. 26.) 6. *It is most profitable.* (1 Tim. iv. 8.) 7. *It is work not to be begun only, but finished.* (John xvii. 4.) 8. *All other works are sin till this is begun.* (Isa. lxvi. 3.) 9. *Unless it be done, we are undone for ever.* (Luke xiii. 3.)—T. C.

Vers. 14-16.—*The importance of a contented and peaceful habit of soul.* "Do all things without murmurings and disputings."

I. THE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF AN UNMURMURING AND PEACEFUL SPIRIT. 1. *Murmuring is here meant against God.* It may arise (1) from our experience of a disagreeable lot or from dark providences; or (2) from an unthankful spirit. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job ii. 10.) We

ought to be "content with such things as we have" (Heb. xiii. 5), for "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. vi. 6). We are, therefore, to do nothing murmuringly, because such an attitude of mind seems to imply a too slender trust in the resources of Divine goodness and wisdom. 2. *The disputings here meant point to those dissensions which mar the peace of the Church.* We ought to avoid disputings, because (1) we know not where they may end; (2) because they often arise from pride and ignorance (1 Tim. vi. 4); (3) because they disturb others as well as ourselves (Luke xxi. 19); (4) because they produce confusion and evil works (Jas. iii. 16, 17); (5) because, if we live in peace, God will be with us (2 Cor. xiii. 11).

II. THE OBJECT AND AIM OF SUCH A SPIRIT. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life." They were to be examples to the world of high Christian living. 1. *Their lives were to be marked by a purity, a loftiness, a consistency, which would disarm the censure of the world.* They were, as children of God, to present no spots upon which the eye of a critical generation might rest with a scorn for goodness. 2. *Their lives were to be marked, not by a mere absence of fault, but by a conspicuous exhibition of all those positive graces that are identified with the full power of the Word of life.* (1) The lives of Christians ought to be a transcript of the Word of life, manifesting its beauty to the world. Thus the saints are to be "living epistles of Christ, to be known and read of all men." (2) They are to shine forth as luminaries in a dark and perverse world (Matt. v. 16). Nearly all the light that fills the world is reflected from a million objects around us, and does not stream down directly from the sun. Similarly, Jesus Christ is the supreme Source of all light—the Sun of righteousness—but his light is reflected upon the world from the millions of believers whom he has enlightened and blessed by his Spirit. Therefore the saints ought to remember the voice of old, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

III. THE ULTIMATE BEARING OF SUCH A SPIRIT UPON THE GLORYING OF THE APOSTLE. "That I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain, neither labour in vain." 1. *It is possible even for an apostle to lose his labour.* It may be in vain to the people who refuse his message, but not to himself (Isa. xlix. 4). 2. *The ministry is a work of great toil and strain.* 3. *The conversion of souls will enhance the joys of heaven to the faithful minister.*—T. C.

Vers. 17, 18.—*The apostle's readiness to sacrifice his life for the Philippians.* "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye jcy, and rejoice with me."

I. MARK THE APOSTLE'S DEEP AFFECTION FOR THE PHILIPPIANS AND HIS INTENSE INTEREST IN THEIR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING. He considered not his life too dear a sacrifice to be made on their behalf.

II. MARK THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRUTH WHICH COULD DEMAND SUCH A SACRIFICE.

III. THE PROSPECT OF MARTYRDOM IN SUCH A CAUSE OUGHT TO BE SUBJECT OF JOY ALIKE TO THE SUFFERER AND TO HIS DISCIPLES.—T. C.

Vers. 19—23.—*The mission of Timothy.* The apostle comforts the Philippians with the intimation that, if he cannot himself visit them, he will send them Timothy, who was already well known to them all.

I. HIS OBJECT IN SENDING TIMOTHY. It was twofold. 1. *To comfort his own heart.* "That I also may be of good heart, when I know your state." The apostle had a tender anxiety respecting the best beloved of all the Churches. 2. *To give them guidance;* for Timothy was one who would "naturally care for their state" with an almost instinctive devotion to their interests.

II. HIS REASON FOR SENDING TIMOTHY IN PREFERENCE TO ANY OTHER. 1. *They had already known Timothy's devotion to the apostle and to the gospel of Christ.* "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel." When the apostle was at Philippi, Timothy—"mine own son in the faith"—was his congenial assistant, obeying his counsel, and imitating his example, in everything that tended to the edification of the Church. 2. *There was no other helper with the apostle at the time possessed of the same quick sympathy with their*

*state as Timothy.* "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state: for they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." (1) The apostle contrasts Timothy with other preachers or evangelists, who sought their own advantage rather than the honour of Christ. He had had sad experience of alienation, half-heartedness, and selfishness in the very circle of the evangelistic companionship. A man's own things may be different from the things of Christ. The highest life is where our interests are identical with the interests of Christ. God will disappoint all other interests. (2) He commands the anxious concern of Timothy on their behalf. (a) It was a concern for their spiritual state. (b) It was, as the word imports, an anxious care on their behalf, testifying at once to his own personal interest in their welfare and to his profound appreciation of the worth of immortal souls. (c) It was a concern natural to one inheriting the interests and the affections of his spiritual father. (d) It was implanted in his soul by the Lord himself; for it was with him as with Titus: "Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus" (2 Cor. viii. 16).—T. C.

Vers. 24-30.—*Epaphroditus the link between the apostle and Philippi.* As it was still uncertain what would be the issue of his bonds at Rome, the apostle deemed it right no longer to detain the worthy Philippian minister who had relieved the tedium of his imprisonment, but sent him back to Philippi under circumstances which attest the tenderness of the relation which bound all three together.

I. CONSIDER THE APOSTLE'S ESTIMATE OF THE HIGH CHARACTER OF EPAPHRODITUS. 1. *In relation to himself.* "My brother"—as if to mark the common sympathy that bound them together—"my companion in labour"—to signify the common work which engaged them—"and fellow-soldier"—to signify the common perils and sufferings of their service in the gospel. 2. *In relation to the Philippians.* "Your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants"—doing for them what they could not do for themselves, supplying "your lack of service toward me." He was the representation of their liberality, and was about to take back to Philippi this beautiful and touching Epistle.

II. THE DANGEROUS ILLNESS OF EPAPHRODITUS. "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death." 1. *The cause of this sickness.* "Because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me." He had overtaxed his strength in the service of the gospel, either by his labours in preaching or by doing a thousand little offices of love for the imprisoned apostle. 2. *His recovery.* (1) The apostle might have used his gifts of healing to restore such a valuable life to the service of the Church, but such gifts were mostly used for the sake of unbelievers, and the Lord did not see fit to have them exercised for the benefit of ordinary believers. (2) It was God himself who was the Author of this recovery; "God had mercy on him." It is a mercy to be thankful for that we should have our health restored and our lives prepared anew for holy service. It is a mercy to the minister, who has fresh opportunities of doing good; and a mercy to his flock, as they receive greater blessing from his labours. 3. *The deep sympathy of the Philippians with their suffering minister.* "He longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick." (1) The distress at Philippi was a proof of their love to Epaphroditus and their interest in him. (2) His distress on account of this rumour shows, again, a deep feeling of love for them.

III. THE JOY OF THE APOSTLE AT HIS RECOVERY. "God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow." The apostle had already to bear the hard sorrow of imprisonment, but if Epaphroditus had died at Rome, his sorrows might have become overwhelming. We are all deeply interested in the recovery of the saints, and especially of eminent ministers, whose lives contribute to the enrichment of the world.

IV. HIS REASONS FOR SENDING EPAPHRODITUS BACK TO PHILIPPI. "I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful." They would recover their cheerfulness at the sight of their beloved minister, and the sum of the apostle's daily cares would thereby be proportionably lessened.—T. C.

**Vers. 1—4.—Altruism.** Paul has been speaking of the gifts of faith and of suffering which the Philippians had received, and now he proceeds to state further the practical outcome of the Christian spirit. It is really an *altruism* of a more thorough character than that provided by the schools. We have altruism paraded at present as the high outcome of that morality which is independent of God. But there is no consideration of the case of others so broad or so deep as that which is secured by the gospel.

**I. THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF A CONSIDERATE SPIRIT IS THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST.** (Ver. 1.) We are not asked in this matter to go upon our own charges; God does not, like an austere man, expect to reap where he has never sown. So far from this, he only looks for consideration of conduct towards others from those who have received "comfort in Christ," "consolation of love," "fellowship of the Spirit," and "bowels and mercies." These are the forerunners of the true *altruism*. And they amount to this, that God has led the way in consideration. His gospel means that in the person of Jesus Christ he has not looked on his own things, but on the things of others. It is Divine altruism. It is the seed of disinterestedness sown in a kindly soil, and it is sure to produce a harvest.

**II. THE UNITY OF THE PHILIPPIANS WAS THE JOY OF THE APOSTLE.** (Ver. 2.) He made it a matter of personal comfort to secure unity of mind and of heart among his converts. If we laid the unity of believers thus to heart, how we would use all lawful means to bring it about! Are we not open to the charge sometimes of living too self-containedly, so that when unity is broken we are not inconvenienced and pained by it as a Paul would have been? Christian union should be made by each one of us a personal concern: let us with Paul say honestly, as we urge men to see eye to eye and feel as heart to heart, that in so doing they are fulfilling our dearest joy!

**III. LOWLINESS OF MIND MUST BE THE ANTIDOTE AND DEATH OF STRIFE AND VAIN-GLORY.** (Ver. 3.) Nothing so separates souls and breaks the unity of spirit as vain-glorious strife. Competition, be it ever so generous, cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, except it be competition for the lowest place and the severest service. The competition for the chief seats in society, in the world's market, in the sphere of power, is always prejudicial to the Christian spirit and the unity which comes from Heaven; but the competition which contemplates the severest service, the lowliest ministrations, the most humiliating rôle, is wholesome, Christ-like, Divine. Now, this lowliness of mind which esteems others better than ourselves can be secured only by severe self-scrutiny in the light of God's Word, above all, in the light of Christ's perfect life. Then our sins and shortcomings become appalling, and we walk softly before the Lord. On the other hand, no such knowledge of our neighbour's sins and shortcomings is open to us; we judge him so charitably as to esteem him above ourselves, and so we sit in the independence begotten of humility. No longer do we complain of any lot God gives us; we accept it as better than we deserve; and in the panoply of humility we are safe from all assault.

**IV. WE CAN THUS MAKE PUBLIC SERVANTS OF OURSELVES IN THE TRUEST SENSE.** (Ver. 4.) We hear a good deal of "public men," as they are called. They profess to serve the public, but the most of them, while professing to serve the public, are suspected of serving themselves. With some of them the public spirit is doubtless genuine, and they *do* serve their sovereign and country with singleness of heart. But the gospel is the great means in God's hand of making men and women the servants of others. Since Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, many have learned to make the welfare of others their chief care. And so Christian consideration and charity break forth on the right hand and on the left. Men and women thrust themselves into work for others which can have no selfish aim or selfish issue, and the world becomes "Paradise restored." We are not right in heart until we thus are made public servants by the dynamic force of the Christian spirit. The law of love regulates us and carries us out of the narrow circle of personal interests into the broader one of the common weal. We sacrifice much to serve others. "We stoop," and think nothing of the effort, "to conquer" souls and circumstances in the interest of Christ. We have got unmoored, and are out to sea, where we have room and are in no danger from the lee shore. It is the life of real liberty which we secure when we look no longer on our own things, but have an eye for those of others.—R. M. E.

Vers. 5-8.—*The self-sacrifice of Christ.* Paul backs up his appeal for public spirit by the example of Jesus Christ. If the Philippians will only entertain a like mind with Christ, then all needful abnegation for the good of others will be forthcoming, even up to self-sacrifice itself. And here we have to—

I. **CONSIDER CHRIST'S EQUALITY WITH GOD.** (Ver. 6.) The Revised Version puts this verse more accurately than the Authorized Version when it gives it, "Who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." Or, as another still more emphatically gives it, "Being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a prize to be retained; but emptied himself." Consequently we must begin with Christ's equality with God, if we would understand the magnificence of his descent. As eternal Son of the eternal Father, he had been the coequal of the Father from all eternity. As he lay in the bosom of the Father, he was "very God of very God," in the language of the Nicene Creed. It was from the abode of absolute Being he began his pilgrimage to save us.

II. **CONSIDER HIS EMPTYING OF HIMSELF.** (Ver. 7.) The idea is hazarded by some that, in his emptying of himself, he laid aside for a season his *Divinity* and became man; but this is not to be entertained for a moment. The "form" of God ( $\mu\sigma\phi\eta$ ) presupposes "existence" ( $\sigma\sigma\tau\alpha$ ) and "nature" ( $\phi\sigma\tau\is$ ), but is not to be identified with either. It is, as we might say, the accidental manifestation of the essential being. It might, therefore, be laid aside without the essential being undergoing any change. This is, then, all that the emptying implies. He exchanged "the form of God" for "the form of a servant." Instead of forcing conviction about his Divine nature by a glorious manifestation of it at all times, he allowed this conviction to spring up quietly and gradually by veiling his Divinity behind a servant's form. The everlasting Son, who shared the glory in the bosom of the Father, became the servant that he might raise us to the dignity of sons. Such was his consideration for us that he took this immense step downwards that we might be redeemed.

III. **CONSIDER HIS ASSUMPTION OF HUMANITY.** (Ver. 7.) "He was made in the likeness of men," having taken upon him the form of a servant. He thus "entered upon a course of responsible subordination." The incarnation of Christ was his becoming all we are, saving only sin. "The body," it has been said, "which had been prepared for him by another was sustained by that other's power. When his disciples went to buy meat, it was because their Master was really hungry; when he asked drink of the woman of Samaria, it was because he was really thirsty; and when he fell asleep in the midst of the howling tempest, it was because nature was overwearied with endless labours of love. We ask why the all-glorious and blessed One should have lived in such bodily dependence as this. The apostle answers—He had *emptied himself*. His almighty power could easily have sustained his body. And though he ate and drank and slept, it might have been for the eyes of those around him only. But this would not have been man's real bodily life. Nay, soul and body are so wondrously connected that it would not have been man's life at all. And had not the Son of God taken the life of man, no son of man could have found the life of God. Every Christian knows what man's nobler life is. Trust in God's love, hope in his eternal mercy, that spirit of filial love which submits itself cheerfully and gladly to a heavenly Father's will, give him strength and ability to serve God in the world. And of this life, as every Christian knows, Christ is the Source and Fountain-head. But he is something more—its Example. It is the life which he himself lived when it pleased him to dwell among us. . . . Possessed of infinite strength, he 'emptied himself,' leaning always on another's arm. Possessed of infinite wisdom, he ever lifted up the eyes to heaven, and took counsel with the Father who dwelt there. Willing only what was right and good, having no wish but what was pure and true, he nevertheless submitted that will in all things; the will of another was his continual law. 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,' i.e. demeaned himself, as man ought to do. Man ought to trust in God and walk by his counsel. This, therefore, was his course."

IV. **CONSIDER HIS HUMILIATION EVEN TO THE OBEDIENCE OF DEATH.** (Ver. 8.) The Incarnation was the first step in the humiliation of God. We do not realize as we ought how tremendous a descent that is. If we as intelligent beings were to undergo a metempsychosis and be incarnated in the lowest creature that crawls, it would not be *so* great a descent for us as it was for Deity to become incarnate. But Christ undertook

a second descent. "The Son of God did not live human life only; he died human death. Oh what a step downward was this! We may be feeble and dependent, still we are alive. And how great is the difference between the living and the dead! We enjoy the society of a friend; we sit at his table; we interchange the thoughts of living men. But there comes a day when, on repairing to his dwelling, we are conducted to the darkened room, and behold his lifeless remains; the friend of yesterday is ready for the grave to-day! . . . What, then, must the disciples have felt as they prepared their Master for his burial! They were covering up and putting out of sight, as what they could no longer bear to look upon, that blessed countenance in which Divine beauty had shone. They were closing, as they thought for ever, those eyes of tenderness in whose light they had rejoiced to live. He had said, 'Ye shall weep and lament,' and verily his words were fulfilled. And when the transition from life to death is accomplished by the hand of violence, the sorrow of bereavement is of a much more overwhelming character. We see on a friend's dead body the marks of rude hands, of instruments of savage cruelty, and emotion altogether overpowers us. How true to nature are the words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Mark Antony as he comes upon Cæsar's body, 'Pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth'! He sought pardon for uncontrollable emotion, for the wild bursts of grief. What, then, must have been the emotion of the disciples as they gazed on their dead Master! His had been 'the death of the cross.' It was in a bloody shroud they wrapped him. His sacred person was disfigured by marks of savage violence; his hands bore them, his feet, his wounded side. They had never had any difficulty about his living human life. Though they knew him to be 'the Son of the living God,' habit had accustomed them to the sight of his eating and drinking and sleeping as they did. And they knew that he believed and hoped and prayed as they did, for he taught them by his example so to do. But from this dire consummation—death, and such a death!—they had always shrunk. And now they saw it realized. He who but yesterday taught, and cheered, and comforted, and blessed them, now lay before their eyes, covered with blood and wounds, and ready only for his sepulchre. A second step in the Christ's descent indeed! From the throne of God to the grave of man!" We have here, then, in the "double descent of the Christ," in his humiliation to become man, and in his humiliation to be obedient as far as to death (*μέχρι θανάτου*), and this death that of the cross, the sublimest enforcement ever afforded of the duty of looking, not upon one's own things, but upon the things of others. The self-sacrifice of Christ is the perfection and ideal of public spirit. It is God moving from the abysmal depths of his absolute being to perform an unparalleled public service and save a ruined race. At the foot of the cross we become the tenants of a large-hearted, public spirit.—R. M. E.

Vers. 9—11.—*Christ's exaltation.* Can the public spirit displayed by Jesus Christ be allowed to terminate in the tomb? Or will it receive a gracious recognition and compensation? It is to this we are next brought by the apostle. The Father set his seal upon the Son's self-sacrifice by highly exalting him and conferring on him a superlative Name. And here we learn—

I. THAT EXALTATION IS PROPORTIONAL TO HUMILIATION IN THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS OF GOD. (Ver. 9.) The humiliation of Christ, as we have seen, is the deepest which the universe admitted of; and so his exaltation is the greatest. Just as water descending from the highest height will return to its own level; so Christ, in condescending to the cross and the grave from the eternal throne, comes back to more than pristine glory, and gets a Name which is above every name. Hence if we were wise, we should gladly abase ourselves in the assurance that self-abasement is the plain and only path to real exaltation (Luke xiv. 11).

II. THE FATHER HAS GIVEN UNTO JESUS A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME. (Ver. 9.) Now, when we consider what a "name" is, we find that it is a *revelation* of what a person or thing is. Of course, names may be given where their appellative character is not regarded; but when a name is given as a glory, it contains a revelation. Thus it has been pertinently said, "Names are mysteries, labelled. A thing not labelled is a mystery directly. If it has not been named, we look at it, we smell it, we taste it, we wonder at it; and finally ask—*What can it be?*" Naming is the annihilation of curiosity. Names are disguises put upon things to conceal from us

their mystery. Things without names would be too wonderful for us. Only a few people continue to wonder as much *after* a thing is named, as before." Now, the Name which the Father sets above every name is that of *Jesus*. The signification of this name is *Saviour* (Matt. i. 21), and the whole course of Providence is to exalt this above every other name. Hence the deep significance of this passage seems to be this—that *salvation* is the greatest glory which can be attributed to any individual. Even the world is coming round to this idea, that for a man to be the "saviour of his country" in any sense is the highest position to which he can attain. When public worth is recognized, it is in connection with *some salvation* which the hero has wrought for men. The world is steadily moving towards this Divine idea, that the highest glory attainable in the nature of things is the glory of saving in some way others.

III. AT THE NAME OF JESUS THE UNIVERSE SHALL YET BOW. (Vers. 10, 11.) Among the saviours of mankind the Lord Jesus Christ is, of course, pre-eminent. All other salutations will be made to appear in their essential insignificance when compared with Christ's salvation of his fellows from sin and death. Hence the long procession of the ages shall yet issue in the universal acclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). This is only another way of putting the truth that self-sacrifice shall yet be recognized as the sublimest manifestation of personality, and that in self-sacrifice Jesus has been pre-eminent. The homage of the universe is yet to be made before the self-sacrifice which is embodied in Jesus Christ.

IV. THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS SHALL BE UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED. (Ver. 11.) Not only shall the Name of *Jesus* be put in honour above all other names, but his right to reign shall be recognized by all. The sovereignty of self-sacrifice is the goal of intellectual and moral progress. Jesus, as embodying the principle in absolute perfection, will yet receive the homage of the universe. Even his enemies shall be constrained to bow to his authority and submit to his holy will. The triumph of self-forgetfulness and consideration for others is to be embodied in the acknowledged sovereignty of the Saviour.

V. But lastly, THE GLORY OF THE FATHER SHALL PROVE TO BE THE LAST END OF THE WHOLE PLAN. (Ver. 11.) For what is this but a similar compensation coming in natural order round to the Father again? The Father in the present dispensation has set himself to glorify, not himself, but his self-sacrificing other self, the Son. He is himself exemplifying the self-forgetfulness and consideration for others for which his gospel calls. The Father is not looking on his own things, any more than the Son. Each Person of the adorable Trinity looks away from self to secure the glory of his mate. Is it not right and beautiful in these circumstances that the glory of the great Father should result from the consideration for others he has shown, and that the mediatorial honours of Jesus should in the end be laid at the Father's feet? It is sometimes thought that it savours of selfishness to say that God arranges all things for his own glory. But when it is analyzed we find that the seemingly selfish arrangement has been really the most absolute unselfishness. God has been looking upon the things and interests of others all the time. He has been laying himself out for the good of his creatures. Disinterestedness has characterized his whole history; and if it be arranged that eventually the universe recognizes and adores the self-forgetfulness of God, if this is to be hailed at last as the only real glory,—then surely we could not desire it otherwise.—R. M. E.

Vers. 12, 13.—*The awful responsibility of personal inspiration.* The purpose of the present passage, as we have seen, is to secure in the Philippian converts that consideration for the welfare of others which is the grand secret of Christian unity. The example of Christ has been brought forward for the same object. Salvation, as wrought out by Jesus, has been the pre-eminent example of public spirit. But now we seem to have come across a break in Paul's idea, as if he would centre the converts in self once again, while labouring to deliver them from self. And the passage has been torn from the context and split up into antagonistic exhortations, so that it seems a theological battle-ground rather than a call to Christian power and peace. Let us see if we do not altogether escape the difficulty by holding hard to the connection of the apostle's thought.

I. PAUL SPEAKS HERE UNQUESTIONABLY OF PERSONAL INSPIRATION AS POSSESSED BY THESE PHILIPPIAN CHRISTIANS. Of course, we are here using inspiration in the sense that the Philippians were each tenanted by the Holy Spirit. They were inspired men, inspired for action, if not for authorship. The Holy Spirit had got their wills in his control and also the issue of their wills in action. Here is the broad fact, therefore, of their personal inspiration. Now, the Holy Spirit's influence upon the will is a most interesting as well as intricate subject. It is not, however, either an unreasonable or a tyrannical influence. It is not *unreasonable*, for it is upon the line of reason and of moral suasion that the Holy Spirit always moves. It is not *tyrannical*, for it is by his inspiration we are delivered from the prejudice and partiality which sin induces and which mar our liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17). We are never so free as when we are surrendering ourselves implicitly and completely to God's inspirations. But the power to carry out the impulses of the inspired will is also the gift of God; so that the Christian is an *inspired instrument* for the accomplishment of the will of God. He is moved from within by the almighty Spirit.

II. PERSONAL INSPIRATION MAY WELL BE ENTERTAINED WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. (Ver. 12.) If it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God when we have risked and courted his displeasure, it is surely no less fearful a thing to lie in his hands as an instrument of his good pleasure. We should regard our personalities with awe and reverence as sacred things. The temple on Mount Moriah was not half so sacred as we are ourselves if the Holy Spirit really dwells within us. It is this tremendous thought which Paul feels assured will vanquish fornication and all the lewdness which invested Corinth (1 Cor. vi. 9—20). We are Divine temples; we walk the world as inspired men; we may well contemplate the organisms we are with fear and trembling. Just as we handle with a fear and nervous tremor some exquisite piece of mechanism which some mighty genius has devised for some admirable purpose, afraid lest rash handling might disarrange it; so are we to handle our inspired personalities, and make body, soul, and spirit with a sober, awe-inspired joy tributary to God's praise.

III. PERSONAL INSPIRATION ISSUES IN EARNEST WORK. (Ver. 12.) God does not inspire men that they may turn out lotos-eaters. The inaction which Brahma induces, for example, can never be induced by the Christian system. Inspiration is for work. The movement in earnest life is the proof positive that the spiritual force has entered into the professedly Christian soul. But what will the work be? This is the question. Does working out our own salvation mean living in a perpetual fever of spiritual anxiety? Does it mean a never-ending attack of spiritual despondency? By no means. It will be found in the spiritual life, as in life physical, that the *hypochondriacs* are in danger, and that it is those who have no time to think upon their own ailments, they are so busy ministering to the welfare of others, who are really making most progress towards the spiritual perfection which is salvation in its fulness. And here it will be seen how consistent these verses are with all that has gone before. Paul wishes the Philippians in ver. 12, just as in ver. 4, to be living the self-forgetful life. It is only when we look away from self to Christ as the ground of our salvation, and when we look away from self to others as the sphere of our special work, that we are living the earnest Christian life. Our salvation is assured when we are enabled to make Christ's work our chief anxiety and Christ's glory our constant aim. Inspired lives lead to self-forgetful and self-sacrificing work. The secret of all safety and nobleness lies here.—R. M. E.

Vers. 14—18.—*Inspired to be blameless sons.* Having seen the great responsibility of personal inspiration, as brought out in the previous verses, we have next to notice what the inspiration contemplates. It is, in fact, to produce such a sense of sonship in all hearts as will ensure unity of spirit, blamelessness of life, and consequent usefulness in the world. Paul wished the Philippian Christians to be of use to their heathen neighbours; unless they were so, he would regard himself as having run in vain; he consequently is in great anxiety that they should walk worthily, which will be his greatest joy. Here we may note—

I. THE POSITION OF CHRISTIANS. (Ver. 15.) The Philippians were "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," and so shall Christians be to the end of this

dispensation. We may expect to be surrounded by the crooked and the perverse. It may not be a very comfortable position to occupy, but it is a very important and ought to be a very useful one. It is, in fact, to furnish opportunities for promoting the faith that this arrangement obtains. We often think that it would be happier to be translated at once where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest;" but it would not be better for us. Our best position is to have opportunities of benefiting others.

**II. GOD INSPIRES US TO BE UNCOMPLAINING AND BLAMELESS SONS.** (Vers. 14, 15.) This is the way he would have us to work out our own salvation. We are to "do all things without murmurings and disputings." We are not to be complaining like Israel in the wilderness, nor at war among ourselves. We are besides to be the blameless and harmless sons of God. The pure life we lead is to be such as to forbid rebuke from a perverse world. In this way we shall be "lights," for through us the light of truth, the light of "the Word of life," shall be held forth before those who are in darkness, that they too may be redeemed. It is an inspiration, consequently, for service, an inspiration towards usefulness, which God gives. It carries the individual clear of selfish considerations and makes him useful among men. It is the inspiration of public spirit.

**III. PAUL EXPECTS TO REJOICE IN THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT HE HAS NOT RUN IN VAIN BECAUSE OF THE USEFULNESS OF HIS PHILIPPIAN CONVERTS.** (Ver. 16.) The present life, in Paul's regard, is to be joyfully reviewed in the day of Christ, that is, the day of judgment. The thought and memory of the usefulness of the Philippians will constitute an intense delight to his great soul. He will in such a case assure himself that he has not run in vain. It must have been a great incentive to them to think that their consistent life would be a joy to the glorified apostle. And would it not be well for Christians to carry this thought with them? They are adding by their blameless and consistent lives to the joy of the heavenly world, adding a thrill to the hearts of angels and of the redeemed from among men and to the heart of the Lord himself.

**IV. PAUL'S POSSIBLE MARTYRDOM WILL NOT DIMINISH BUT INCREASE THIS JOY.** (Vers. 17, 18.) Paul knew as a prisoner in Rome that his martyrdom was possible. He may not, indeed, have deemed it *probable* at this period, for if this Epistle be, as Bishop Lightfoot thinks, the first of the Epistles of the captivity, it is likely that he enjoyed a little season of release before his final apprehension and martyrdom. And Paul knew that the possibility of his death threw a shadow over the minds of his converts. In his beautiful consideration for them, therefore, he tells them that he can rejoice even should his martyrdom be as a drink offering upon their service and sacrifice of faith. He calls upon them to rejoice along with him in prospect even of possible martyrdom. It will not mar the joy, but will be owned of God in multiplying it. Paul is thus a sublime example, after Jesus his Lord, of consideration for others. He does not mourn over his lot as a possible martyr, and crave their sympathy; but for their sakes he rejoices over it and asks their congratulation. Grace turns the apparent evil into real good; and joy is promoted at Philippi as well as Rome by what the world thinks should only create sorrow. Paul is thus an inspired and blameless son himself, and a pattern to his people at Philippi. We have thus set before us the magnificent public spirit which the gospel fosters. It enables us to look away from our own things to the things of others, and it brings us to make even misfortune a tributary to spiritual joy. May we follow after the things that make for peace and tend to the edification of others!—R. M. E.

**Vers. 19—30.—*The considerate missions of Epaphroditus and Timothy.*** The passage is still dominated by the idea of consideration for others as the proper outcome of the Christian spirit. The life God inspires (ver. 13) is the life of consideration for others. In this section we have this beautifully illustrated by Epaphroditus, Timothy, and the Philippians, as well as by Paul himself. We cannot do better than look at the public spirit as thus historically illustrated.

**I. THE CONSIDERATE SPIRIT AS ILLUSTRATED IN EPAPHRODITUS'S MISSION TO ROME.** (Vers. 25, 30.) He had gone up as a deputy from Philippi to Rome to minister in person to the beloved apostle. The long journey he had undertaken cheerfully for the sake of Paul. It was just such an outcome of the Christian spirit at Philippi and

in Epaphroditus himself as Paul knew God inspired and he could calculate upon. Sympathy thus drew the distant into close companionship.

II. **EPAPHRODITUS'S DANGEROUS ILLNESS CREATED A PANIC AT PHILIPPI.** (Ver. 26.) The faithful deputy seems to have caught in the Campagna at Rome some dangerous disease, which brought him to the gates of death. Tidings were carried in due season about his sickness to the brethren at Philippi, and their anxiety about their sick brother was deep and sore. Epaphroditus knew that they would be painfully anxious, and this reacted upon him at Rome. A Christian spirit regrets the necessity of putting sympathetic hearts to pain on his account. Sympathy intensifies suffering as well as lightens suffering round the world.

III. **THIS LED TO HIS CONSIDERATE PROPOSAL TO DEPART TO PHILIPPI AND TO PAUL'S DESPATCH OF HIM.** (Vers. 26, 27.) The aged apostle had watched over his sick "fellow-soldier" with anxiety until he saw him fairly "on the mend." Then he found the convalescent with a heavy anxiety on his mind because of the trouble his sickness had caused at Philippi. The result is that the two great hearts proposed to separate, that Epaphroditus may relieve the Church at Philippi of its anxiety by appearing in health once more among them. The whole picture is one of mutual consideration.

IV. **STILL MORE CONSIDERATION IS SHOWN IN THE PROPOSED DESPATCH OF TIMOTHY.** (Vers. 19—21.) Timothy tarries at Rome after Epaphroditus leaves, but only for a time. Paul keeps him only until he sees what turn his trial will take. In case he is released, he means to despatch Timothy at once to Philippi to carry on considerately the work of God in their hearts. Amid the general selfishness of men, Timothy at all events can be relied on, who will, as a matter of second nature or habit, care for the Philippians' state. This second mission, that of Timothy, is a fresh embodiment of the considerate Christian spirit.

V. **LASTLY, PAUL'S OWN ADVENT IS PROMISED IN CASE OF HIS RELEASE.** (Ver. 24.) Paul at Rome has been experiencing the consideration, not of earthly friends only, but also of his Father in heaven. He notes this in the recovery of Epaphroditus. God had raised up the faithful attendant lest Paul should have "sorrow upon sorrow." He thus impressed his servant with the fact that sorrows come one by one, in Indian file, while joys come thick as the leaves of autumn. Miss Procter has brought out this beautifully in her poem, 'One by One.' We may quote here one precious verse—

"One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,  
Do not fear an armed band;  
One will fade as others greet thee;  
Shadows passing through the land."

('Legends and Lyrica')

Filled, then, with the grateful sense of the Divine as well as the human consideration, Paul determines, if released, to set out at once for Philippi. Timothy may go at a quicker rate as forerunner, but Paul means to follow after him and do what he can by personal visitation of the Church to minister to their joy. There is thus given to us ample and vivid illustration of the considerateness of the Christian spirit. Let it be our aim to show it always and act in some way worthy of our high calling!—R. M. E.

Vers. 1—11.—*Exhortation to unanimity and humility.* I. **HE APPEALS TO THE PHILIPPIANS BY FOUR COMMON ELEMENTS IN THEIR COMMON CONFLICT TO FULFIL HIS JOY.** 1. *By the comfort there is in Christ.* "If there is therefore any comfort in Christ." The connecting word has reference to the duty which was enjoined in the twenty-seventh verse of the last chapter, and is again enjoined in the second verse of this chapter. But there is also reference to the circumstances under which unity is enjoined. They were enduring the same conflict at Philippi which Paul had once endured at Philippi, and was then enduring in Rome. Under circumstances of common conflict, what had they to fall back upon, and by which they could appeal to each other? It is this which leads to the introduction of the subject of comfort. Some would substitute "exhortation" for "comfort." But "comfort" is certainly the word appropriate to the occasion, and the following of it up in the second clause by a word of similar import only serves to emphasize the tone of the appeal. The form of the

appeal is noticeable. It is under a supposition, being simply, "If any comfort in Christ." He knew that he was touching a chord to which there would be a ready response on the part of the Philippians. Any comfort in Christ? Yes; that was the quarter to which he and they in common looked for comfort. As oppressed by the troubles of this life and the question of our destiny, we need to be comforted. All the comfort that philosophy affords amounts to this—that such is the constitution of things, that we must bear what we cannot mend, that complaining only makes our case worse. In Christ there is this all-sufficient comfort, that, from his own experience of suffering, he can enter sympathetically into the suffering of each soul, and, while for good ends he may see fit to continue it, he undertakes to support under it and to make it productive of good. As Christians they had a right to expect and to ask of *each other* a conveyance of the Master's sympathy with them in their afflictions. Paul extended loving thought, as from the Master, toward the Philippians in their conflict; and it was his desire that they should extend loving thought as from the Master toward him. 2. *By the consolation of love.* "If any consolation of love." In the previous clause the idea was that they were to take of what was Christ's and show it to each other. The idea here is that they were to take of *their own* love and show it to each other for consolation. They had a common hate from the world; the antidote for that was the refreshing influence of mutual love. Paul would have the Philippians in their conflict know, for their consolation, that they were loved by him; and he looks to them to let him know in his conflict, for his consolation, that he was loved by them. 3. *By the fellowship of the Spirit.* "If any fellowship of the Spirit." They were partakers of a common life of strength, of gladness, of hope in the Spirit. As thus alike favoured of the Spirit, they were bound to make it their aim to promote their common life. He was prepared to do his utmost for the Philippians, that in their conflict they should partake more largely of the strong, glad, hopeful life of the Spirit; he looks to them to do their utmost, so that in conflict he shall have reciprocity in the same life. 4. *By tender mercies and compassions.* "If any tender mercies and compassions." The first seems to point to tender feelings confined to the heart; the second to tender feelings going out in compassion to others in their need. Paul was no stranger to tender feeling and compassionate yearning toward the Philippians in their conflict; he wishes to have from them in his conflict reciprocity in the same luxury. "Fulfil ye my joy." What they had a right to ask of him, he, in the exercise of his right, asks of them. They had given him joy in the past; it was not yet made full. Let them from the common source fill up his joy.

II. HE ASKS THEM TO FULFIL HIS JOY BY ATTENTION TO TWO DUTIES. 1. *Unanimity.* "That ye be of the same mind." This has been explained as thinking, willing, and seeking the same thing. (1) *Unanimity proceeding from loving and being loved alike.* "Having the same love." This points to the condition under which unanimity is to be wrought out—there must be love on both sides. If there is no love, or love only on one side, then there cannot be the same way of thinking, willing, and striving. But let there be reciprocal love, warmed around the cross of Christ, then, whatever differences there may be to begin with, there will come ultimately to be a seeing eye to eye. (2) *Unanimity appearing in harmony of soul.* "Being of one accord, of one mind." It is better to take the two clauses as one and to translate, "With harmony of soul, being of one mind." The latter expression is just the literal meaning of unanimity. And we are here taught that unanimity must not be mere uniformity—subscribing to the same creed, observing the same forms of worship. It must be something deep down in the nature, wrought out under the influence of love in the feelings and active impulses. It is what may be seen in a couple who have long and deeply loved each other—they come to feel and act alike. It is what can be wrought out without loss of independence. It is like what may be seen in a choir where there are blended many qualities of voice. It is what may be seen in a congregation where there has long been good feeling and harmonious co-operation; there is created an excellent *esprit de corps*—one soul animates the body and determines its movements. It is what will yet, we hope, be exhibited in the Churches, when they have all received a larger baptism of the spirit of love. Many differences will disappear—no difference will remain to prevent them uniting and co-operating in the work of the Lord. It is what will only be thoroughly wrought out in the Church above, where the same view of Christ's work

will take hold of all minds, animate all hearts, and call forth loud and harmonious praise. 2. *Humility.* (1) *Manifestations of self-importance.* “Doing nothing through faction or through vain-glory.” *Faction.* It was a false estimate of themselves that threatened to be a dividing element among the Philippians. Controversy may be carried on in a spirit of fairness. Parties may be necessitated by fidelity to principle. Even separations may be justified under certain circumstances: “Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.” But there can be no doubt that self-assertion is the prolific source of controversy, of party, of division. When men are concerned to have their own opinions established rather than the truth, to have their own party advanced rather than the cause of Christ, their own importance added to rather than the peace of the Church preserved, they are factious. And therefore it is that, in the interest of unity, the apostle warned against self-importance. *Vain-glory.* The Philippians do not seem to have had external advantages of which to be vain. For the apostle testifies elsewhere that in *much proof of affliction* the abundance of their joy and *their deep poverty* abounded unto the riches of their liberality. Nor do we know that their temptation was connected with superior natural endowments. It was rather connected with their spiritual excellences. These the apostle fully acknowledges, he says nothing to their disparagement as a Church, only he seems to evince an anxiety lest disunion should creep in among them through their being vain of their excellences and comparing themselves with one another. (2) *Cure for self-importance.* “But in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.” We are to have a lowly estimate of ourselves. If we have external advantages to think of, we have also to think of responsibilities connected with them. If we have superior natural gifts to think of, we have also to think of the use we have made of them. If we have spiritual excellences, we are to be thankful to God for them; but we are not to be vain of them. Instead of being vain, we must think that we are not what we should have been, considering the grace that has abounded toward us; that we have come far short in the working out of the plan of our life. The more narrowly we look into ourselves and our work, the more shall we see that we are only keeping to truth, to reality, when we humble ourselves before God as the chief of sinners. But what of our comparing ourselves with others? The apostle teaches that a true looking to the things of others will lead to our counting others better than ourselves. We have to consider this regarding others that, apart from external advantages, from natural gifts, and from moral character, they are of great price before God as created, planned for, suffered for, loved by, God. We have also this to consider regarding others, that we do not know the disadvantageous influences, compared with others, under which they may have been brought up, and it is possible that, when they fail, we should not have done better if we had been in their position. We have also to consider that, even where we may be more excellent than they in some respects, we are not in a position to know all the excellence that may belong to them. If certainly we compare ourselves with others for the sake of self-exaltation, we are showing our own want of excellence. A true spirit of humility will lead us rather to compare ourselves with others, in points in which they are our superiors, and thus all such comparison must be accounting others better than ourselves. “Unto me,” says Paul, “who am less than the least of all saints.”

III. CHRIST THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY. 1. *Humiliation.* (1) *Humiliation to humanity.* “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.” It is not said of Christ Jesus that he was in fashion as God, *i.e.* to appearance, God. Nor is it said that he was in the likeness of God, *i.e.* in nature resembling God. But it is said absolutely that he was in the form of God, *i.e.* was God. It is more decisive than *image of God* and *impress of God*, elsewhere applied to Christ; though these, being used absolutely, testify to his Divinity. Form points to Christ having the manifestation of Divinity which, as it is a glorious manifestation, is expressed by the word “glory.” “The glory which I had with thee before the world was.” We are referred to the moment when he contemplated his equality with God, *i.e.* not in its essence, but in respect of his having the glorious effulgence of Divinity. At that

moment, what was the mind that was in him? It was not to clutch at and to retain his glorious prerogatives as a prize. On the contrary, he emptied himself, i.e. of these glorious prerogatives, while not ceasing to be God. Emptying himself, the new form that he took was that of a servant, i.e. he actually became a servant. The particular form of servant is pointed to in its being added that he was made in the likeness of man, i.e. had the human qualities, while not mere man. The descent from the form of God to the form of the human servant was immeasurable. From being infinite (beyond conditions), he became finite (was placed under conditions). From having uncreated perfection, he became subject to a human development. From being eternal, he came under the condition of time. From being omnipresent, he came under the condition of space. From being omniscient, he came to know neither the day nor the hour of the end. From being almighty, he came to need power to help him in his weakness. Such was his emptying himself. (2) *Humiliation in humanity.* "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." This part of the humiliation is described as within human observation. He was found in fashion as a man. He was publicly recognized as having the outward marks of a man—"look, dress, mode of living, gesture, mode of speaking and acting." His humiliation did not stop with his descent to humanity, but in humanity he found further opportunity, not now of emptying himself which could only be once, but of humbling himself. This, which human eyes witnessed, was his becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross, i.e. the most shameful of all deaths. And there was more than appeared to human eyes. That death of the cross was really God in humanity suffering wrath on account of sin, and that obedience to the death of the cross was the human will completely and cheerfully given up to the Divine will in the direst extremity. This marks the depth of the humiliation—the possessor of the Divine glory coming down to be the bearer, not merely of all the shame that man could put upon him, but of the Divine wrath against sin. Such, then, is the exhibition of the mind that was in Christ. He went through infinite self-abasement for our salvation. He looked not merely to his own things; he looked beyond to our things. Nay, did he not put us before himself? He clung not to his Divine position as what could never be parted with; but he emptied himself of position, that he might grasp us in his saving love. Let the same mind be in us. Let us not clutch at position when, by abasement of ourselves, we can advantage men. Oh, how the factious seeking of place and power is exposed in the intense light of the Divine Son not counting his place and power a prize? How is vain-glory—glorying in empty things—exposed in the light of the Divine emptying? 2. *Exaltation.* (1) *His Name.* "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the Name which is above every name." We are here taught that the exaltation of Christ in our nature was the reward of his humiliation. In becoming obedient, even unto death, yea, the death of the cross, he obtained, not only infinite merit for us, but rather for us in himself. And his recompense was that he was exalted, and more than that, highly exalted. This pre-eminent exaltation consisted in there being gifted to him the Name which is above every name, i.e. as appears from the language following, the Name of Jesus. It is a way of honouring men to give them names. This honour does not always correspond to worth. For we are told that what is exalted among men is abomination in the sight of God. And, even when the name represents reality, how confined is it in its import, even at the best! The name of highest import is the Name of Jesus, Saviour, as setting forth the great saving work which best illustrates the character of God. Not arbitrarily, then, but righteously, God has surrounded this Name with the highest dignity and with lordship too. (2) *Universal recognition of his Name.* "That in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The language is founded on Isa. xlv. 23, "That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." It is here represented that what is to move and animate the worshippers is, not the sovereignty of God so much praised in the forty-fifth of Isaiah, but, what is brought also into connection there, the glorious significance of the Name of Jesus. The worshippers are here designated by the external symbol of adoration, as bowing the knee. And they are classified exhaustively, and with a certain indefiniteness, as

*celestial, terrestrial, and sub-terrestrial.* Of these classes not one shall have his knees unbent. They are also represented as confessing with their tongues. Of the classes named not one shall have his tongue unused in confession. To think of involuntary adoration on the part of some, is to mar the language. All are to render to Christ the specially Christian confession—they are to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, specially invested with power to complete the work of redemption. They are to render the adoration to Christ to the praise, not of God's justice, but of God's fatherhood. Dogmatic inference from this passage cannot be drawn with certainty. All that we have to do is to allow the language, in all its majesty, to have its due weight in our minds alongside of other language that is used in Scripture with regard to the last things.—R. F.

Vers. 12—18.—*Exhortations.* I. PERSONAL WORK FOR THE PHILIPPIANS. 1. *How he exhorts them with pleasure.* “So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.” The exaltation of Christ, which is the subject of the three foregoing verses, is specially fitted to be an encouragement to the duty of humility. It is not this, however, that he now specifies, in descending from the sublime Example. He rather lays hold on that “obedience” which was the soul of the humiliation, and on the name “Saviour” which marked the exaltation. And upon these he makes his exhortation to turn. For the first time he addresses them as his “beloved.” It indicates his drawing closer to them. He has a complimentary word to say to them. They had in the past obeyed, not him—for it is no mere personal request that he has to make—but the gospel of which a statement follows, and which is referred to as the Word of life. They had always obeyed, *i.e.* both when he was present and when he was absent. Into this form, then, he throws his exhortation. They were to make their future, as they had made their past. They were not to make their obedience to the gospel dependent on his presence with them. An obedience *as* in his presence would have meant negligence in his absence. Nay, they were to make his absence a stimulus to greater exertion. When they had not his help they were to feel the greater need of rousing themselves to action. 2. *The work of salvation.* (1) *What it is.* “Work out your own salvation.” It is thought of as a work that is our own, *i.e.* pertaining to ourselves and going on in our nature. It is what is known as *character*, what is impressed on our nature, according as we are obedient to the will of God. It is thought of as that which has a *beginning, progress, and end.* We are to work it out from the beginning all through to the end. It is thought of as that which has its starting-point in the nature in *a state of sin.* The end is only to be reached in conflict with evil, and in the *salvation* of the nature from evil. *Salvation of the thoughts.* It belongs to us as thinking beings to think out the great thoughts which God has given for our instruction in the Bible. We have to think them out, so as to get the full advantage of their quickening influence in our being. This is part of the great work which God has appointed us to work out. It is *saving work*, inasmuch as we need to be saved from the darkness of our minds. We need to be saved from an unworthy conception of *God.* There is nothing which more bespeaks our elevation than that we think aright of God. It is a work of no little difficulty to rise above such gross notions of God as are derived from our senses, our passions, our selfish partialities, and to think of him as the Father of our spirits, who has high and kind thoughts regarding us, who is interested in our well-being, who is ever present with us to inspire us, to strengthen us, to waken up our life, who rebukes us and is grieved when we do wrong, who commends us and is glad when we do well; to think of him especially as the God of salvation, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has made infinite sacrifice for us, who makes to us offer of boundless grace, who is seeking by every means to compass our salvation. We need to be saved from an unworthy conception of *human life*, from thinking that it consists in the abundance of things which we possess, that it is to be spent in idleness or pleasure, that it has not issues beyond death. It is no easy task to come to the full realization of the thought that our life derives its significance from our being tried, from it being intended to be a service rendered to God, the working out of a Divine plan, the unselfish seeking of the good of others; derives its significance especially from Christ having associated himself with it, having brought back its old value, and having given it an increased

value in his death—having actually given us the example of a perfect human life. The idea of the apostle in 2 Cor. x. 5 is that every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. That involves our having a Christian *volume* and *force* of thought which we can bring to bear on all subjects. There is a *philosophical* temper of mind, which consists in accurately observing facts, in discerning what are relevant, in giving them their due weight, in investigating the causes, connections, explanations, of things. So there is a *Christian* temper of mind, which consists in our being saturated with Christian ideas, in looking beneath the surface, in testing the Christian character of actions and courses of action, of thoughts and lines of thought, in readily discovering their bearing upon Christ and his salvation. And that is what is as open to the labourer as to the philosopher. As we have all a power of applying our minds in matters connected with our earthly calling, so there is no reason why we should not have the power of applying our minds in matters connected with our heavenly calling. And we should clearly recognize that as part of the great work of our salvation which we are here commanded to work out, *Salvation of the affections*. It belongs to us as social beings to be rightly affected toward other beings. That enters very deeply into the question of our happiness. And part of the great work of our salvation is to work out the right state of our affections. It is a *saving* work, inasmuch as we need to be saved from a depraved state of our affections. We need to be saved from a depraved state of our affections towards *God*. We have a natural aversion to goodness, and, because God is the perfection of all goodness, it is true that we are alienated and enemies in our mind, that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. We need to have our affections changed, so that we love God because of his goodness, and simply because of his goodness, and love him with all fervour and steadiness because he is supremely good; and love Christ because he is the glorious Manifestation of the Divine goodness, the Accomplisher of our redemption. We need to be saved from a depraved state of our affections toward *beings like ourselves*. There is much that is beautiful in the affection of parents for their children; but it needs to be saved even from mere *naturalness* or characterlessness. We must love our children, not with a blind affection, but with an affection that is under the guidance and restraint of moral and religious principle; we must love them as intelligent, spiritual beings, who have been given us to train for God and immortality; we must love them especially for the sake of Christ, who has obtained right to them by his blood, and who wishes to see them transformed into his image. Our affections need to be saved from mere *narrowness*. They are not to be confined to our home circle or circle of our acquaintances, but are to have something of the catholicity of the Saviour's love. Our affections need to be saved from *shallowness*. Our interest in all must extend beyond their temporal well-being to their Christian perfection. Our affections need to be saved from every element of *malice*. We must not hate or break forth into passion, but be patient and forgiving, after the example of the Master. Thus will a Christian character be given to our affections. And that is part of the work of salvation which we are distinctly to place before us as commanded here. *Salvation of the energies*. It belongs to us as active beings to have our energies rightly employed. This enters largely into our happiness, and is part of the work of salvation that we are appointed to work out. It is a saving work, inasmuch as our energies need to be saved from *self*. One form which self takes is that of *sloth*. That is a sin which besets very many. We are not to work listlessly, bringing little to pass, spreading the work of one hour over many. We are to let our energies out, and to let our energies out as a whole, no restraining especially our best energies. We are not to be discouraged by difficulties but rather to regard them as an opportunity for our putting forth our energies more vigorously. We are not to spend our energies simply for a livelihood, or in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the pursuit of a fortune, or in the pursuit of fame. Our energies are to be saved by being lifted above self to *God*, especially by being connected with Christ, laid as a willing tribute at his feet, concentrated on his glory, steadily rendered to him, imbued with his unselfish, philanthropic spirit. That is the third line in which we are to carry out the saving work commanded here. (2) *Spirit in which it is to be carried out*. "With fear and trembling." The latter word refers more to the anxious solicitude that is connected with what is feared. This was the spirit in which Paul served among the Corinthians: "I was with you in weakness and

in fear and in much trembling." It is the spirit which he requires of servants toward their masters: "Servants, be obedient unto them that, according to the flesh, are your masters, with fear and trembling." We may well have fear and trembling as to the work of our salvation being really *commenced*. For there is such a difference between a saved and an unsaved state, between being in Christ and being out of Christ. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Have we unmistakably given ourselves up to Christ, so that we are among the number of the saved, *i.e.* enjoy the fruits of Christ's work in the pardon of our sins, acceptance of our persons, and the beginning of a better life? "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it." A mistake here is, of all mistakes, the most stupendous, and the very possibility of it should make us fear and tremble. To be an entire stranger to fear and trembling regarding the reality of personal salvation is to be in an alarming condition. We may well have fear and trembling, too, regarding the satisfactory going forward of the work of salvation, which is more referred to here. It is a work for which we are made responsible, which is made to depend on our fidelity, and we may well fear and tremble when we think of our indifference, of our unsteadiness of purpose. It is a work which goes so far into our inmost being that we may well distrust our own power to do enough in connection with it. Can we but fear and tremble when we think that our doing has to pass under the all-seeing eye of God, and to be judged unerringly, not only as to its quantity, but as to its quality? We do not need to crouch as under the rod, when we think of failure; for we are in the hands of a merciful Father: but all the more because he is merciful should we have a trembling anxiety lest we do not come up to what he expects of us. It is a work for the accomplishment of which long time is needed, and we may well fear and tremble when we think of the little time that we can calculate on as at our disposal. In what state of progress towards perfection shall our thoughts and affections and energies be when we are called away from the scene of our trial into the presence of our God? 3. *Encouragement.* "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." (1) *The Divine Energizer.* We are encouraged to work out the work of our salvation in a spirit of anxious solicitude by the thought that it is God which worketh—literally, energizeth—putteth forth power in us. At the centre of our being is the will. It is it which wills and energizes in our thoughts, affections, and practical activities. We are here taught that within our will, a centre within a centre, there is a higher power that wills and energizes. It is God which energizes in us both to will and to energize. This power he has over us by virtue of being our Creator. This is the power which he retains over his creation, that he can touch efficiently the will in its choosing and in its outgoing in the nature. It is a saving power that we are here to think of, *i.e.* a power which only goes forth in connection with the work of him who has been exalted as Saviour. From the crucified and exalted Saviour, through the Spirit, God puts forth power to counteract the weakness of our will, to give it power in choosing the good and refusing the evil. Until he puts forth his power on the will nothing good can come out of it. There is only depravity in it, and we can no more get rid of it ourselves than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. The first enabling power in good must come from God. While he enables us he holds us responsible, and he gives us this to encourage us, in tremblingly discharging our obligations as to our salvation that, as it is his almighty grace that first comes down upon our will, so we have the same grace on which unlimitedly to rely for support in its struggle out of sin toward salvation. Great is the weakness of our will, but greater is the power that energizes in us both to will and to energize. We are thus in the position of carrying forward, while tremblingly, yet hopefully, the work of our salvation. (2) *For what he energizes.* The idea is that it is his good pleasure that gets the advantage. We reap great advantage in our experience of salvation. But God is here said to energize in us savingly for his own advantage. It is not for the advantage of his sovereignty, so much as of that goodness which is at the heart of his sovereignty. It is his sovereignty that gives him the right to energize in our wills; but it is goodness that determines the exercise of his sovereignty, as always, so especially in our salvation from sin, in meeting us in all our impotence, and in giving us the power to maintain the struggle; and so it is the goodness of his pleasure that is advantaged in our salvation.

II. DUTY OF THE PHILIPPIANS IN THE WORLD. 1. *The one thing to be avoided.* "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless." The apostle has been enjoining on them their duty with reference to their personal salvation. He now contemplates them as placed in the midst of the world. It can be seen that he has in his mind ancient Israel. It is true that they were characteristically murmurers and doubters against God. But it does not appear that the Philippians were inclined to murmur and doubt under the Divine dealings. We are rather made to feel that they had not a little of the martyr spirit. The danger feared was the breaking of their unity through self-exaltation. We are, therefore, to think of murmurings and disputings among themselves. It pointed to a state of matters in their Church which would be very prejudicial to their spiritual life. This was the one thing to be avoided, in order that they should be *blameless* in the judgment of others, and *sincere*, as we should read, conscious to their own minds of good intention. It was being not very far from the *mark*. Other Churches may have excelled the Philippians in reference to this particular; but of how few could it be said that there was one thing to be avoided by them in order that they should be blameless and right-minded! How many points would need to be enumerated in order that such language might be employed of some of our Churches now? 2. *Proper conception of their duty.* (1) *To be free from spots.* "Children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." There is a reminiscence here of language employed in the song of Moses: "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation." They had not answered to the Divine conception, which was that of children without spot in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. It is much more obvious than it was then that we are the children of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father.* The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Such is the fully expressed Christian standpoint. It is the Divine arrangement that, as children of God, we are separated into Christian societies; not, however, removed to a separate sphere where we are not acted upon from without, and have simply to conserve and consolidate our Christian life. But we are placed in the midst of the world, and the world is here thought of in its generations. The generation is characterized by moral abnormity. Both "crooked" and "perverse" contain the idea of being bent from the true form, as a tree is bent or as the human body is sometimes bent. In the latter the bending is so decided as to amount to *distortion*. All the generations have abnormity; but every generation has its own peculiar abnormity or spot. And the Church, from age to age, has especially to guard against the spot of the wicked generation in the midst of which it lives. The spot of the *present* crooked and perverse generation may be said to be a *secularism*, which would make of the Lord's day a common day, of the Bible a common book, of Christ a common man, of religion simply the performance of common duties. That is the mask which the generation is more and more taking, in all forms of literature and in public movements. That is the infinence which, through a thousand channels, is being brought to bear upon the Christian part of the population. And there are always those who are inclined to adjust themselves to what they see around them. But that is not the spot of God's children. Let us keep clear of it in the name of our adoption into God's family. "Do you require me so?" it is said in the words following these, quoted in the song of Moses: "Am not I your Father that bought thee?" Let us have separateness from our generation, in its general spirit, and in the particular forms that may prevail around us. (2) *To give light to the world.* "Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life." Christ is the Sun, or Light of the world; we are intended to be stars, or lesser lights. Ours is a borrowed light from Christ, or rather, as it is here regarded, from his gospel, which is named the Word of life, i.e. the light which gives an eternal quickening to the soul. According as we have received the gospel, in its blessed statements, into our being, are we made light, have darkness expelled from us. And our function is to hold forth the Word of life—to cast the light that we have appropriated forth upon the dark world. That is the true way to meet the aggression of the crooked and perverse

generation. Something more is needed than the most satisfactory Christian apologetics. The Church must show, positively and decidedly, the living power of Christianity. It must make a better help to the spiritual life of the Lord's day, if that day is not to be surrendered to the enemy. It must have a more living hold of the Bible, if that book would maintain its authority. It must have a warmer attachment to Christ, if he is properly to be held forth for the faith of men. It must have greater fervour in prayer and in all religious duties, if it would commend these as sanctifying and sweetening common duties. The Church must, from the right use of the gospel, create a public sentiment of a Christian nature, a body of strong living light, if it would make an impression upon the darkness around, and not have its own light obscured. Let us see that individually we act as light-bearers to the world, holding forth the Word of life.

III. INTERTWINING OF PAUL WITH THE PHILIPPIANS. 1. *Alternative of his being spared.* "That I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain." What a beautiful intertwining of the apostle with his converts! He hoped yet to run for them, with his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; he hoped yet to labour for them. Beyond that he sees the day of Christ, the day when his running and labouring, with all its attendant results, in them, would pass under the eye of the great Head of the Church. He hopes, then, to have his destiny so intertwined with theirs that they would be the occasion of his glorying, as in successful work for Christ. Whereas he intimates that it would be loss to him of a crown of rejoicing, if his running and labouring for them turned out to be ineffectual. What minister would not thus wish to be intertwined in loving service with his people? 2. *Alternative of his dying.* (1) *His joying and rejoicing with them.* "Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." He does not here present his dying as the probable issue. For that would be inconsistent with the confident anticipation of release, to which expression was formerly given. Rather does he wish to entertain as probable or certain the supposition of the satisfactory nature of their faith. If he can think of them as priests ministering at the altar and offering thereon a believing life, then, though his life-blood should be poured out as a libation around the offering, he will joy in *their* offering, and rejoice with them all. (2) *Call to joy and rejoice with him.* "And in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me." Martyrdom was a joyful thought to him. His dying when the cause of Christ was in the ascendant, his being poured out as a libation when he could think of them and others offering up their faith to God, would only send a thrill of joy through his heart. The dark hour would be lighted up by the thought of their believing testimony, and of the crown which they would be the occasion of his wearing. Far be it from them, then, to be overwhelmed by the event. Let them joy in his having courage to die for the Master, and let them rejoice with him in the reward, connected with them, that the Master was to put into his hand.

—It. F.

Vers. 19—30.—*Timothy and Epaphroditus.* I. *TIMOTHY.* 1. *His mission.* "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state." He looked forward to sending Timothy to them in the not-distant future. This hope he entertained in the Lord Jesus. It was not the hypocrite's hope, which is like the spider's web. It had to do with his being spared; but that, not based on worldly scheming to secure an acquittal at his approaching trial, but based on the need for doing more work for the Lord at Philippi. It was a hope that was made to rise within his heart by an impulse from the Lord. It was to the Lord that he looked for the realization of the hope. It was particularly the hope of performing a friendly office to the Philippians. In order that friendship may be turned to good account as a force in the advancement of the cause of Christ, it is necessary that there should be an honest endeavour to keep up intercourse. Where long distance intervened, that was a more difficult matter than it is now. We have readier means of communication with the mission field. There can be more frequent transmission of letters, an easier going and coming of missionaries. In that respect we are better placed for friendship, and for using it as a force in the extension of Christianity. The apostle had to contend with difficult means of communication, and yet he found it possible to keep up friendly intercourse with distant Churches. He was

presently incapacitated himself, but he had it in view to send Timothy as his *special messenger* to Philippi. This was with the friendly object of *knowing their state*. Timothy would be able to supplement the information concerning Paul's state taken by Epaphroditus, and in that way would cause them to be of good comfort. But he *also* expected to be of good comfort (he the sender, as well as they the receivers) when Timothy returned with news from Philippi. He does not seem to have heard to any purpose (although there had been some communication) since the coming of Epaphroditus, and he did not expect to hear until Timothy brought him back word. He was always *pained*, when he was long in hearing from any of the Churches. It would put him out of pain, it would cause him to be of good comfort, to have good news from Philippi. In our day it might have been sufficient to have sent a letter. We are not accustomed to such long painful intervals, although we have had experience of them too, as when Livingstone was lost in the centre of Africa. In view of the Philippian Church being lost to Paul for a period at the least extending over a year, he hoped to send Timothy to find them, as Stanley was sent to find Livingstone. It is much easier sending a letter; but more interest attaches to such special personal sending, and there is more satisfaction in the end. It was a richer manifestation of friendliness on the part of Paul, that he had it in his heart to despatch his delegate. Would not his prayers and good wishes go forth with him? Would he not then, as he hoped, rejoicing in freedom, see him on board ship at Ostia or Puteoli? Would he not send kind messages with him? Would he not remember him during his journey, and calculate the time of his arrival at Philippi, so as to be present in spirit with him and with them? And would not the coming of Timothy be an event of the utmost consequence to the Philippian Church? It would be looked forward to with the greatest interest. After the painful suspense on their side, his arrival would be hailed with manifestations of joy. Their thoughts would at once go back to him from whom he came? How was it with the veteran soldier of the cross? If liberation was the word that fell from Timothy's lips, what a thrill of joy would pass through the hearts of all! And then, as Timothy delivered himself of the messages with which he was laden to each, how would they drink in comfort, and think they had ample compensation for their fight of afflictions! And then, as Timothy stood up and preached to them the old gospel, with a savour caught from long association with Paul in imprisonment, how earnestly would they listen! how greedily appropriate its comfort! and how determinedly they would resolve to win the crown of faithfulness! And then, when the time came for Timothy to depart, how sorrowful they would feel! how they would send their congratulations to Paul, and their hope for his speedy coming among them! how this one and that one would wish it to be reported to Paul that they were determined to hold by Christ even to death! how some of them would go down to Neapolis and accompany him to the ship with tears! And then, when the delegate was met by the apostle again at Ostia or Puteoli, or wherever he had meantime gone to labour, what comfort there would be in hearing all that Timothy had to report to him! 2. *His fitness relative to Paul.* "For I have no man like-minded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." Travelling from Rome to Philippi would be attended with not a little inconvenience and risk. With the work associated with the journey, it would probably mean, to the person who undertook it, an absence of months. It is to be remembered that even emperors then did not charter their own vessels or have command of their own movements. Advantage had to be taken of coasting vessels engaged in commerce, and with delays at ports and with winds not always favourable, travelling by sea was generally slow. We read of a journey which Paul made from Philippi to the coast of Palestine in the seven weeks that intervened between the Passover and Pentecost. A journey from either of the harbours of Rome to Philippi would not be so formidable an undertaking; but Scylla and Charybdis had to be passed, the point of Italy rounded, the Ionian Sea crossed, the Grecian archipelago passed through, and the *Ægean* Sea encountered as far as Neapolis. There would probably be waiting at some Grecian port for a vessel for Philippi. There was always the danger of a storm by sea, and there was, especially to the messenger of the cross, the danger of persecution wherever he prosecuted his labours. The apostle was ill placed for fit men to undertake such a journey. There was such a general disposition, even among those who professed to work for Christ, to place their

personal comfort and convenience before the claims of Christ on their service. Of those available there were none (with only one exception) who could stand the test of such a journey. There is a side light thrown here on one of the trials of Paul in his imprisonment. As all, when it came to the crisis, forsook Christ and fled, so Paul was so isolated as to be at a loss to find a delegate of the right stamp for this mission to Philippi. "All," he has to say, "seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." In no haste, in all sobriety, does he bring this heavy indictment against them. They were all so afflicted with selfishness that they could not, at the call of Christ, brave a journey from Rome to Philippi. And before we cast a stone at them, let us ask if we could have stood the test ourselves. Do we habitually place the claims of Christ before personal comfort and convenience? May the same charge of selfishness not be brought home to very many still? If there was, even among those who profess to be Christ's, a willingness to set aside comfort and convenience for Christ, would there not be a hundredfold more of men and of money for Christian work? The one exception, the one unselfish man of those who might have gone to Philippi, was Timothy. He is commended as like-minded, or like-souled, with the apostle. And this is to be explained by the fact of his spiritual parentage. The language used in various places is "son," "my own son," "my beloved son," "my dearly beloved son." It is common to see the features of the father repeated in the son. This is true, not only of the bodily features, but extends even to the mental and spiritual configuration. Timothy had been moulded by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois in the Jewish religion, and no doubt they had left their mark on him. But in his conversion to Christianity he had so completely come under the formative influence of the apostle that there was a kind of natural assimilation to him in what he cared for. With his father's instincts, is Chrysostom's explanation of the word "truly" that is used here. Because Paul cared for the state of the Philippians, Timothy his son could not help caring for their state. 3. *His fitness relative to the Philippians.* "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel." Timothy had been with Paul at Philippi, as is borne out by the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, and his qualities had been there put to the proof. Their experience of him was this, that—as a child serveth a father, so he had served with Paul in furtherance of the gospel. It is an excellent arrangement, by which the younger is made to serve under the elder. It is beautiful to see a son free from opinionativeness and self-will, and spending his time and employing his powers as the father, in his larger experience and superior wisdom, directs. Soldiers who have plenty of strength and courage, when they go into battle are placed under the best military skill that is obtainable, and thus in the result it is as though each had the skill of his commander. It will be a source of strength for us, the men of this generation, to be guided by what has been proved to be good by the men of former generations, especially by those principles of religion which have stood the test of the ages, and have had the approval of the wisest and best of our race. Timothy must have been a very young man when working at Philippi, and very unaccustomed to the work. Some years after the date of this Epistle, Paul wrote to him in these words: "Let no man despise thy youth." In his inexperience in the work of furthering the gospel he had grace given him to take the course marked out for him by Paul; and thus he was preserved from many a fall, and was able to work to the best advantage. In this he was an example to a junior pastor serving with a senior. Blessed are those who, filled with a sense of their own imperfections, value the assistance of the wise in the direction of their energies. 4. *Time of his mission.* "Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me." He hoped *shortly* to send Timothy to them; he hoped, therefore, shortly to see how it would go with him. As soon as he saw the result of the trial, which he was confident would be his liberation, forthwith, without any loss of time, would he send forth Timothy, that the Philippian and other Churches might rejoice. 5. *The mission of Timothy was not to supersede a visit from himself.* "But I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly." In the same spirit and sphere of confidence, he gives them to understand that, while thus writing of the mission of Timothy, he does not forget his promise to pay them a visit himself, on his liberation. It might not be an immediate or a prolonged visit; but he held himself bound (God willing) to include Philippi in his plan of visitation.

II. EPAPHRODITUS. 1. *The Christian.* (1) *In relation to Paul.* (a) *Common sympathy.* "But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother." Paul was not without natural attachments. We do not read of his being married; but we read of his sister and his sister's son. And he seems to have interested himself in the highest form in his relations; for we read of several of his kinsmen sending their Christian salutations to the Church at Rome. But especially did he form noble attachments in connection with his work. If he had no brother after the flesh, there were many toward whom he exercised brotherliness. Epaphroditus, we may conclude, was a Philippian, of a different race, of a different nation. Thrown into contact with the apostle, and converted to Christianity probably through his instrumentality, they were closely drawn together on the ground of sympathy on the great subject of salvation. Their acquaintance had been renewed at Rome, and now, in parting with him, Paul affectionately names him to the Philippians as *his brother*. And it is only on the ground of a common Christian sympathy that the idea of *the Christian brotherhood* can be wrought out. This sympathy must be real, active, else it will prove to be inefficient. It is only when it is no mere matter of courtly phrases, but when, in all genuineness, we feel drawn to one another in Christ, that we shall be able successfully, unmistakably, to get over difference of race, difference of class, difference of pursuit, difference of ecclesiastical connection. Let, then, the brotherly feeling be in us, with its roots deeply struck into Christ. (b) *Common work.* "And fellow-worker." Christians are organized into a society, not merely on the ground of common sympathy, but for common work. Our impression of the apostolic Churches is that all the members were workers, male and female. If they did not all preach the gospel or serve tables, they worked in trying to induce friends and acquaintances to go with them to hear the gospel. And it was because there was so much *movement*, interest manifesting itself in all kinds of work, in those early Churches, that they prospered so wonderfully. Paul knew how to take advantage of men who were fitted for special work. He called such a man as Epaphroditus to his side, and, with Epaphroditus at his side and working with him, he felt stronger and gladder. Union makes us stronger; we each count more than one when we all work side by side. Union makes us gladder. "What makes the harvest-field so cheerful a scene? Because each is cheered by the other's alacrity, word, and song." (c) *Common warfare.* "And fellow-soldier." We have to conquer men's hearts for Christ. We have to conquer the world's evils—sensuality, intemperance, mammon-worship, carelessness, infidelity. We must fight, for there is a subtle and powerfully aggressive influence from the world; and if we do not conquer the world, the world will conquer us. It becomes, then, all who are true soldiers of the cross to stand side by side, that they may act to more purpose against the common foe. Paul felt more raised above his personal temptations, and a braver soldier against the heathenism of his day, when he had such soldiers as Epaphroditus and Archippus at his side. We should come up to the idea of the Theban sacred band. Thebans, making common cause with Thrasybulus and his Athenian co-patriots, set out together, resolved to dethrone the Thirty Tyrants of Athens, or die in the attempt. "That is what God means his Church to be: a band, not of friends merely, but of brothers, united heart to heart and hand to hand, and going forth resolved never to yield up the warfare till they are called to lie down in death or see victory crowning their efforts." (2) *In relation to the Philippians.* "And your messenger and minister to my need." Epaphroditus seems to have been a Philippian office-bearer; we may think of him as a Philippian minister, with a gift of preaching as well as of administration. As Timothy was intended to be special messenger from Rome to Philippi, so Epaphroditus had come as special messenger from Philippi to Rome. He was undoubtedly, personally, in sympathy with the special object of his mission—ministering to Paul's need. As the love of Christ, as it takes possession, opens the heart to the need of all mankind, so it must have opened the heart of Epaphroditus to the need of his spiritual father, of the founder of the Philippian Church, of the truest and bravest of Christ's servants. For his sake he was willing to leave beloved friends in Christ behind, and to brave all the dangers of the deep. And it would be with peculiar tenderness that he would hand over to the chained apostle the contribution of the Philippian Church. 2. *Reason for his return in his own state of mind.* "Since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick."

This was the *necessity* of the case. The Philippians had heard of his sickness; apparently they had not heard of his recovery. This, somehow coming to the knowledge of Epaphroditus, threw him into a state of sore trouble, or dividedness. He knew how he stood in their affection, and that they would be anxious about him. How could he remain longer away from them? He must go and relieve their anxiety. And so he took a longing for them—what is known as home-sickness. 3. *Information regarding his sickness and recovery.* “For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.” The report of his having been sick was correct, and his sickness had been of a very serious nature—he had been sick nigh unto death. But God had recovered him, and, in recovering him, had mercifully considered, not one but two. The Philippians are not included, because they were not on the spot. Paul writes as one who was with Epaphroditus through his sickness, or was kept regularly informed of his condition. And therefore we are to think of the locality of the sickness as Rome, and not on board ship on his way to Rome. God mercifully considered *Epaphroditus*, who was more immediately concerned, to whom he gave more life, even as he gave to King Hezekiah. He who has the ordering of all lives in his hands suffered him not to be stricken down away from his home. He set this mark of his favour on his servant, that he brought him back from the gates of death, so that he could say with one in like circumstances, “The sorrows of death compassed me. I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” But God also mercifully considered *Paul*. It would have been a severe blow to have had one of his companions stricken down. It would have been the sorrow of a peculiar bereavement upon the sorrow of imprisonment. But as God considered the children of Israel when they sighed by reason of the bondage, so he considered his bond-servant Paul, and ordained that it should not be that Epaphroditus should die, were it only for Paul’s sake. No additional burden must be laid on him, already burdened enough. And so, not to increase but to alleviate his sorrow at that sick-bed in Rome, he who made the seven stars and Orion mercifully turned the shadow of death into the morning. 4. *Reason for his return in Paul’s state of mind.* “I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.” The Philippians, he felt, were to be considered. He entirely entered into the feelings of Epaphroditus regarding them. Personally, he would very gladly have kept him with him at Rome for a time, until perhaps the time of the liberation, when he would have returned to Philippi with the news. But, however useful and comforting he found him, he must deny himself for the sake of the Philippians. He must give them the pleasure of seeing their pastor again after all their anxiety about him. And, while giving them pleasure, he would really be alleviating his own sorrow. With more haste, therefore, than he would in other circumstances have shown, he sent him to them. 5. *He bespeaks for Epaphroditus a good reception.* “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy; and hold such in honour: because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.” There is no reflection on the Philippians in the concluding words. They had done their utmost in service in giving Paul what he characterizes as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. What was lacking in their service was what they could not supply in the distance, viz. *personal service to Paul*. They supplied it *representatively* in Epaphroditus. It was the very height of their interest in Paul that they could deny themselves the service of their pastor for a considerable time, in order that, besides supplying him with money for his personal use and for carrying on the work, they might have the luxury in him of personally waiting upon him in his imprisonment. Epaphroditus was the substitute of each Philippian, who would gladly have taken his turn in waiting upon the apostle. And it was in seeking to render in the fullest measure what was thus lacking in their service, that he brought on an illness which proved well-nigh fatal. He is called a soldier, and he had the spirit of the true soldier in heroic devotion. A soldier must not consult his ease, he must not linger beside wife and children, he must not count his life dear unto himself. He must, at the call of his commander, be willing to undertake difficult and even perilous service, to form one of a storming party who have to march “i’ the cannon’s mouth.” Verily he must endure

hardness. And so the good soldier, Epaphroditus, for the work of Christ, in the battle carried on by Paul at Rome, in undertaking difficult service against the enemy there, came nigh unto death, hazarding his life. They were to receive him then in the Lord, with all joy, in fellowship with the Lord and in gratitude to the Lord who had mercifully dealt with them in giving him back to them as from the dead. And they were to hold him in honour, the ground of their honouring him being, not that he was in office among them, but that in working for Christ in their name he had risked his life. They were to heap honour upon him as upon a soldier who had distinguished himself in battle. And Epaphroditus was only to be taken as a specimen of a class. Hold such, says Paul, in honour. Whom are we to honour? It is not those who have lived to indulge themselves. It is rather those "who have walked in a rugged path, and clung to good and great ends in persecution and pain; who amid the solicitations of ambition, ease, and private friendship, and the menaces of tyranny and malice, have listened to the voice of conscience and found a recompense for blighted hopes and protracted suffering in conscious uprightness and the favour of God." Hold in honour the Christian brother, like Archer Butler, who nobly lost his life in volunteering to visit the infected houses during a visitation of cholera in Dublin; and the Christian sister who, resigning the comforts of her home, devotes her life to caring for the bodies and souls of patients in a hospital. Hold in honour the Christian missionary who, leaving his people and civilization, goes forth to a distant land and submits to isolation and a trying climate and peculiar difficulties of work, that he may bring the ignorant to the knowledge of the Saviour. And hold in honour all who can be unselfish in the place which Providence has assigned to them, and do not grudge the sacrifice of their time and comforts in giving, in praying, in working, in order that Christ may be magnified.

—R. F.

Vers. 1—4.—*Genuine socialism apostolically urged.* "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love," etc. Notice—

I. GENUINE SOCIALISM. Man is a social being, and his normal social condition is unity. Society is one body, and all men are members thereof, all animated by one life, and contributing to the good of the whole. This is the social ideal; but, alas! sin has created a schism. Instead of unity there is a division everywhere, and the divided parts become antagonistic. The mission of the gospel is to remedy this and to restore to perfect social unity. This unity, we infer from the text, includes three things. 1. *Harmony of feeling to one another.* "That ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Having noticed this point in the preceding article, we have only to repeat that the harmony can only be realized by all having the one same object of reigning love. Two men, however different in the kind and measure of native talent, in the nature and measure of information, in the degree of culture, in the character of their opinions and beliefs, are indissolubly united in soul if their *greatest love is centred in the same object.* So of any number. The design of the gospel is to centre all men's love on God in Christ. There is no other way of producing this harmony; no theological system, no ecclesiastical organization, no legislative enactment can do it; it is simply by this love that it can be done. 2. *Humility of deportment among one another.* "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." This verse expresses the negative result of this unity of soul—that nothing will be done in strife, that is, factiousness (the word used in ch. i. 17), or 'vain-glory'; nothing, that is, with the desire either of personal influence or of personal glory. For, he adds, each will esteem other better than himself, or rather, will hold that his neighbour is worthy of higher consideration, and a higher place of dignity than himself (compare the use of the word in Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13, of temporal dignity), for the idea is of the ascription to others, not of moral superiority, but of a higher place and honour. Self-assertion will be entirely overborne. So he teaches us elsewhere that 'charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own' (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5)" (Dr. Barry). The proud, the haughty, the supercilious, are not only the disturbers of social unity, they are the *destroyers* of it. According to the law of souls, they loathe and recoil from all arrogance and pretension in others, hence the exhortation, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory." 3. *Generous concern one for*

*another.* “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” This does not mean, of course, that you are to neglect your own things. There are things that every man must attend to for himself—his own physical health, intellectual culture, etc., but it means that we are not to attend to our own things *chiefly*, and in such a way as to neglect the concerns of others. There is no real antagonism between the interest of self and the interest of others; on the contrary, we can only secure our own individual well-being or happiness by promoting the interests of others. It is only as men become generously engrossed in the interests of others that they can realize their own individual happiness and perfection. *The man* rises only as he becomes self-oblivious; thus Paul felt, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.” The ego must be swallowed up in the non-ego—the spirit of universal benevolence. This is genuine socialism, and it is here urged by—

II. APOSTOLIC PERSUASION. “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded.” “There are here four influencing motives to inculcate the four Christian duties corresponding respectively—that ye be like-minded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind. 1. ‘If there be [with you, as I assume] any consolation in Christ,’ i.e. any consolation—but Ellicott, to avoid tautology, ‘comfort’ following, translates (*paraklesis*) ‘exhortation,’ Rom. xii. 8—of which Christ is the source, leading you to console me in my afflictions borne for Christ’s sake, ye ought to grant my request. 2. ‘If there be any comfort of [i.e. flowing from] love,’ the adjunct of consolation in Christ. 3. ‘If any fellowship of [joint participation of] the Spirit’ (2 Cor. xiii. 14). As ‘pagans’ meant those who were of one village and drank of one fountain, how much greater is the union which conjoins those who drink of the same Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4) 1 4. ‘If any bowels [tender emotions] and mercies’ (‘compassions,’ Col. iii. 12), the adjuncts of fellowship of the Spirit. The first and third mark the objective sources of the Christian life—Christ and the Spirit; the second and fourth, the subjective principle in believers. The opposites of the two pairs into which the four fall are reprobated in vers. 3 and 4” (Fausset). A man like the apostle would not have urged this true socialism with such mighty earnestness had he not been impressed with its importance; and what can be of greater importance than this unity among the race? For this Christ prayed the night before his death, “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”—D. T.

Vers. 5—11.—*The moral history of the Christly spirit.* “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” etc. “From a practical introduction in the familiar exhortation to follow the example of our Lord, St. Paul passes on to what is perhaps the most complete and formal statement in all his Epistles of the doctrine of his great humility. In this he marks out first the Incarnation, in which, ‘being in the form of God, he took on him the form of a servant,’ assuming a sinless but finite humanity; and next the passion, which was made needful by the sins of men, and in which his human nature was humiliated to the shame and agony of the cross. Inseparable in themselves, these two great acts of his self-sacrificing love must be distinguished. Ancient speculation delighted to suggest that the first might have been even if humanity had remained sinless, while the second was added because of the fall and its consequences. Such speculations are indeed thoroughly precarious and unsubstantial—for we cannot ask what might have been in a different dispensation from our own, and moreover, we read of our Lord as ‘the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world’ (Rev. xiii. 8; see also 1 Pet. i. 19), but they at least point to a true distinction. As the ‘Word of God’ manifested in the Incarnation, our Lord is the treasure of all humanity as such; as the Saviour through death, he is the especial treasure of us as sinners” (Dr. Barry). This is one of the grandest passages in the Bible; it has been the arena of many a theological battle, the subject of many a sermon, and of many volumes too. Eschewing, as far as possible, all verbal criticism and speculation, I shall turn it to a practical account by using it to illustrate the *moral history of the Christly spirit*—the spirit which the Philippians in the preceding verses are exhorted to obtain and cherish. Using it with this view, there are two great facts to be noticed.

I. IT IS A SPIRIT OF SELF-ABNEGATION. “Let this mind be in you, which was also PHILIPPIANS.

in Christ Jesus," etc. Now, this "mind," or spirit, he details as developed in Christ himself. 1. *In what Christ did not do.* "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Or, as Dr. Davidson renders the words, "Did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped at." "The term 'God' here and in the following paragraph," says Bengel, "does not denote God the Father; the *form* of God does not mean the Deity himself nor the Divine nature, but something rising out of it. Again, it does not signify the being equal with God, but something prior, the *manifestation* of God, that is, the form shining out of the very glory of the invisible Deity." The *form* of man is not the man himself, so the manifestation of God is not God himself. Now, Christ did not seize at this manifestation, did not consider it a thing to be grasped at. Of the true Christly spirit it may be said that, when great good is to be done, it does not hold on to privileges, honours, dignities, etc. This is strikingly illustrated in St. Paul, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (ch. iii. 7). 2. *In what Christ did do.* (1) "He made himself of no reputation." This should be rendered, "he emptied himself," or stripped himself of his original glory, the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Not that he was less Divine and great in time than he was before all time. But he did not appear so. He concealed his splendour in the veil of his flesh, so as to fulfil his redemptive mission. (2) He "took upon him the form of a servant." "The three words," says Bengel, "'form,' 'likeness,' 'fashion,' are not synonymous, neither are they virtually interchangeable; there is, however, a connection between them; *form* means something positive, *likeness* signifies a relation to other things of the same condition, *fashion* relates to the sight and perception." The King of the universe a servant! (3) "He was made in the likeness of men," and "found in fashion as a man." This does not mean that he had merely the appearance of a man and nothing more. He was a man, "made in all parts like unto his brethren." (4) He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "His death," says Dr. Barry, "is not here regarded as an atonement, for in that light it could be no pattern to us, but as the completion of the obedience of his life. He followed out the Divine will even to death, and to the death of the cross—a death of anguish and ignominy." Here is self-abnegation, and this self-abnegation is essentially the Christly spirit. Self-sacrifice is the essence of religion. He that does not lose himself in the swelling tide of benevolent sympathy for lost souls has not the "mind that was in Christ Jesus."

II. IT IS A SPIRIT OF DIVINE EXALTATION. Because of this self-abnegating love "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every name;" rather, "the Name above every name." Perhaps all intelligent creatures through the universe have appellations by which they are distinguished from others and recognized. Angels have their names: Michael, Gabriel, etc. Some names are greater than others. It often happens that the name of one man towers in significance and grandeur above the name of a whole generation. Such names as Moses, Paul, Luther, Howard, Garibaldi. But the apostle declares that there is one "Name above every name," either on earth or in heaven. 1. *It is a transcendent Name.* "A Name which is above every name." It is idealistically and independently perfect. There is no name like unto it in the universe. Above every name in every hierarchy in the creation. 2. *It is a morally conquering Name.* "That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow." There is a talismanic energy in this Name. It has wrought wonders on our earth already, and far greater wonders it will work in the human mind "until all his enemies be made his footstool." It wins the mastery over the soul, ay, and gains ascendancy over all minds in the universe. "Of things in heaven, and things in earth," etc. For "things," read "beings." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." 3. *It is a God-gloryfying Name.* "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The acknowledgment of the glory of Christ is the acknowledgment of the glory of the Father as the source of Deity manifested perfectly in him. "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xvi. 28).

**CONCLUSION.** Here is the fixed law of heaven. The moral spirit that would ascend to true dignity, win a name that shall command the reverence both of earth and heaven, must empty itself of all selfish motives and personal interests. There are two hills lying opposite each other, one is the hill of personal pride—barren, bleak, cloudy; the other is the hill of Divine dignity—grand, sunny, blooming in beauty, and abounding in fruit, crowned with the pavilion of the Godhead. No soul can ascend the one without descending the other; he must go down the brow of selfishness step by step, till he reaches the dark valley of self-abnegation, and then upward he may commence scaling the sublime altitudes of Divine dignity and bliss.—D. T.

**Vers. 12, 13.—*Salvation as a work in the soul.*** “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” It is worthy of note that this, of all the Epistles of Paul, is the only one that contains no direct rebuke. The apostle here speaks of them as “having always obeyed,” not only in his presence, but in his absence. The passage leads us to contemplate *salvation as a work in the soul*. The word “salvation” implies a previous lost condition. The soul is lost; but in what sense? Not in the sense of *missing*, as the piece of silver was lost, the sheep was lost, the prodigal son lost; God knows where every soul is. Not in the sense of *destruction*, as the tree or house is lost when burnt to ashes; but in the sense in which a *worthless* child is lost to his parents, a worthless soldier to an army, a worthless citizen to his country. All souls are lost to God in this sense—they fulfil not their mission, which is (1) truthfully to reveal, (2) loyally to obey, and (3) religiously to serve him. I offer three remarks on this subject.

**I. SALVATION IS A SUPREME WORK IN MAN.** The apostle urges it here as supreme: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence,” etc. As if he had said, “Mind, attend to this, wherever I am, in whatever condition, whether I am living or dying, do not neglect your salvation.” This is the supreme work. If the soul is not restored to the knowledge and image of the true God, what matters it what else a man may possess? “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

**II. SALVATION IS A DIVINE WORK IN MAN.** “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” 1. He works *in you*. He works everywhere outside of you. He is the *force* of all forces, the Spirit in all the wheels of nature; but in the soul he has a higher sphere. As outside in unreasoning nature he works in harmony with the laws which he has established, so in the soul he works according to its laws of thought and volition. 2. He works *in you for your salvation*. Not for your destruction; destruction would require no work on his part, a mere volition would extinguish you for ever, but he works to save you—works as the physician works to save his patient, as the lifeboat works to save the sinking bark. 3. He works *in you for your salvation according to his good pleasure.*” It is not his will that you should perish; the desire of his great fatherly heart is that you should be saved. Hence he works *in you*, works silently, constantly, and in connection with all the influences of nature, events of history, and the laws of your own being.

**III. SALVATION IS A HUMAN WORK IN MAN.** 1. It is a work which the *man must do for himself.* “Work out your own salvation.” No one can do the work for you; no one can believe, repent, and love for you; the work is absolutely personal. 2. Man’s encouragement to this work is *the co-operation of God.* “God worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” His agency, instead of superseding the necessity of yours, should stimulate yours. If he did not work with you, your efforts would be futile; if against you, your efforts would be baffled and confounded. But your salvation is his “good pleasure.” He works with you as he works with the industrious agriculturist; he supplies all the necessary conditions for success in the production of golden crops. He works with you as he works with the genuine truth-seeker, touches the springs of thought and stimulates by ever-opening prospects.

**CONCLUSION.** Never let us forget that our supreme work is spiritual salvation, that all other works should be made subservient to this.—D. T.

Vers. 14—16.—*Church activity.* “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.” The Church is essentially as active society. An inactive Church is a solecism. Activity is not only the condition of its health, strength, and growth, but the condition of its very existence. Inactivity is death. The text leads us to look upon its activity in relation to various things.

I. IN RELATION TO THE SPIRIT WHICH SHOULD INSPIRE IT. 1. *The spirit should be uncomplaining.* “Do all things without murmurings (*γογγυσμῶν*).” In Peter this word is translated “grudging.” It represents a discontented soul. It is not uncommon, alas! to find men in the Church discontented—discontented with their fellow-members, their minister, their work. This *gongusmos* is a growl which is most painful and mischievous in Church operations. 2. *The spirit should be uncontentious.* “Disputings.” There is a strong tendency in some persons to enter into contention and raise a strife. The smallest points of difference are seized. This disputatious spirit has been ripe in all ages. The theological controversies, sectarian battlings, the schismatic strifes of the Church, have been her disgrace and her bane. 3. *The spirit should be irreprehensible.* “That ye may be blameless and harmless.” The expression means faultless and sincere. Christians should exemplify such a spirit and maintain such a deportment as would guard them from the rebukes of the severest critics of life.

II. IN RELATION TO THE SPHERE OF ITS OPERATIONS. “A crooked and perverse nation.” Though, perhaps, Paul especially refers in these words to the bigoted Jews and Gentiles, amongst whom the Philippians lived, they are not inapplicable to the unconverted world. The world, as distinguished from the Church, living outside and around it, is indeed wicked and perverse. The world is the sphere of the Church. And how corrupt in its maxims, in its aims, in its spirit, in its theories, practices, and institutions! The prince of darkness is its ruler. He worketh in the children of disobedience.

III. IN RELATION TO THE MISSION IT PROSECUTES. “Holding forth the Word of life.” Observe: 1. *Its instrument.* “The Word of life.” The gospel is the Word of life. It reveals, generates, nourishes, and perfects Divine life in the soul. 2. *Its method.* “Holding forth.” The language is figurative. Hold this Word forth as a standard-bearer holds forth his banner to direct the march and animate his soldiers in the day of battle. Hold it forth as a light in the midst of surrounding darkness. Some think there is in the text an allusion to those towers which in ancient times were built at the entrance of harbours, and on which fires were kept burning to direct ships into port. It should be held forth as the lighthouse holds forth that flaming lamp that flashes its radiance on the dark sea to guide the mariner on his way. Hold it forth, not only *doctrinally*, but *practically*; let it turn your whole being into a light that shall shine brightly as a star in the world’s dark firmament.

IV. IN RELATION TO THE MINISTRY THAT STIMULATES IT. Christ has appointed a ministry in the Church. The design of that ministry is to stimulate and guide its activity. Paul had ministered to the Church at Philippi, and he uses the service he had rendered as an argument for their continued Christian activity. “That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.” There is nothing selfish in this reason. But there is something very suggestive in Paul’s words. They imply: 1. That the Church may render fruitless the labours of its minister. This is a solemn truth, and one exemplified in the history of many congregations. An indolent, ignorant, worldly, inconsistent Church must ever render futile the services of the best of ministers. Even Paul dreaded it. 2. That such an event is a calamity to be deprecated. Paul did so now. Deprecated, not on selfish grounds, for the true minister has his reward in his own holy efforts. But on account of those who augment their responsibility and increase their guilt by an abuse of the means of grace. 3. That the results of the Christian ministry will be fully revealed on the day of judgment. This day is here called “the day of Christ.” It is his day, because he will appear on that day; he will be the most prominent object on that day; he will rule the destinies of that day.—D. T.

Vers. 17, 18.—*Christly love.* “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.” There are different kinds of love. Christly love is love in the highest form, the love which is the inspiration of all human activities, approved of God, and spiritually useful to man. Two remarks are here suggested concerning this love.

I. It is SELF-CONSECRATING. It was so: 1. *In the conduct of the Philippian Christians.* Paul speaks of their religion as the “sacrifice” and “service” of their “faith.” The life of a genuine Christian is the life of a true priest; he is at once the *offering* and the *offerer*. It is a self-dedication to God. In this priesthood of personal Christianity two things are to be observed. (1) Every man is his own *sacrifice*. The sacrifice of anything short of his own self will not do. The wealth of the world would not be a substitute for this. He must lay himself on the altar. It is not until he has done this that anything else that he can do has aught of virtue in it. What does this offering of self imply? (a) Not the loss of *personality*. Man does not lose himself by consecrating his existence to the Eternal. He will never be absorbed in the Infinite; a man once, a man for ever. (b) Not the loss of *free agency*. In the consecration man does not become the mere limb or machine of Omnipotence. In truth he only secures his highest liberty by yielding up himself to God. What does it mean, then? It includes two things—yielding to his love as the inspiration of his being, and adopting his will as the rule of his activities. (2) Every man is his own *minister*. He must offer the sacrifice himself; no one can do it for him. Could my being be offered to the Almighty by another, it would be a crime in the offerer and no virtue to me. I must do it fully, devoutly, manfully. 2. *In the life of the apostle.* “Yea, and if I be offered [or, ‘poured forth’] upon the sacrifice.” The allusion is to the practice of pouring out libations or drink offerings over sacrifices both Jewish and heathen. Paul regards his own possible martyrdom in the sense of a libation. He felt that his possible death was to serve that practical Christianity which the Philippians were exemplifying in their “sacrifice” and “service.” He had consecrated his existence to the furtherance of the gospel.

II. It is JOY-INSPIRING. “I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.” This self-consecrating love to the cause of Divine benevolence, the cause of Christ and humanity, is “joy.” Such disinterested love is happiness, nothing else, is heaven and nothing else. Just as the individual man loses himself, his ego, in the love of God and the interests of his universe, all personal anxieties and sorrows sink into the depths of oblivion, the soul gets filled with all the fulness of God. Genuine religion is joy; it is not the means to heaven, it is heaven itself. Such is Christly love, and such alone is true religion. Selfish love, sectarian love, and theological love are not constituents, but antipathies, to this love.—D. T.

Vers. 19—24.—*The true spirit of Christian usefulness.* “But I trust in the Lord,” etc. These words might be fairly employed to illustrate the *true spirit of Christian usefulness*, and the following remarks are suggested. This spirit is—

I. SUPREME CONCERN FOR THE SOUL-INTERESTS OF OTHERS. This was exemplified in Paul. 1. *In thinking of them at all in his condition.* Paul was now a prisoner in Rome, exposed to martyrdom, “ready to be offered.” One might have thought that in such a condition his mind would have been wholly occupied with his own affairs, and that he would be utterly dead to the concerns of others. Not so; he feels a vital and deep interest in the Church at Philippi. 2. *In despatching to them the best man he could find to promote their spiritual good.* “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.” See what he says of this Timothy, whom he purposed shortly to send to them. (1) He was the only man he could find of a similar mind to his own. “I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care [or, ‘care truly.’] for your state.” It would not be difficult, perhaps, for him to find men who would go down to the Philippians and preach to them; but very difficult to find a man who would visit them with that tender interest and self-sacrificing love which Paul had. (2) He was a man who was devoted to the things of Jesus Christ, and not to his own. “For all seek their own.” This, perhaps, must be taken in a qualified sense—the “all” for most. The millions in every age seek their own, self is the centre and circumference of their aims

and activities. Self is not only uncrucified, but in the ascendant. Few seek the "things of Jesus Christ," such things as *truth, benevolence, holiness, entire consecration* to the Divine will. The spirit of usefulness is devotion to the things of Christ. 3. *In dispatching to them a man well known to them, dear to him as a son and a loving colleague.* "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." They knew Timotheus. He was with Paul when he first preached the gospel to them (Acts xvi. 12-14). And also with Paul when he visited them, on another occasion, on his way to Jerusalem. He was with him as a "son," loving and loyal. Thus Paul showed his absorbing interest in them. Why did he think of them at all? Above all, why did he send Timotheus, a man so dear to him, to minister to them? Why did he not keep him with himself, to soothe and succour him in his terrible position? It was because he had that spirit of Christian usefulness that absorbed his whole nature in the concerns of others. With his liberty gone, and death before him, he says—I want to "know your state," how you think, feel, purpose, and act in relation to the gospel which I preached unto you—the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and for this purpose I send Timotheus to you, the most valuable man I know, and the most dear to me. So it is ever; a man imbued with the true genius of spiritual usefulness will think more about the moral concerns of others than about himself. Elsewhere we hear our apostle say, "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ, for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites" (New Version). Ah me! Where is this spirit of usefulness now? Where are the men to whom their own personal and worldly interests are as dross to the welfare of souls?

II. A SPIRIT OF SETTLED TRUST IN THE WILL OF THE GREAT MASTER. "Him [that is, Timotheus] therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." Observe: 1. *He was in a state of uncertainty as to his destiny.* He did not know whether he should be liberated or martyred. The future of our personal existence is concealed from all, even from inspired men. "We know not what shall be on the morrow." 2. *Though in this state of uncertainty he entertained the hope of visiting them shortly.* "I trust . . . I myself shall come shortly." This was natural. It not only implied a deliverance from his horrible position, but the gratification of renewing old and tender associations. 3. *This hope he entertained in subjection to the Divine will.* I do not know my future, but I trust in the Lord. I do hope to visit you "shortly." I should like once more to be amongst you; I trust I shall; but my trust is in submission to the Divine will. Herein he acted according to the directions of St. James: "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will" (Jas. iv. 15).

CONCLUSION. Such is the spirit of Christian usefulness, a spirit that regards the soul-interests of men as supreme, and that makes all hopes and calculations of the future subject to the Divine will.—D. T.

Vers. 25-30.—*True labourers for Christ.* "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus," etc. Epaphroditus, it would seem, had been sent from the Church at Philippi to Paul at Rome, with supplies for his temporal necessities. In the execution of his commission he had fallen sick, and now, having reached convalescence, he longed to return home in order to relieve the anxieties of his friends, who had heard of his indisposition. The text presents to us two *genuine*, if not *model*, workers for Christ—men thoroughly imbued with the Christly spirit, and subject to those trials which generally attend in this world the faithful discharge of the gospel mission. In them we discover—

I. A FEELING OF SPIRITUAL EQUALITY. Paul speaks of Epaphroditus as "my brother," "my companion," or, as in the New Version, "my fellow-worker" and "my fellow-soldier." Whatever difference existed in their natural or acquired abilities, their worldly position and social standing, a sense of spiritual equality possessed and ruled them. They were children of the same great Father, labourers in the same great cause, soldiers in the same moral campaign—a campaign against the evils, physical, intellectual, social, and moral, that afflict the world. Where is this sense of spiritual equality displayed now amongst those who profess to be labourers of Christ? What would be thought of an archbishop writing a letter to a Church concerning a primitive local

preacher, a true labourer withal, with these words, "my brother, my labourer, my fellow-soldier," receive him with all gladness; and hold such in reputation? Such conduct from the primate would shock the fawning sycophancy which is too rampant in Church and state.

II. A SENTIMENT OF TENDER SYMPATHY. Here is sympathy manifested by three parties. 1. *By the Philippian Church towards Paul.* Touched with Paul's wretched condition in Rome, a prisoner lacking food, they sent Epaphroditus to him with means of relief, made him the "messenger" of charity. 2. *By Epaphroditus towards the Philippian Church.* Paul says, "he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness." Why was he "full of heaviness," or in sore trouble? It does not say that it was on his own account, but because "ye had heard he had been sick." He was afraid that the tidings which they had received of his indisposition would distress them with anxieties, and he hurries home to relieve them. 3. *By Paul for both.* "I sent him therefore the more carefully [diligently], that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful." As if he had said, "I want your sorrows removed, for in your sorrows I sorrow." How beautiful, thrice beautiful, is all this! How rare, withhold! how Christly! Nay, there is no Christlikeness without it. Unless Christianity unites all souls in this living sympathy, it has failed in its mission. All true disciples are members of one body, of which Christ is the Head, and what one feels, all feel, and they rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep.

III. A CONDITION OF TRYING AFFLCTION. Paul was a sufferer. He was not only a prisoner at Rome, awaiting a terrible fate, but in actual "need," dependent on the charity of others. Epaphroditus had been in sore affliction, "nigh unto death." Now, it is worthy of note that the affliction that came on both these men came on them in consequence of their Christianity. One might have thought that their Christianity, their generosity, purity, and moral nobleness, would have guarded them from even the common ills of life. Not so. Paul knew that such afflictions were to be expected, and elsewhere he says, "No man should be moved by these afflictions. Ye yourselves know that ye are appointed thereunto." Afflictions, however, that come in this way are distinguished from all other afflictions in two respects. 1. *They have a disciplinary influence.* They are not judicial penalties, but parental chastisements. They cleanse, they spiritualize, they enoble the soul. 2. *They have Divine supports.* So abundant are the consolations they experience that they "glory in tribulation," etc.

IV. A REALIZATION OF DIVINE MERCY. "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." He ascribes both the restoration of Epaphroditus to health, and his own deliverance from the terrible "sorrow" which would have befallen himself had his friend expired, to the mercy of God. Not to any secondary instrumentality, not to the value of their services in the cause of Christ, but to mercy. A practical realization of Divine mercy is at once a sign and element of vital Christianity. In the gift of life there is mercy, in the sustentation of life there is mercy, in the afflictions of life there is mercy; to a Christian all is mercy.

V. A RIGHT TO CHRISTIAN REGARD. "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." 1. *Give him a hearty reception.* "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness." Welcome him, not with mere conventional civility and social politeness, but with exultant affection. 2. *Treat him with honour.* "Hold such in reputation." He is a noble man; treat him as a noble man should be treated. The honour which is paid to worldly men on account of their wealth, their grandeur and position, is a spurious honour, is flunkeyism. There can be no true honour where there is not the honour-worthy, and the honour-worthy implies moral excellence. 3. *Do all this because he deserves it.* "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death." He is thoroughly disinterested; he suffered and risked his life, not from any personal motives, but from the inspiration of Christian love and charity. Disinterestedness is the soul of virtue and the only foundation of greatness. A disinterested man has a right to Christian regard, ay, more, to enthusiastic reception.—D. T.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Exhortation to unity: (2) The testimony of our spiritual and moral*

conscience. St. Paul is now on higher ground, showing how unreal is all Christian profession which does not desire unity.

I. 1. *What consolation (or, exhortation) is there in Christ without this desire?* What growth in the knowledge of him or in union with him? 2. *What comfort of love?* How can the royal law of love of the brethren be fulfilled without this? 3. *What fellowship of the Holy Spirit?* It is the office of the Holy Ghost to bind together. How can we be partakers of him unless he is working in us his peculiar work? 4. *What tender mercies and compassions?* Even natural loving-kindness prompts the desire for unity.

II. How much nearer to unity should we be if all who profess to love the Lord Jesus would dwell on these points, rather than on the points about which they differ!—V. W. H.

Vers. 3, 4.—*Exhortation to unity: (3) Causes of its breach.* I. **To CONQUER A MALADY WE MUST ASCERTAIN ITS CAUSE.** St. Paul lays bare the causes of the divisions which exist among Christians. 1. *Strife:* faction; party spirit; the desire to promote the success of a cause rather than to be guided by the Holy Spirit into that which is true. 2. *Vain-glory:* personal vanity; the desire to be noticed, and the hatred of owning one's self to be wrong. These are the solvents of Christendom. Often the theological disputes which have been the apparent causes of separation have not been the real causes.

II. **REMEDIES.** 1. *Humility.* Many controversies proceed from an endeavour to explain that which is beyond definition. 2. *Consideration for others.* Controversy would, to a great extent, cease if each man would be satisfied with bearing witness to the truth, which has made itself a living thing to himself, without insisting that his experience must be that of every one else.—V. W. H.

Vers. 5.—*Exhortation to unity: (4) Its highest motive and most powerful agent.* I. **WHAT THE MIND OF CHRIST IS.** It is the mind of perfect love manifesting itself in perfect humility.

II. **WHY WE NEED IT.** It is the only cure for our want of unity. Disunion comes from self-exaltation. Union from losing self in Christ. St. Paul here urges the highest motive to unity and the only method by which it can be secured. Controversies are hushed when we realize the presence and the example of the incarnate Christ.

III. **HOW WE CAN HAVE IT.** By uniting ourselves to him. So long as we are in our Father's house, all that he has is ours. The humility and the love of which Christ is full are imparted to us if we are in him. We must receive him if we would imitate him; for if we receive him he lives his life in us.

IV. **WHAT IT WILL BE TO US.** In the heat of controversy we shall learn to see that servant's form in our midst, set there as he once set a little child in the midst of his disciples disputing among themselves which should be the greatest. He is himself that little child; by his self-humiliation he for ever rebukes our self-exaltation.—V. W. H.

Vers. 6-8.—*The humiliation of Christ.* I. **THE HEIGHT FROM WHICH HE CAME IS THE MEASURE OF THE DEPTH TO WHICH HE DESCENDED.** He was for ever "in the form of God;" i.e. with the essential nature of God (cf. John xiii. 3, 4).

II. **HIS HUMILIATION WAS NO LOSS OF GLORY OR ESSENTIAL WORTH.** He is for ever in the form of God; this he could not renounce. He laid aside for a time his *external* equality with God. This he considered not to be a possession of any great importance. How contrary to ordinary human ideas, which "catch at" anything which confers external honour! But to catch at an external resemblance argues that we do not possess the essential likeness. Only the truly great can afford to humble themselves.

III. **HIS HUMILIATION A REALITY.** He takes the "form of a servant;" i.e. he actually becomes such, as he was actually in the "form of God." He assumes also the "likeness of a man," becoming in appearance, as in reality, one of ourselves.

IV. **HE ACCEPTS THE TRUE POSITION OF MAN, WHICH IS THAT OF OBEDIENCE.** This is man's truest and essential glory. The true man cannot live any other life than that of obedience and service. His obedience is to death, even to a death of shame, if such

is required of him. Our glory is to accept whatever may be the will of God for us.—V. W. H.

Ver. 9.—*Exaltation through humiliation.* I. 1. *Our Lord's teaching.* He is continually urging, under different forms of expression, the elementary gospel truth, that to humble ourselves is the true way of exaltation. “ Except a man be born again ; ” “ Blessed are the poor in spirit ; ” “ He that humbleth himself ; ” “ Except ye be converted,” etc. 2. *Our Lord's example.* He is himself the great example of that which he teaches. He humbled himself as none other can humble himself, and he is exalted as none other is exalted.

II. OUR EXALTATION CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED AS HIS WAS. 1. We must humble ourselves. Being humiliated is not the same thing as humbling ourselves. Unless we accept it as from God, and for our benefit, humiliation may rouse anger and pride, and thus hinder our exaltation. 2. We must humble ourselves *in the way of obedience.* We shall not find grace in any self-chosen methods of self-humiliation not imposed upon us by God.

III. 1. *It is a matter of spiritual experience* that self-exaltation always leaves us humiliated, whereas the cheerful acceptance of the cross which God lays upon us, making us to share in the humiliation of our Lord, gives us some share also in his exaltation. 2. *It is a matter of historical proof.* The builders of Babel proposed to “make themselves a name,” and were confounded ; Abraham left himself in God's hands, who undertook to make his name great (Gen. xi. 4, 8 ; xii. 2).—V. W. H.

Vers. 10, 11.—*The exaltation of the Son of man.* I. CONTRAST THE GLORY WHICH THE SON OF GOD RENOUNCED WITH THE GLORY WHICH HAS BEEN BESTOWED UPON HIM BECAUSE OF THAT RENUNCIATION. Contrast also the position of a *servant* which he voluntarily took, with the position of *Lord* which he thereby won. Although exalted to be Lord, he still remains in the likeness of men ; for it is as Man that he won his kingship, and as Man that he draws all men to himself.

II. THE FEELINGS EXCITED IN US BY THIS REVELATION OF THE EXALTATION OF THE SON OF MAN. 1. *Wonder and adoration.* Wonder that One in our own nature should be thus exalted, and that prayer may now be addressed to One who is still our fellow-man ! All creation worships him in whom creation is united to its Creator. 2. *Faith.* Every tongue is to confess that Jesus is the Lord. This is the essential Christian creed. In it is contained all Christian doctrine and practice. It is Jesus, the loving Son of man, who is exalted to be our Lord. The change in his condition does not change his disposition, which is that revealed to us in the gospel story. All power is now given to him who is all loving. What further revelation of God can we need ?

III. THE FINAL PURPOSE OF HIS WORK AND OF OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH IN HIM. “The glory of God the Father.” The humiliation and exaltation of the Son, the loving adoration of mankind, have this as their final object.—V. W. H.

Vers. 12, 13.—*Our own salvation.* The command that we should “work out our own salvation” is not in opposition to the truth that all salvation is the gift and the work of God. It has no reference to this, but is an exhortation to rely upon ourselves and upon God in us rather than upon any human guide or teacher.

I. THIS SALVATION IS AN INDIVIDUAL THING. It is “our own.” To trust to human guides is to doubt the guidance of God. It was expedient for the disciples that the Lord Jesus should go away. While they were in his visible presence they trusted to that rather than to his Spirit within them. The presence of the teacher hinders the spiritual life if it tends to lead the disciples to trust to it rather than to God. A lesson useful both for our own spiritual training and for the work which we would do for the souls of others.

II. IT IS TO BE WORKED OUT WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. This fear is not a servile fear, but it is the consciousness of the presence of God and of our relationship to him. Note that among these Philippians bidden to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, there must have been that jailor to whom St. Paul had said, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” That first act of faith placed him

in a state of salvation, and in this sense "saved" him, and now, being saved, he has to work out a full salvation.

III. THIS SALVATION IS OF GOD. From him comes firstly the *desire* by which we long for it and the *power* by which we can attain to it. All is of his grace. He gives grace for grace, not grace for good works. Consider the strength which this truth bestows. The One to whom we trust is not a guide outside us, but a God within us. He is not only One who can teach us when we are willing to be taught, but One who can give us the will to be taught. He is not One whom we have to persuade to help us against his will, but the whole that we need is already of "his good pleasure."—V. W. H.

Vers. 14—16.—*The Christian life: its effect upon the world.* I. HOW THIS EFFECT MAY BE OBSCURED. By murmurings (i.e. active rebellions against the will of God) and disputings (i.e. efforts of the intellect to persuade ourselves that God's voice is not speaking to us).

II. HOW IT IS MANIFESTED. Where God's will is accepted, it will render our lives *blameless* towards him and *harmless* towards our fellow-men. Thus are we manifested as the sons of God, being partakers of his life.

III. WHAT IT CONSISTS IN. 1. *Shining as lights.* The faithful are the illuminated, shining, not in their own light, but in the presence of the Light of the world within them. He so fills them with himself that their whole body becomes full of light. 2. *Holding forth the Word of life.* The light is the life of men. They who are possessors of the light must impart it. One light may be kindled from another without diminution of its illuminating power. It is the Word of God, i.e. the revelation of God, the Word of life (cf. 1 John i. 1), which is "a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our path."—V. W. H.

Vers. 17, 18.—*The law of sacrifice.* St. Paul takes his metaphor from the methods of sacrificial worship in common use among heathen nations. He sees "the soul of good in things evil," and even in the notions of corrupt human imaginations a distorted reflection of truth. He compares the faith and devotion of the Philippian Christians to a sacrifice presented on the altar, and he is ready to pour out his own life's blood as the libation which shall complete this offering and render it acceptable.

I. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE. The offering of ourselves, our powers, and possessions. How can these be offered? Only through our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself for us, because we had nothing worthy of God's acceptance. His sacrifice becomes ours, inasmuch as we are in him. By his being in us he now enables us to offer ourselves.

II. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD. To offer ourselves for one another is the true privilege of priesthood. Christ is the one Priest, for he alone is worthy to offer anything acceptable to God. In as far as we are partakers of his spirit we share in his priesthood and are permitted to offer ourselves for each other.—V. W. H.

Vers. 19—30.—*Two characters, representing two aspects of Christian work.* I. TIMOTHY, A MAN OF SYMPATHY. The secret of true sympathy is to be seeking for the things of Jesus Christ. He who seeks for these feels, as his Master feels, for all human sorrows. Such a one is thoroughly "like-minded," and is delivered from the selfishness which cares for nothing but self. None can work for Christ except they are possessed of this sympathy.

II. EPAPHRODITUS, A MAN OF ACTIVE MINISTRY. He is the chosen messenger of the Church at Philippi to minister, in its name, to St. Paul's wants. The sickness from which he was recovering was probably caused by his exertions in this work (ver. 30).

III. ST. PAUL COMBINES IN HIMSELF BOTH THESE ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN WORK. He is a man of intense sympathy. Notice his readiness to deny himself the society of these two men in order that the Philippians may be benefited. His reward will be sufficient if he hears a good report of them. At the same time, his whole life is a life of active ministry.

IV. THE SECRET OF BOTH SYMPATHY AND ACTIVITY. His life is lived "in the Lord" (vers. 19, 24, 29).—V. W. H.

**Vers. 1, 2.—Brotherly union.** St. Paul had already much joy in contemplating the spiritual prosperity of the Philippians (ch. i. 4). One thing only was wanting to make that joy complete. There was some danger lest a spirit of faction should creep in and mar the family unity of the Church, especially among the women (ch. iv. 2). If this danger were averted and harmony established, the joy of the apostle would be full.

**I. BROTHERLY UNION IS THE CROWNING GRACE OF THE CHURCH.** Many other graces may be attained before this is realized—knowledge as in the Corinthian Church, a faithful martyr spirit as in the Philippian Church. But the chief grace is brotherly love. The idea of the Church is essential to Christianity. The gospel does not simply offer individual salvation and call to isolated missions. It brings men into a family and unites them in close bonds. The ideal Christian is not the lonely hermit, but the large-hearted, sympathetic, social man. Close union, however, is only possible on conditions of deep sympathy. We may differ and yet be at peace while we live apart, with sufficient “elbow-room” for our several crotchets. But Church fellowship necessitates internal harmony for the maintenance of peace. Intellectual unity, unity of thought, is impossible to thinking men. The essential unity is unity of purpose and of sympathy—the one mind and the one love. Christians above all men must realize the duties of a democracy—how to subordinate private ends to the general good, how to yield individual opinions in obedience to the general voice of the community. Party spirit, personal ambition, self-will, domineering self-assertion in the leaders, and obstructive self-assertion in the rank-and-file, are the dangers that threaten such communities as were founded by the apostles. Only a spirit of love can conquer them.

**II. GREAT CHRISTIAN MOTIVES URGE US TO BROTHERLY UNION.** 1. *Our living union with Christ.* “Any comfort”—i.e. practical experience, help, grace of fellowship—“in Christ.” Christians are united together through a common union with Christ. Connection with the Head leads to harmonious co-operation of the members of the body. 2. *The blessedness of love.* It is found to be a joy, a strength, and a comfort. In trouble and persecution especially it is happy and helpful to unite our individual feelings in love one to another. 3. *The fellowship of the Spirit.* The one Spirit of God that inhabits the whole Church is a mystical bond of union and inspiration of love. 4. *Natural affection.* “Tender mercies and compassions,” which are natural to humanity, are never so well employed as in Christian brotherhood.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 4.—Selfishness.** **I. SELFISHNESS IS THE ROOT OF SIN.** Selfishness is living in and for ourselves. It manifests itself in various aspects. 1. *In thought.* Self becomes the largest figure in a man’s conception of the universe. The shadow of self lies across everything else. The merits of self are magnified in pride. Vanity craves the admiration of others for one’s self. Self-worship makes a man prejudiced in holding to his own opinions and bigoted in rejecting those of other men. 2. *In feeling.* Self-love fills a selfish man’s heart. He has no grief at another’s trouble and no pleasure in another’s joy. Instead of feeling as a member of a great body moved by the common pulse of a common life, he is like a solitary cell detached and self-concentrated. 3. *In action.* Self-will becomes the predominating energy and self-seeking the prevailing motive. In its extreme development this becomes positive cruelty—a pursuit of one’s own pleasure through the pain of others. Now, all this is sinful in the sight of God and man, and frightfully injurious to society. War, crime, intemperance, etc., all spring from some form of selfishness.

**II. CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES THE ERADICATION OF SELFISHNESS.** So long as a man thinks only of himself he has not learnt what the gospel means. He may be seeking what he calls his spiritual welfare—escape from hell, a happy future, or peace here. But all this is selfish. Selfishness in every respect must be uprooted in order that the true Christian life may be established. 1. *In thought.* This is essential to repentance. Humility and confession of sin are necessary before we can even enter the kingdom of heaven. 2. *In feeling.* Love to Christ, not the saving of our own souls, is the great motive that should inspire us. Love to our fellow-men, not personal comfort, is the spirit that should pervade our lives. We are only Christian in so far as we follow Christ. And Christ denied himself and “went about doing good.” All pretensions of saintly devotion count just for nothing, or for worse than nothing, for hypocrisy, so long as the self sits enthroned in our hearts. 3. *In action.* Faith pre-

supposes self-abnegation; it is the surrender of ourselves to another. It takes two forms—(1) submission of our souls to the will of God in reliance upon his grace in Christ as our Saviour; and (2) obedience of our lives to the will of God in loyal service to Christ as our Master.—W. F. A.

**Vers. 5—11.**—*The mind that was in Christ Jesus.* The experience of Christ is the supreme example of his doctrine that “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” It is here described as an incentive to our duty of unselfish humility. But as the apostle narrates the wonderful facts, and enumerates the details with evident delight on their own account, we may find in them an inexhaustible subject for meditation, and, while not forgetting the object of drawing a practical lesson from them, we may be prepared to receive that lesson more fully by realizing more thoroughly the great example with which it is enforced.

**I. THE HUMBLING OF CHRIST.** 1. *It was voluntary.* The example of Christ is very different from that of Job. Job suffered from misfortunes that came upon him unsought; but Christ freely chose his own humiliation. Therefore the mind that was in Christ was not simply like Job's, a mind of patience and faithfulness; it was a mind of self-abnegation. 2. *It was great in extent.* We measure a fall, not by the absolute level reached, but by comparison with the altitude left. To fall from a steeple to the common earth on which most men walk, is to make a tremendous descent. In becoming man Christ humbled himself. As a man he humbled himself further than ever man did before, in submitting to shame and death. 3. *It was perfect in quality.* Look at some of the particulars. (1) The abdication of lawful rights. Though of Divine form, Christ sought not Divine rank. (2) The surrender of natural powers. “He emptied himself.” He cast away possessions and influences and faculties, till he reduced himself to the capacity of a babe. Most of us would be more ready to sacrifice our external honours than to abandon any internal superiority of gifts and powers. Christ did both. (3) The submission to servitude. “Taking the form of a bond-servant.” There is a humility that, only helping others in its own way, is consistent with much pride of self-will. It is harder to obey than to condescend. Christ did both. (4) The descent to shame and death. This is humiliation in a man. What is it in One who is naturally “in the form of God”?

**II. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST.** The story of Christ does not end with Calvary. The sequel is as glorious in the experience as the first part is in the character of Christ. 1. The exaltation is *God's act.* Christ humbled himself, but Christ never sought his own glory, not even after his humiliation. “God highly exalted him.” Neither on earth nor in heaven, neither now nor ever, neither when ill deserved nor when well deserved, does the highest glory come to those who seek it for themselves. It is always conferred unsought on the self-forgetful. 2. The exaltation is a *consequence* of the humbling of Christ. “Wherefore,” etc. Christ is not simply reinstated in his old dignity. He receives new honours in direct recognition of his self-sacrifice. It is not merely as a compensation for the suffering, but rather as a reward for the disposition and will of self-abnegation, that the higher glory is accorded to Christ. The spirit in which he suffered, the “will” that sanctifies us, the “mind” that was in him, receive the reward. 3. The exaltation is perfect. (1) Honour. All knees bow. For shame there is glory. (2) Power. He is confessed to be Lord, *i.e.* King and Master. (3) Universal supremacy. Heaven, earth, and hell are ultimately to confess Christ's authority. What a victory! Nothing short of voluntary submission could ever please Jesus as he was known on earth and as he is changeless in character through eternity. In his glowing vision of the future, St. Paul sees all evil conquered and all beings in the universe turned from their rebellion to the acceptance of Christ as their Lord.

**III. THE EXAMPLE.** This sublime picture is not simply drawn to excite our admiration, nor merely to move our gratitude, but directly to rouse us to imitation. Unlike our modern selfish use of the experience of Christ when we too commonly dwell upon it simply that we may “appropriate the fruits” of it, the apostles almost always refer to it by way of illustration to urge us to show the same spirit. Indeed, our enjoyment of the results of Christ's humbling of himself for us is closely connected with this use of his experience; for we profit by them when we follow him (1 Pet. iii. 17, 18).—W. F. A.

**Ver. 12, 13.—Working out our own salvation.** I. WE MUST WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION. 1. Our salvation is from evils within our reach. If it consisted chiefly of deliverance from future punishment, we could not touch it. But it is, in the main, deliverance from present ills—the sins, temptations, and troubles that beset us. A man's foes are them of his own household, even of his own heart. 2. Our salvation is *not yet accomplished*. It may be nearer than when we first believed. But while one sin still haunts us, one temptation still attacks us, or one trouble still threatens us, our salvation is not fully accomplished. We can only be called "saved" in the first act of faith, because salvation then begins and the promise of its completion is given us. But the perfecting of salvation is a lifelong, gradual process. 3. The securing of this salvation is *in our own hands*. St. Paul gives no justification for that one-sided perversion of the doctrine of grace, according to which "doing is a deadly thing." Except we work and fight, Christ's work and victory cannot profit us. 4. The salvation must be *worked out* to be perfected. We have to carry on what God begins, to develop the seed he sows, to work from the new heart within to the outer life. 5. This process must be carried on "*with a nervous and trembling anxiety to do right*" (Lightfoot).

II. WE CAN WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION BECAUSE GOD WORKS IN US. 1. *God is in us.* The language of the apostle is no empty metaphor. It describes a spiritual fact. The Christian is a temple because God inhabits him. 2. God works in us. We may contrast this truth with the Stoic doctrine of the indwelling Divinity. "Reverence the Divinity that is within thee," says Marcus Aurelius. But the Stoic, though reverencing, does not look for much active aid from the indwelling God. The Christian receives God in him for a great purpose. God works, creating the disposition to do well—"to will," giving energy for the execution of it; "to do," and directing the course of our action, "for his good pleasure." 3. This working of God in us should *prevent us from looking too much for extraneous human aid*. The early Church was in danger of leaning too much on the apostles. When the guidance and inspiration of an apostle was removed, the Christians felt the loss of a great support. Especially must this have been the case with Churches founded and fostered by so great a man as St. Paul. There was danger in this. The apostle warns the Philippians against it, and tells them that they should do as well in his absence as in his presence, because God dwells in them. We often make too much of human teachers and leaders, instead of seeing that our real strength lies in immediate personal communion with God. He who trusts God most can be most self-reliant. 4. The working of God within us should be the *great encouragement of our own energies*. This great truth has been abused so as to encourage indolence, or at least to discourage effort. It is here brought before us with the very opposite purpose. For God works to enable us to work. His work in us is frustrated if we do not co-operate. But when we work we find the power in God, and so are encouraged to labour, knowing that, when most weak in ourselves, we are most strong in God.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 15.—Lights.** I. CHRISTIANS ARE LIGHTS. Such was their appearance in St. Paul's time. It was a dark age for the world. Old faiths were lost; horrible vices overshadowed society; gloom settled down on the most thoughtful minds. In this spiritual midnight the Christians appear like stars, each with the light of truth and goodness. A similar position always belongs of right to Christian men and women. 1. The light that comes with Christ is not confined to him. He is first of all the Light of the world. But through him his disciples, reflecting his light, become also the light of the world (Matt. v. 14). 2. This light is not diffused through the atmosphere as a vague radiance. It is focussed and concentrated in Christian men and women. The truth influences the world through the persons who hold it. 3. This light is in individuals. It is not the general illumination of the Church, but the particular light of each Christian, that enlightens the world. Every Christian is a distinct luminary.

II. CHRISTIANS ARE LIGHTS BECAUSE THEY HOLD FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE. They do not shine in their own goodness, nor merely to spread abroad their own notions. They are the lamps; God's truth is the flame. Christians, then, like the Jews of old, have the custody of "the oracles of God;" but not merely in the literal sense of

possessing the Bible. Rather they declare and interpret the truth of revelation by manifesting the character and power of it in their own lives. The truth thus revealed is a word of life. It is a vital truth, the secret of the Christian life, the promise of life to the world.

**III. THE CHRISTIAN LIGHTS ARE SEEN BY THE WORLD.** "Ye are seen as lights in the world." It is our duty to let our light shine, not to hide it under a bushel. The Church exists for the good of the world. She receives light that she may give it to the people that sit in darkness. This is the most effectual way of commanding the Word of life to the world. Moreover, whether we shine well or ill, the eye of the world is upon us.

**IV. THE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANS DETERMINES THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD.** The Church has made too much of orthodoxy to the neglect of goodness. We may have the best oil, and yet, if the lamp be out of order, the flame will flicker painfully, and if the glass be foul, the light will be dull. Christians may have the pure Word of life within them, but they will only hold it forth clearly to the world when the lamp is trim and the glass clean—when their own life is healthy and no earthly-mindedness checks the outflow of the Divine radiance. Nothing is more fatal to the clear shining of the Christian light than quarrels among Christians (ver. 14). Love in the Church is an essential condition of light in the world.—W. F. A.

**Vers. 25-30.—*Epaphroditus.*** Epaphroditus was a member of the Philippian Church who brought the contributions from that Church to St. Paul at Rome. While in the imperial city, he threw himself so zealously into the work of the apostle as to bring on an illness and seriously endanger his life. Recovering, he feared that his friends at Philippi might be over-anxious about him, and was desirous to return to them as soon as possible. St. Paul, therefore, commanded him to the Philippians, in this letter which he was to bear with him. We know nothing about Epaphroditus beyond what the Epistle tells us. But that is enough to reveal him as a man of great beauty of character.

**I. EPAPHRODITUS WAS A DEVOTED FRIEND OF ST. PAUL.** He took the long journey to Rome in order to bring gifts to the apostle. When there, his arduous efforts were especially spent in service towards St. Paul. While party spirit in following one man to the disparagement of others is a disgrace to the Church (see 1 Cor. i. 12), devotion to good and great men is natural, right, and helpful for their work. It is well when external adversity only intensifies the devotion. Epaphroditus was most energetic when the apostle was a prisoner.

**II. EPAPHRODITUS WAS A SELF-DENYING LABOURER FOR CHRIST.** Though in assistance of St. Paul, his work was Christ's work. And he wrought at it till he was sick almost to death. The best Christian work cannot be relegated only to leisure hours, carried on listlessly, and abandoned at the least excuse of ill health. We may not be called to lay down our lives in the violent martyr's death. But the noblest servants of Christ are ready to be faithful unto death in wearing life out with arduous service. Such men should be held in honour.

**III. EPAPHRODITUS WAS MOST UNSELFISH IN HIS SUFFERINGS.** His one trouble was that they should cause distress to his friends at Philippi. His was not the complaining spirit that makes every one else miserable with its own sufferings, much less was it the mock-martyr spirit that attitudinizes sentimentally and lays itself out to move the compassion of others. There is often much selfishness in trouble, even when it does not take these extreme forms. But the Christian endurance of suffering will involve unselfish regard for the feelings of others and anxiety not to hurt them.

**IV. EPAPHRODITUS WAS ANXIOUS TO RETURN HOME AFTER HIS ILLNESS.** Christianity does not destroy natural affection. It deepens and strengthens the love of those who are near to us. It is difficult to know how to divide our attention between public and private claims. But, remembering the fatherly love of God, who is the Creator of our human nature, may we not give more scope to the impulses of affection as Divine, and therefore right when purified and guided by Christian principle?

**V. EPAPHRODITUS WAS A MAN MUCH BELOVED.** Such a man deserved love; and lovable men are generally loved. Except where peculiar circumstances and misunderstandings intervene, it is generally our own fault if we are unable to win the

affections of others. God may not always spare those we love. But when he does, we should recognize his goodness in not adding "sorrow to sorrow" and in blessing the tie of Christian affection.—W. F. A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER III.

**Ver. 1.**—Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. This word "finally" (*τὸν ἄποιντον*) is frequently used by St. Paul to introduce a practical conclusion after the doctrinal portion of his Epistles: thus it occurs again in ch. iv. 8, and also in 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Eph. vi. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 1. Some render *χαλπέτε* "farewell;" but "rejoice" seems more suitable here. The golden thread of spiritual joy runs through this Epistle. "Rejoice in the Lord" is the oft-repeated refrain of St. Paul's solemn hymn of praise. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. "The same things:" does he refer to his oral instructions, to a previous Epistle now lost, to his exhortations to unity, or to his reiterated command "Rejoice"? The words seem most naturally to point to something in the same Epistle rather than to advice given on former occasions. It is true that Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippians (section 3), says that St. Paul wrote Epistles (*ἐπιστολὰς*) to them; but there is no trace of any other Epistle; and the mere plural number is not sufficient to support the theory of other letters, the plural word being frequently used of a single letter. Bishop Lightfoot suggests the exhortation to unity in ch. ii. 2. But this topic does not reappear before ch. iv. 2. And the hypothesis of an interruption, which (as Bishop Lightfoot and others think) suddenly turned the apostle's thoughts into another channel and prevented him from explaining *τὰ αὐτὰ* (the same things) till ch. iv. 2, seems forced and unnecessary, notwithstanding the great authority by which it is supported. It seems more probable (Bengel and others) that St. Paul refers to the constant admiration of this Epistle, "Rejoice in the Lord." To repeat this again and again was to him not grievous (rather, with R.V., "irksome"), but safe for the Philippians. Christian joy has a close connection with safety, for it implies unwavering faith, and, more than that, the presence of Christ. Compare the oft-repeated exhortation of Ps. xxxvii., "Frst not thyself: it tends only to evil-doing" (ver. 8, in the Hebrew). Possibly, however, *ἀσφαλές* here, as in Acts xxii. 30 and xxv. 26, may mean "certain." The repetition is not irksome to St. Paul, while it makes his meaning and his wishes certain to the Philippians.

**Ver. 2.**—Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. The connection is, as given in ver. 3, Rejoice in the Lord, not in the flesh; have confidence in him, not in the ceremonies of the Jewish Law. Compare the same contrast in Gal. vi. 13, 14. There is certainly something abrupt in the sudden introduction of this polemic against Judaizing, especially in writing to Philippi, where there were not many Jews. But there may have been circumstances, unknown to us, which made the warning necessary; or, as some think, the apostle may have written this under excitement caused by the violent opposition of the Jewish faction at Rome. *Beware*; literally, *mark*, observe them, to be on your guard against them. *The dogs*. The article must be retained in the translation. The Jews called the Gentiles "dogs" (comp. Matt. xv. 26, 27; Rev. xxii. 15), i.e. unclean, mainly because of their disregard of the distinction between clean and unclean food. St. Paul retorts the epithet: they are the dogs, who have confidence in the flesh, not in spiritual religion. *Evil workers*; so 2 Cor. xi. 13, where he calls them "deceitful workers." The Judaizers were active enough, like the Pharisees who "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte;" but their activity sprang from bad motives—they were evil workers, though their work was sometimes overruled for good (comp. ch. i. 15—18). *The concision* (*κατατούν*, cutting, mutilation); a contemptuous word for "circumcision" (*περιτομή*). Compare the Jewish contemptuous use of Ishbosheth, man of shame, for Eshbaal, man of Baal, etc. Their circumcision is no better than a mutilation. Observe the paronomasia, the combination of like-sounding words, which is common in St. Paul's Epistles. Winer gives many examples in sect. lxviii.

**Ver. 3.**—For we are the circumcision. We: the apostle of the Gentiles identifies himself with the Gentiles (1 Cor. ix. 2); himself circumcised, he recognizes the great truth that they only are the true circumcision whose hearts are mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts. *Which worship God in the spirit*; read, with the best manuscripts, *which worship by the Spirit of God*. The word *λατρεία*, worship, is used specially of the Jewish ceremonial service (comp. Rom. ix. 4; Luko ii. 37; Acts xxvi. 7). We Christians, St. Paul means, have not only the true circumcision, but the only true

worship: the temple service prefigured the spiritual worship of the Christian Church. *By the Spirit*; by his assistance, inspiration: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 26). *And rejoice in Christ Jesus*; rather, *glory* (*καχεύεσθαι*). "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," through whom alone we can obtain salvation, not in any external privileges. *And have no confidence in the flesh*. Neither in circumcision nor in any other outward rites.

Ver. 4.—*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh*; literally, *though having myself confidence in the flesh also*; that is, as well as in Christ. The apostle had both grounds of confidence: the one he renounces for the other; but no man could accuse him of despising that which he did not himself possess. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. He claims the privileges of the Jew; they are his by right, but he counts them loss for Christ.

Ver. 5.—*Circumcised the eighth day*; literally, *at circumcision eight days old*. The apostle was not a proselyte, circumcised at his reception into the Jewish Church; nor an Ishmaelite, circumcised, like Ishmael, at the age of thirteen. *Of the stock of Israel*. Neither were his parents proselytes; he was by descent an Israelite. He uses here the highest title of God's ancient people, the title which implied the inheritance of the covenant made with Jacob. Other nations were descended from Abraham and Isaac; the Israelites alone could claim Jacob for their ancestor; they only could glory in the covenant name given to him when he wrestled all night long with the angel, and proved himself a prince with God (comp. Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament,' sect. xxxix.). Of the tribe of Benjamin. His family had preserved their genealogy; he came from the tribe which gave the first king to Israel; which never swerved in its allegiance to the house of David; which, after the Captivity, united with Judah and the Levites to go up and build the house of the Lord (Ezra i. 5); the tribe of Esther and Mordccai; the tribe within whose boundary stood the holy city. *A Hebrew of the Hebrews*; rather, *of Hebrews*; omit the article. His father and mother were not only Israelites, but also they retained, though living at Tarsus, the Hebrew language and customs. St. Paul was not a Hellenist; he was brought up at Jerusalem under the great Rabban Gamaliel; he spoke Hebrew (Acts xxi. 40), and used the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Septuagint translation. All the descendants of Jacob were Israelites; those were called Hebrews distinc-

tively who adhered to the use of the sacred language (Acts vi. 1). *As touching the Law, a Pharisee*. He was by birth an Israelite, by education a Hebrew; he became by choice a Pharisee (Acts xxiii. 6); he embraced the strictest sect "as regards Law," the sect which took the strictest view of the Law of Moses.

Ver. 6.—*Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church*. He was not only a Pharisee, but an energetic, zealous Pharisee; he carried out the principles of his sect, thinking that he did God service by persecuting those whom he counted as heretics. Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. As far as "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" went, the righteousness which is "in Law," which consists, that is, in the observance of formal rules; or which is "of Law" (ver. 9), which springs, that is, from such observance, St. Paul was found blameless. "Rara sane laus et prope singularis," says Calvin, quoted by Alford; "videamus tamen quanti eam fecerit." (For the whole of this passage, comp. 2 Cor. xi. 21, 22.)

Ver. 7.—*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ*; literally, *but such things as used to be gains to me, those I have counted as loss for Christ's sake*. He used to regard these outward privileges, one by one, as so many items of gain; now he has learned to regard them, all in the aggregate, as so much loss because of Christ. They were loss because confidence in outward things tends to keep the soul from Christ. *Τοῦ γαρ ἡλιοῦ φαέντος*, says Chrysostom, *προσκαθῆσθαι τῷ λύχνῳ ζυγίᾳ*.

Ver. 8.—*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss*. He holds fast the truth which he once learned; he still counts all things as loss in comparison with the one thing needful. The particles used here (see Winer, sect. lxxi.) correct and strengthen the assertion of the last verse, both as to time, "I count," and as to extent, "all things," not only the privileges mentioned above. *For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*. The preposition may be rendered "for the sake of," as in ver. 7, or "because of." The knowledge of Christ is a blessing so surpassing and transcendent that nothing else is worthy to be called good in comparison with that one highest good. Its glory, like the rising sun, overwhelms and hides all lesser lights. *My Lord*. The pronoun expresses the warmth of his affection, the close personal communion between the apostle and the Saviour (see ch. i. 3). *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things*; rather, *I suffered the loss of*; literally, *I was fined or mulcted*; the aorist refers to the time of his conversion. *All things* (*τὰ ἄντα*); all that I had in the

world, my all, all things together (comp. Rom. viii. 32). He lost his all for Christ, for the sake of possessing Christ: with Christ God will freely give him all things (*rd πάντα again*). And do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. Σκότωσα (also in Eccl. xxvii. 4); dung, or perhaps refuse, dogs' meat; comp. Matt. xv. 26, 27. There the Jews were the children, the Gentiles dogs. St. Paul here, as in ver. 2, reverses the terms of the comparison; the legal privileges of the Jew are but as crumbs thrown to dogs in comparison with the rich blessings of the gospel. Comp. also Matt. xvi. 26, where our Lord uses the same verbs, to lose and to gain; the whole world is but loss, the Saviour says, compared with the never-dying soul. The loss of one's all in this world (St. Paul echoes the sacred words) is as nothing; all things put together are but as dung, compared with the one thing which St. Paul so longed to gain, Christ himself—his presence in the soul, spiritual union with the Lord. "To gain Christ is to lay fast hold upon him, to receive him inwardly into our bosoms, and so to make him ours and ourselves his, that we may be joined to him as our Head, espoused to him as our Husband, incorporated into him as our Nourishment, engrafted in him as our Stock, and laid upon him as a sure Foundation" (Bishop Hall, 'Christ Mystical,' ch. vi., quoted by Bishop Ellicott).

Ver. 9.—And be found in him; now, at the last day, always. *In Christ*; member, that is, of his body, a living branch of the true Vine. Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law; rather, as R.V., not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the Law. Not any righteousness of my own, such as that described in ver. 6, the righteousness which consists in and results from conformity to an external law. But perhaps the words are best rendered, as in the margin of R.V., "Not having as my righteousness that which is of the Law." St. Paul was blameless as regards that righteousness which lies in legal observances: in that he puts no confidence, he seeks a better righteousness. But that which is through the faith of Christ; rather, as R.V., *through faith in Christ*. There is no article, and the genitive is objective. *Through faith*. God is the Giver, the Source of righteousness; it is given through faith as the means, on condition of faith. The righteousness which is of God by faith. Greek, "upon faith," based upon faith, or on condition of faith. St. Paul speaks of "having" this righteousness. Then it is his; yet it is not any righteousness of his own, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done;" but a righteousness of God given to him, merited, not by

his works, but by the perfect obedience and the precious death of Christ, and granted unto all who are found in Christ. It comes from God, the one only Giver of all good things; it is obtained through faith as the instrument or means; and it is given on that faith—on condition, that is, of a living faith abiding in the soul. Thus St. Paul states incidentally, but simply and forcibly, the great doctrine of justification by faith.

Ver. 10.—That I may know him (*τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν*). For the grammatical construction, see Winer, sect. xliv. b. For the sense, comp. John xvii. 3, where Dr. Westcott notes, "In such a connection, *knowledge* expresses the apprehension of the truth by the whole nature of man. It is not an acquaintance with facts as external, nor an intellectual conviction of their reality, but an appropriation of them (so to speak) as an influencing power into the very being of him who *knows* them." Γνωσκειν differs from εἰδέναι: εἰδέναι is "to know," γνωσκειν is "to recognize" or "to become acquainted with." We must be found in Christ in order to know him; we must have that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, for we can know him only by being made like unto him. Comp. 1 John iii. 2, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;" and now those who see him by faith are in their measure being transformed into the same image. For the knowledge here spoken of is a personal knowledge, gained, not by hearing or reading, but by direct personal communion with the Lord; it is not theoretical, but experimental. "Qui non expertus fuerit, non intelligit" (Anselm, quoted by Meyer). And the power of his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ was a glorious manifestation of Divine power (Rom. i. 4). That resurrection is now a power in the spiritual life of Christians: it stimulates the spiritual resurrection, the resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness (comp. Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12). It is the centre of our most cherished hopes, the evidence of our immortality, the earnest of the resurrection of the body. And the fellowship of his sufferings. This clause and the last are bound together under one article, according to the best manuscripts. There is a very close connection between them (comp. Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12). To know the quickening power of his resurrection, we must share his sufferings. The Christian, meditating in loving thought on the sufferings of Christ, is led to feel ever a deeper, a more awful sympathy with the suffering Saviour. And if, when we are called to suffer, we take it patiently, looking unto Jesus, then our sufferings are united with his sufferings,

“we suffer with him.” And he who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows feels for us in his sacred heart, being “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” This fellowship in suffering leads through his grace to fellowship in glory (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 10; Rom. vi. 5). *Being made conformable unto his death*; rather, as R.V., *becoming conformed*. The participle is present: it implies a continual progress. It is derived from the word *μορφή*, form, used in ch. ii. 6 (where see note), and denotes, not a mere external resemblance, but a deep, real, inner conformity. The reference is not to the impending death of martyrdom, but to that daily dying unto self and the world which the apostle exhibited in the heroic self-denials of his holy life: he was “crucified with Christ” (Gal. ii. 20; comp. also 1 Cor. xv. 31).

Ver. 11.—*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* The apostle uses the language of humble expectation. For the participle, “if by any means” (*εἴ πως*), comp. Acts xxvii. 12; Rom. i. 10; xl. 14. The verb “attain” means to arrive at the end of a journey; it presents the figure of a pilgrimage. Read, with R.V. and the best manuscripts, *the resurrection from the dead*. This phrase (used also in Luke xx. 35 and Acts iv. 2) means the resurrection of the *blessed* dead (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 16). This meaning is strengthened here by the repetition of the preposition with the word “resurrection” (*ἐγενάντως*). The general resurrection is always called the resurrection of the dead.

Ver. 12.—*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect*; the R.V. renders this clause more accurately, *not that (I do not say that) I have already obtained*. The verb is not the same with that translated “attain” in ver. 11; it means to get, to win a prize, as in 1 Cor. ix. 24. The tense is aorist: “I say not that I did at once win the prize;” that is, at the time of his conversion. Compare the tenses used in ver. 8, “I suffered the loss of all things;” and ver. 12, “I was apprehended;” which both refer to the same time. The prize was not gained in a moment; it needs the continued effort of a lifetime. St. Paul proceeds, using now the perfect tense, “Nor have I been already made perfect.” He has not even now reached perfection; he is still working out his own salvation. There may be here a delicate allusion to the spiritual pride which seems to have disturbed the unity of the Philippians (see ch. ii. 2—4). *But I follow after; rather, I pursue, I press on.* If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. The words rendered “for which” (*ἐφ ὅ*) will

admit three different interpretations: (1) that of A.V., which implies the ellipse of the antecedent “that;” (2) that given in the margin of R.V., “seeing that;” and (3) that of the R.V., “for which,” for which purpose (that is, that I may press on and persevere) I was also apprehended by Christ Jesus. All these translations are possible, and all give a good sense. Perhaps (2) best suits the context, “I press on to lay hold of the prize, because Christ first laid hold of me.” The grace of the Lord Jesus furnishes the highest motive; it is the Christian’s bounden duty to press on always in the Christian race, *because Christ first called him*.

Ver. 13.—*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; rather, perhaps, I reckon.* Two of the best manuscripts read “not yet” (*οὔτε*). The pronouns are emphatic: whatever others may think of me or of themselves, “I reckon not myself to have apprehended.” But this one thing. The ellipse here is forcible; some supply “I reckon;” others, “I say;” others, as A.V., “I do,” which seems best suited to the context. I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. St. Paul concentrates all his thoughts and all his energies on the one great end of life, the one thing needful. He forgets those things which are behind; that is, not, as some explain, his Jewish privileges and distinctions, but that part of his Christian race already past. So Chrysostom, *Καὶ γὰρ δ δρομεῖς οὐχ ὅστους ἔννοεν ἀναλογίζεται διαιώλους, ἀλλ' ὅστους λειπεται. . . . Τί γάρ τὴν ἡμέτερην ὥφελει τὸ ἀντεῖδεν, δταν τὸ λειπόμενον μὴ προστεθῆ; Reaching forth.* The Greek word *ἐπεκτεινόμενος* is singularly emphatic: it means that the athlete throws himself forward in the race with all his energies strained to the very utmost. Compare Bengel, “Oculus manum, manus pedem prævertit et trahit.”

Ver. 14.—*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; rather, with the best manuscripts, unto the prize.* The first preposition, “towards,” expresses the aim; the second, “unto,” the end of the race. *The high calling;* the upward, heavenward calling. God is calling us all upward, heavenward, by the voice of the Lord Jesus, who is the Word of God. Comp. Heb. iii. 1, “Partakers of the heavenly calling.” The words, “in Christ Jesus,” are to be taken with “the high calling.” It is God who calls: he calls us in the person of Christ, by the voice of Christ, “Come unto me.” “It was his will that thou shouldst run the race below: he gives the crown above. Seest thou not that even here they crown the most honoured of the athletes, not on the racecourse below

but the king calls them up, and crowns them thoro" (Chrysostom).

Ver. 15.—*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.* "Perfect" here means mature, full grown, as opposed to babes or children. The word is so used (in the Greek) in 1 Cor. xiv. 20; Eph. iv. 13; Heb. v. 14. "There is a difference," says Bengel, on ver. 12, "between the perfect and the perfected: the first are ready for the race; the last are close upon the prize." St. Paul exhorts all full-grown Christians to imitate his perseverance; like him, to forsake any claims to legal righteousness; to seek that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ; to know Christ, to win Christ; to press ever forwards to obtain the prize. And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. If only we be in earnest, pressing onwards in the Christian race with sustained perseverance, God will, by the manifestation of his Spirit in our heart, correct any minor errors of doctrine or of practice. Comp. John vi. 17, "If any man willett to do (*θέλην ποιεῖν*) his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." "Otherwise" (*έτερως*) seems here to mean otherwise than is right, wrongly, amiss—a meaning which it has not unfrequently in classical Greek, and in our word "heterodox." *Even this; rather, this too, as well as the one thing needful, the knowledge of Christ, which he has already revealed.* Mark the word "revelation." Paul may teach, but living spiritual knowledge is a revelation from God. This passage shows that the word "perfect" is used here in a restricted sense, not of consummated holiness; as it implies that some of the "perfect" may be "otherwise minded," may be involved in minor errors. Good Christians must have that righteousness which is through faith; they must persevere: they may err in less essential points. It is a lesson of charity and humility.

Ver. 16.—*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rules, let us mind the same thing.* Omit, with the best manuscripts, the words from "rule" to "thing," and translate, with R.V., *only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same (rule) let us walk; or, more literally, only, what we arrived at, by that same walk.* Let there be no falling back; let us, at each point in our Christian course, maintain and walk according to that degree of grace at which we arrived. This explanation seems more probable than the other view, which understands the words, "by the same," of the rule of faith as opposed to the works of the Law.

Ver. 17.—*Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample; rather, as R.V.,*

*imitators together.* They are to unite, one and all, in imitating him. In 1 Cor. xi. 1 he gives the ground of this advice, "As I also am of Christ." *Mark*, here in order to imitate; elsewhere (as Rom. xvi. 17) in order to avoid. He changes the singular number to the plural, modestly shrinking from proposing himself alone as their example. But "ensample" is still singular, because they all (Timothy, Epaphroditus, etc.) present the same image, all imitating Christ. Observe the change of metaphor: hitherto the Christian life has been compared to a race; now he speaks of walking; literally, *walking about* (*περπατάν*), moving hither and thither in the daily path of life.

Ver. 18.—*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; rather, I used to tell you; the tense is imperfect.* He used to speak thus of them when he was at Philippi; now, during his absence, the evil has increased, and he repeats his warning with tears. "Paul weeps," says Chrysostom, "for those at whom others laugh; so true is his sympathy, so deep his care for all men." He seems to be speaking here, not of the Jews, but of nominal Christians, who used their liberty for a cloke of licentiousness. Such are enemies of the cross; they hate self-denial, they will not take up their cross. By their evil lives they bring shame upon the religion of the cross.

Ver. 19.—*Whose end is destruction; rather, as R.V., perdition.* Observe the contrast: not the prize of the high calling, but everlasting death. *Whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame* (comp. Rom. xvi. 18). They boast of their liberty, and pervert it into licence (2 Pet. ii. 19). *Who mind earthly things; rather, they who mind.* The irregularity of the construction (be returns to the nominative) seems expressive of the apostle's indignation.

Ver. 20.—*For our conversation is in heaven.* The word "our" is emphatic; the apostle refers back to ver. 17: "Follow us, not those enemies of the cross; our conversation is in heaven; they mind earthly things." The A.V. has this same word "conversation" in ch. i. 27, where the Greek (*πολιτεύεσθε*) is the verb corresponding with the noun (*πολιτεύμα*) which occurs here. The verb is used in the sense of a certain mode of life or conversation, as in Acts xxiii. 1, but it does not appear that the noun ever bears that meaning. The rendering "citizenship" also seems deficient in authority. In classical Greek the word has three meanings: (1) a form of government; (2) political acts, politics; (3) a commonwealth. The last seems the most suitable here. The unworthy Christians mentioned in the last

verse mind earthly things; but our city, our country, our home, is in heaven: there is the state of which we are citizens; there is the general assembly and Church of the First-born, whose names are inscribed in the roll of the citizens of the heavenly city. Our real home is there *now* (*ενδρόχει*); comp. Eph. ii. 19, "Ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens of the saints" (comp. also Heb. xi. 10, 16 and xiii. 14; Gal. iv. 26). From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; rather, we *eagerly wait* for (comp. Rom. viii. 23, 25; Gal. v. 5) *the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour*; comp. Isa. xxv. 9, "This is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Ver. 21.—*Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body; rather, as R.V., who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory.* Compare the description of our Lord's person and work in ch. ii. 6—8. There St. Paul tells us that he who was originally in the form of God took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man. Here he uses the derivatives of the

same words "form" and "fashion" (*μορφή* and *εγγύμα*), to describe the change of the bodies of the saved at the resurrection. He had already told us (ver. 10) that the Christian soul is being gradually conformed during life unto the death of Christ. He now tells us that this conformity of the Christian unto Christ is ultimately to extend to the body. The Lord shall change the outward fashion of our body; but this change will be more than a change of outward fashion: it will result in a real conformity of the resurrection-body of the believer unto the glorious body of the Lord. *The body of our humiliation; not "vile body."* St. Paul does not despise the body, like the Stoics and Gnostics; the Christian's body is a sacred thing—it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the seed of the resurrection-body (comp. 1 Cor. vi. 20). According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. According to the working, the energy, of his power not only to change and glorify the bodies of the redeemed, but also to subdue all things, the whole universe, unto himself. "The apostle shows," says Chrysostom, "greater works of the Saviour's power, that thou mightest believe in these."

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Holy joy.* I. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE. 1. *It is in the Lord.* "Rejoice in the Lord," the apostle says. The Lord, who once gave himself *for* us, gives himself *to* us now. "Behold," he says, "I stand at the door, and knock." If we listen to his voice, and open the door of our heart, he is ready to enter, to bless us with his sacred presence, to abide with us for ever. In his presence there is fulness of joy. We can know it only by experience.

"The love of Jesus, what it is,  
None but his loved ones know."

The unspeakable Gift, the gift of Christ, is a gift of abiding joy. 2. *It is one of the fruits of the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit of God is the pledged possession of all true Christians; and "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Then holy joy is an evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit; it shows that he is with the saints of God. 3. *It is the earnest of our inheritance;* for it springs from the inworking of the Holy Spirit of promise. It is a foretaste of the joy of the Lord, which is reserved for the good and faithful servant. It is of all forms of joy the truest, deepest, most abiding; for it depends on no external cause, it is not much affected by the chances and changes of this mortal life. It supports the true Christian in trouble, in sickness, in the prospect of death. For it is *in the Lord*, resting on him, depending on his presence, flowing from communion with him.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY. 1. *Because it is commanded.* "Rejoice evermore," is equally binding with the parallel commandment, "Pray without ceasing." In this Epistle especially the apostle reiterates again and again with ever-increasing earnestness the exhortation to rejoice. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, Rejoice." 2. *Because it is enforced by the example of the saints.* "Sorrowing, yet always rejoicing," is the motto of the Christian life. St. Paul with Silas in the dungeon at Philippi sang praises unto God. Now a prisoner at Rome, he could say, "I joy, and rejoice with you all." He was in bonds, encompassed with many hardships and afflictions, in daily

danger of a violent death. But his soul was raised above his outward troubles by the blessed presence of the Lord within him. His heart was glad ; the crown of righteousness laid up in heaven for all who love the appearing of the Lord was ever before his thoughts ; he could rejoice himself ; he could bid others rejoice with him. It is indeed a great example of the power of faith, an illustration of the Saviour's words, "Let not your heart be troubled ; believe in God, and believe in me." 3. *Because to be gloomy and melancholy implies a want of gratitude.* The Christian who knows that his Redeemer liveth, that Christ the Son of God died for his sins and rose again for his justification, that he is even now interceding for him in heaven, ought to be bright and cheerful. He has no right to give way to despondent thoughts. The temptation will come sometimes ; but it is a matter of duty to struggle against it ; for to yield is to dishonour the Lord. "Count it all joy," says St. James, "when ye fall into divers temptations."

III. TO BE ENFORCED BY CONSTANT EXHORTATION. 1. *The gospel is ever fresh, ever new.* "It is not irksome to write the same things, says St. Paul." The Christian is never tired of repeating, never tired of hearing, the blessed story of the love of Jesus. The Athenians "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." The Christian is content with the old, old story—the holy life, the blessed death, of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is sometimes the preacher's temptation to strain after novelty ; he should seek simply to save souls. 2. *It is hard to rejoice evermore ; it is a duty to be frequently pressed.* To rejoice in sickness, in distress, in times of anxiety, is very hard ; but it is our duty ; we must enforce it constantly upon ourselves, upon others. And it is a source of safety ; the soul that is learning to rejoice in the Lord, to take *delight* in communion with him in prayer and praise and holy sacrament, is not easily separated from the love of Christ.

IV. CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE TRUE CHRISTIANS AND THE JUDAIZERS. 1. *These last rejoice, not in the Lord, but in outward distinctions.* They pride themselves on their circumcision, but it is merely outward, in the flesh. They may be clean ceremonially, but they are unclean in heart ; for they are workers of evil. 2. *The Christian has the true circumcision and the true worship.* The true circumcision is "that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." The true worship, too, is in the highest sense not that of form and ceremony, but inward and spiritual. The Christian worships by the Spirit of God, by his help, by his teaching, by his inspiration ; all true prayer is prayer in the Holy Ghost. 3. *The Christian glories only in Christ.* "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian glories in the Saviour's love, in the atonement wrought by his most precious blood, in his prevailing intercession, in the hope of seeing him face to face in his kingdom. In him is his confidence, not in any outward rite.

LESSONS. 1. Pray for the great gift of holy joy : "Ask, and ye shall have." 2. To win that joy we must renounce confidence in the flesh. 3. We must worship by the Spirit of God, with real heart-worship, and that by the help of God the Holy Ghost.

Vers. 4-11.—*The example of St. Paul.* I. WHAT HE RENOUNCED. All confidence in the flesh. 1. *He enumerates the privileges of the Jew, and claims them as his own.* He had the seal of circumcision, the inheritance of the covenant ; he was brought up in the Hebrew learning ; he belonged to the strictest sect ; he was zealous ; he had lived a blameless life. In outward grounds of confidence no man could surpass him. He had all the privileges that could issue from the Judaism of the time. 2. *He renounces them all.* He sums them up together and renounces them ; more than that, he counts them as loss ; further yet, he counts *all things* as loss in comparison with the one gracious presence, the one glorious hope which now fills his heart.

II. WHAT HE SOUGHT. 1. *The knowledge of Christ.* This knowledge is: (1) *A personal knowledge.* "Mine own know me," says our Lord, in John x. 14, Revised Version, "as I know the Father." The knowledge wherewith the true sheep know the good Shepherd is compared by our Lord himself to the knowledge with which the Son of God knows the eternal Father. It is a knowledge of love, a knowledge of intimate personal communion. It is less in the intellect than in the heart ; it is gained not so much by study, as by prayer and holy sacrament and the daily effort of faith to realize the Saviour's nearness and to imitate his holy life. (2) *It is excellent.* St. Paul can

scarcely find words to express its excellency. Compared with this, all other things sink into insignificance; what was gain becomes loss; what was glory becomes shame. For this knowledge implies the presence of Christ, "Christ in you, the Hope of glory." (3) Thus the Christian who knows Christ, wins Christ to be his own, his own most loving Saviour, his own most gracious Friend; his very life, for "he that hath the Son hath life." And (4) he is found in Christ, incorporated into him, a living member of his mystical body, a fruitful branch of the true Vine. 2. *The righteousness which is through the faith of Christ.* They that are found in Christ have his righteousness. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). They have none of their own (that is, through their own works), for the righteousness which is in the Law is no true righteousness, and cannot endure the all-seeing eye of God. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." This righteousness is of God, not ours; and yet in some sense it is ours, for it is given to us, given in the gift of Christ. "He that spared not his own Son, . . . how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" This righteousness is through faith; obtained (that is) through faith as the means or instrument; and it is by (or rather, upon) faith, given (that is) on condition of faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," was the message delivered by St. Paul in this very Philippi. "Only believe." Faith is spiritual sight; by faith the saints in all ages have endured, "as seeing him who is invisible." Faith is the spiritual vision of Christ; by faith we see him dying for us upon the cross; we see Christ crucified, and recognize him as our own Saviour and Redeemer. Again, faith is the "substance ['the assurance,' Revised Version] of things hoped for;" it is trustfulness—trustfulness, in the love and promises of Christ. It involves distrust of self, and trust only in Christ. Ever less of self, ever more of Christ, is the law of spiritual progress. Faith is the condition of righteousness.

III. *THE RESULT OF THIS SELF-BENUNCIATION. The ever-deepening knowledge of Christ.* St. Paul prays to be found in Christ, that he may know him. This knowledge, which he seeks so earnestly, is an experimental knowledge; it is an ever-increasing acquaintance with Christ, a realization of the life of Christ in his sufferings and in his exaltation. We need to know: 1. *The power of his resurrection.* The resurrection of Christ is a spiritual power; it hath a power to lift us up into the resurrection-life, the new life that is hid with Christ in God. The soul that was raised with Christ seeks those things which are above, and that through the power of the Lord's resurrection realized in the heart. His resurrection, too, is the pledge and earnest of our own resurrection, and so kindles and stimulates self-denying Christian effort. 2. *To know the power of his resurrection we must know the fellowship of his sufferings.* The Christian life has joys of its own; it has also sufferings of its own. For: (1) Besides the deep sorrow of contrition, the Christian sorrows for the griefs of others, for the sins of others, for the oppression and afflictions of the Church. And these sufferings are the sufferings of Christ; he suffers in and with his members. Hence the apostle says (Col. i. 24), "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church." (2) We have fellowship with Christ's sufferings when we sympathize with his agony, with his cross; when by the energy of faith we realize the Saviour's sufferings, and, knowing that our sins added to his burden of woe, feel with him and for him. (3) We share his sufferings when, suffering ourselves, we offer our sufferings to God by an act of faith; when, fixing our hearts upon the sufferings of Christ, we unite our sufferings with his by faith and prayer, casting all our care on him. Thus he bears our griefs and carries our sorrows; he suffers with us and we with him. (4) Thus we become, little by little, conformed unto his death. The intense contemplation of the suffering Lord gradually impresses the likeness of his death upon the believing soul. That likeness is not outward and transient, but inward, deep, real. It is formed gradually; it varies in degree in different individuals or in the different stages of the Christian life; but in all true Christians it is real. It is a mortifying, a crucifixion of the old man; like the Saviour's death upon the cross, slow and painful. But at last the believing soul struggles itself free from the body of sin and death into the new life, the life which is hid with Christ in God.

IV. *THE BLESSED END.* 1. *The resurrection of the holy dead.* That resurrection is the end of all our labours here; the end for which the Christian is content to count all

earthly things as loss. 2. *The spiritual resurrection here is the earnest of the glorious resurrection hereafter.* The heavenly life begins here; the life of faith is the beginning of the life of glory. Both consist in union with Christ, who is our Life; both derive their joy and brightness only from his irradiating presence. They differ in degree, not in kind. The life of faith, when all present hindrances are removed, advanced, as it will be, to unspeakably higher degrees of purity and joy and fellowship with Christ, culminates in the life of glory. Hence it is that the excellency of the knowledge of Christ issues in the blessed resurrection of the holy dead.

LESSONS. 1. St. Paul broke wholly with his unconverted life; so must we. 2. He experienced a complete change of thought, motive, aim; it must be so with us. 3. It was the constraining love of Christ that drew him from his old life; it is so still. 4. He suffered with Christ, he felt the power of his resurrection; so may it be with us.

Vers. 12-16.—*St. Paul's humility.* I. **HE HAS NOT YET ATTAINED; HE IS NOT PERFECT.** 1. *The most advanced Christian is always the humblest.* The nearer we draw to Christ, the more we feel our own unworthiness. The light of Christ's holiness, manifested in the hearts of his saints, brings out into clearer light the exceeding sinfulness of sin. 2. *But he is striving after perfection.* The Christian knows his own weakness and sin, but he knows also that he is really following Christ. If we are doing so, we must know it; we must be conscious of *real effort* in the spiritual life. 3. *Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith.* Christ first laid hold of St. Paul, therefore St. Paul strives to lay hold upon Christ; because he was apprehended, he hopes to apprehend. "We love him, because he first loved us." 4. *This very sense of imperfection urges the Christian to sustained effort.* He is never satisfied with himself, therefore he always presses onwards. He does not dwell with complacency on his attainments, but forgets the progress which he has made; in view of the far greater height which remains to scale, he throws himself into the work with ever-increasing energy. 5. *Therefore he presses toward the mark.* The crown of righteousness is laid up for all who love the appearing of the Lord. God is calling us thither, calling us upward, to higher degrees of the spiritual life now, to the perfection of that life in heaven. The prize of that upward calling is the heavenly glory. It is the end for which the Christian lives, which makes life worth having, worth living.

II. **ALL ADVANCED CHRISTIANS MUST BE THUS MINDED.** 1. *The love of Christ, faith, humility, are essentials.* All Christians alike must set the knowledge of Christ high above all other objects of desire. All must seek that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ; all must strive to win Christ, to be found in Christ, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. All must be humble, dissatisfied with themselves; all must press onwards towards ever higher degrees of the spiritual life. 2. *In this all must agree; in smaller matters there may be differences.* St. Paul seems to imply that there will be differences. "If in anything ye be otherwise minded," he says; otherwise than is right, he seems to mean. There will be, there must be, errors. Men cannot all see alike. There are various degrees of illumination, of spiritual knowledge. And men are differently constituted; their characters, their early training, their education, their surroundings, their associations, differ indefinitely; all these circumstances act upon their habits of thought. Their opinions are the ultimate outcome of all these multitudinous influences. Doubtless we are to a large extent responsible for our opinions. It is our bounden duty to search the Scriptures, to think, to meditate, to pray for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. He will guide us into all truth (all that is necessary for our salvation), if we seek his help with a single heart, in earnestness, and in humility. But he does not force all good men to think alike; he leaves room for the play of the individual character, for the manifold influences of temperament and training. The truth is one, the faith is one; but we look upon that one truth from various points of view. Hence there will be differences even among those who sincerely seek the truth. Truth is of momentous importance. Truth of doctrine and holiness of life together make up the saintly character; imperfections in either so far mar the beauty of the whole. But if the two cannot always coexist, holiness is far closer than doctrine to our soul's salvation. The good Samaritan was nearer to God than the priest or the Levite; though they were orthodox, while he was a schismatic. 3. *But the promise is that to those who sincerely*

*seek the truth God will certainly reveal it.* Only let a man be like St. Paul in his humility and earnest perseverance, never satisfied with himself, never counting himself to have attained, but always pressing towards the mark, and God will reveal the truth to him, as he revealed it to St. Paul. Thus we learn that holy obedience is a condition of living spiritual knowledge, and that living spiritual knowledge is a gift of God. The letter of the Scripture is a subject for intellectual study, but the inner truth of the Scriptures, the knowledge of Christ, is a revelation from God. God hath hidden this from the wise and prudent, but he revealeth it to babes. God the Holy Ghost is the one only Teacher of this precious knowledge.

**III. THERE MUST BE NO BACKSLIDING, NO LOSS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE ONCE OBTAINED.** It must be our most earnest effort to maintain that degree of grace at which we have arrived. Mark how the apostle dwells on the necessity of perseverance. The life of very many professing Christians is a series of oscillations between permitted sin and feeble repentance. Hence there is no real progress; they remain year after year much as they have been—decent in their lives, and well-intentioned perhaps, but without any real growth in holiness, in self-denial, in humility. “The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.” This ought to be the record of our lives; but this implies continual perseverance, and perseverance implies constant watchfulness and constant prayer.

**LESSONS.** Learn from St. Paul’s example: 1. Utterly to shrink from spiritual pride; it is a deadly poison; it makes men satisfied with their present attainments; it prevents their progress in holiness; it leads to backsliding. 2. Always to persevere. 3. To keep the prize of the high calling before the thoughts. 4. Not to judge harshly those who differ from us. 5. To pray for a fuller revelation of the truth to our souls.

**Vers. 17-19.—*The Christian minister must set an example to his flock.*** I. **THE TRUE SHEPHERD GOETH BEFORE HIS SHEEP.** He should be able to say, like the apostle, “Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.” For the preacher’s words have little influence if they are not enforced and illustrated by his life. A real earnest Christian life is a living power; its light shines before men; it leads others to glorify that God from whom all true religion comes. For it proves the truth of God’s Word and promises; it is a miracle of grace, more wonderful than miracles of power; it draws those who at first believed not the Word, to believe the works. The work of God’s grace, manifested in the changed life of the believer, draws souls to God. Hence we must strive always to set a holy example. But we must, like Andrew, find Christ first ourselves if we would bring others to him. Alas! not all who point the way to heaven will enter there; not all who helped to build the ark were saved therein.

**II. THE CHRISTIAN MUST MARK THE SAINTS of God.** 1. *Their example is precious full of gracious attraction.* A true Christian, wherever he is, in whatever circumstances, is of inestimable value. Having himself received grace from God, he becomes a centre of grace for others; rivers of living water flow from him. 2. *Such examples increase our responsibility.* St. Paul bids us mark them. If we do not, we neglect one of the greatest helps to a holy life which God provides for us. To read the lives of holy men, still more, if we have that great privilege, to know them, ought to excite in us a holy ardour and ambition. They are men like ourselves, encompassed with infirmities; they have by the grace of God attained a high degree of holiness; we may do the like if we persevere as they persevered. We must be followers together of such men; we must try to reach the holiness which they have gained; their humility, their self-denials, their charity, their holy joy, their delight in prayer and praise, ought to stir us up to a holy emulation. Such examples, if followed, are an unspeakable advantage; if neglected, they must greatly increase our danger and (it may be) our condemnation. 3. *Christ’s saints are many; their example is one.* Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, reflect in various degrees the one image of Christ. All Christians, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Their characters, their training, their opportunities, differ; they present some one grace, some another, more conspicuously than others; these different graces are so many different aspects of the one image of Christ. We may study these various graces severally as mixed with human frailty in the characters of saints; we may study them all combined in absolute perfection in the life of our Divine Saviour.

III. BUT THERE ARE EVIL EXAMPLES IN THE CHURCH. 1. *Many who are called by the Name of Christ mind earthly things.* They will not take up their cross and deny themselves; they serve their own lusts. Such men are really enemies of the cross of Christ; they hate the cross, they shrink from the cross, and they grievously check the progress of the gospel. The Name of God is blasphemed through them. The end of such men is destruction. 2. *Such evil lives cause real grief to the true Christian.* St. Paul weeps when he speaks of them. Fools make a mock at sin; the apostle weeps. He knows the meaning of sin, its exceeding sinfulness, its awful danger. It is a miserable thing to see men laugh at drunkenness or other forms of vice; these things kill the souls of men, souls for whom Christ died. The apostle reminds us of the psalmist, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes because men keep not thy Law."

LESSONS. Learn: 1. To study the lives of holy men, to imitate their graces, to avoid their errors; their history is written for our admonition. 2. Above all, to study the one perfect Example, the life of Jesus Christ our Lord. 3. To set a good example ourselves, remembering the great influence of example for good or for evil. 4. To shun evil examples, to mourn over them.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The grounds for following St. Paul and other holy men.* I. OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN. The false brethren mind earthly things; follow us. 1. *Our commonwealth is in heaven;* we are citizens of the heavenly country. Here we are citizens of this realm of England; we have our sovereign, our magistrates, our fellow-subjects, our duties, our privileges. It is a shadow of heavenly things. The heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, is our true home, our continuing city. The almighty God, King of kings and Lord of lords, is the centre of that vast communion. The blessed angels, our guardians, are his ministers, standing before him, to do his will. The saints, living and departed, are our fellow-citizens, the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn who are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect. There we have our privileges, the sacraments, the means of grace, the help of the Holy Spirit of God, the hope of everlasting blessedness. There we have our duties, all growing from the one highest law of love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; . . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." 2. *Our real home is there now* (*ἐν ἀρρενεῖ*). We are citizens of the heavenly commonwealth first, then of our earthly country. We are Christians first, then Englishmen. The name first given at Antioch is our highest title; it pledges us to unity, to holiness; it pledges us to the service of the great Master, whose love passeth knowledge, whose life stands alone in its gracious beauty, in its perfect purity. Our home is in heaven, where he is; it is so now. "Ye are come to the city of the living God;" "Ye are fellow-citizens of the saints." Therefore "seek those things which are above." There must our treasure be, there must we set our hearts. We should try by God's grace to fill our minds with the blessed thought of heaven, to accustom ourselves to meditate daily upon its occupations, its never-ending worship, its unclouded contemplation of the Divine beauty. For there we hope to spend the ages of the everlasting life. It will be, we trust, our last, our unspeakably most glorious prize; let us try to fill our thoughts and imaginations with it now, not with the poor prizes of earthly success. Thus let us seek to realize those striking words, "Our commonwealth is in heaven."

II. CHRIST IS IN HEAVEN NOW; WE WAIT FOR HIS COMING. 1. *We are citizens of the heavenly country now; we have not yet its full privileges; we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven.* But Christ is there now; he will come again as a Saviour. Then he will make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; we must be changed. He is changing our souls now (if we abide in him) by the power of his grace. Then he shall change our body, this body of our humiliation, the body which is now subject to disease and death, and sometimes, alas! to the defilement of sensual sin. He shall make it like, in true and deep resemblance, to the body of his glory. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." 2. *For he is able to subdue all things unto himself.* All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. Therefore we may not doubt his power. He can raise these bodies of ours from the dust of the earth, no longer natural, corruptible, mortal; but spiritual, incorruptible, immortal. He can do this, for he can do greater things than these.

**LESSONS.** Learn: 1. To regard heaven as our home. 2. To practise its employments, to learn the new song here on earth. 3. To remember that the eternal life begins here. "This is life eternal, to know . . . God and Jesus Christ." 4. To love the appearing of the Lord, to look earnestly for his coming. 5. To rejoice in the hope of rising in the glorious resurrection-body.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.—*Spiritual joy.*** "Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord." The key-note of the Epistle still recurs.

**I. THE NATURE OF JOY IN THE LORD.** It is to make him the object of our joy: 1. For what he is in himself, the God of love and light and blessing. 2. For what he is to us: (1) our Preserver (Ps. xlvi. 1, 2); (2) our Redeemer (Heb. iii. 18; Ps. xxvii. 1); (3) our God (Heb. viii. 10). The world rejoices in creation and sees no joy in God, but the believer finds the joy of the Lord to be his strength (Neh. viii. 10).

**II. THE DUTY OF REJOICING IN THE LORD.** 1. *It is a commanded duty.* 2. *Christ prays for it.* (John xvii. 13.) 3. *The Holy Spirit works it in us.* (John xvi. 7; Gal. v. 22.) 4. *It is necessary to the fulness of our Christian experience.* (1) As lessening our love of the world and of sinful pleasures (Ps. iv. 7; lxxxiv. 10). (2) As making us more active in the Lord's service (Deut. xxviii. 47; Neh. viii. 10). (3) As supporting us under the weight of troubles (1 Pet. i. 7, 8).

**III. HOW WE OUGHT TO REJOICE IN THE LORD.** 1. *We ought to live above the world.* (2 Cor. iv. 18.) 2. *We ought to avoid everything inconsistent with this joy.* (1) Gross sins (2 Cor. i. 12). (2) Unbelieving thoughts. 3. *We ought to cherish a constant trust in the Lord.* (Heb. xiii. 6; Isa. lv. 7; xlix. 13, 14. See hints on ch. iv. 1.)—T. C.

**Vers. 2, 3.—*Serious warning against errorists.*** The apostle, after counselling the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord, somewhat abruptly recalls the case of errorists of the Judaistic type, who, though not at Philippi, were not far from its boundaries. He deems it "safe" to give timely warning: "Beware of the dogs, of the evil-workers, of the concision."

**I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JUDAIST ERRORISTS.** 1. *They were "dogs" in the Jewish sense, that is, impure and antichristian enemies of the truth.* It would be a surprise for Jews to be described by the epithet they themselves always applied so scornfully to Gentiles. 2. *They were "evil-workers."* There was no want of religious activity among them, but it had a selfish and evil root. The apostle elsewhere speaks of "false apostles, deceitful workers" (2 Cor. xi. 13). The Pharisees "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte" (Matt. xxiii. 15). But their zeal was essentially evil. 3. *They were "the concision"—the mutilation—who rejoiced in a mere manual, outward mutilation of the flesh, forgetful of the significance of the true circumcision.*

**II. FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUCH ERRORISTS AND THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION.** "For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." There are three characteristic points involved in the circumcision of heart which belongs to all true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. 1. *Their worship is essentially spiritual.* They "worship by the Spirit of God." It was not a worship by mere external rites, as if all its merit consisted in rigid ritualistic conformities, but the true worship of God, which is only possible through the influence of his Holy Spirit (John iv. 23; Rom. viii. 26), who "helps our infirmities" of supplication. It is the characteristic of saints that they "pray in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). 2. *Their entire dependence is in Christ Jesus.* "Who glory in Christ Jesus." This is the essential distinction of the Christian. "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 31). He does not glory in rites or ordinances, but in a personal Redeemer, who saves him from his sins. 3. *They have no confidence in mere external privileges.* "And have no confidence in the flesh." The primary allusion here may be to circumcision, but the clause points to the merely outward and earthly in religious form. The Judaists gloried in the flesh, "Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also" (2 Cor. xi. 18; Gal. vi. 13, 14).—T. C.

Vers. 4—7.—*The apostle's estimate of his high privileges as a Jew.* The Judaists arrogated to themselves high privileges by virtue of their descent. The apostle shows that they can claim no superiority of privilege above himself, though he finds in these very privileges a quite insufficient ground of religious confidence.

I. HE REPUDIATES SACRAMENTAL EFFICACY. “Circumcised the eighth day.” He was thus distinguished alike from the proselyte, who was circumcised on his conversion, and from the Ishmaelite, who was circumcised in his thirteenth year. He was a pure Jew.

II. HE REPUDIATES THE RELIGIOUS IMPORT OF AN HONORED PARENTAGE. 1. “*Of the stock of Israel.*” For he was no proselyte, but directly descended from Israel. 2. *He was a member of the illustrious “tribe of Benjamin,”* which gave the first king to Israel, and had a foremost place among its armies. He did not, therefore, belong to any mere renegade tribe. 3. *He was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.”* Not only of pure blood, but untinctured by Hellenistic tendencies.

III. HE REPUDIATES RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY. “As touching the Law, a Pharisee;” a member of the strictest and most authoritative sect of the Jews.

IV. HE REPUDIATES INTENSE EARNESTNESS. “As touching zeal, persecuting the Church.”

V. HE REPUDIATES THE WORTH OF CEREMONIAL BLAMELESSNESS. “As touching the righteousness which is in the Law, showing myself blameless;” that is, the righteousness of formal precept as contrasted with the righteousness which is by faith (ver. 9). All these characteristics and prerogatives, which “were gains to me,” because I set them down to my credit religiously, my conversion changed into loss “for Christ's sake,” because their repudiation was necessary “that I might gain Christ.”—T. C.

Ver. 8.—*The excellency of the knowledge of Christ.* “I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. 1. *It implies a knowledge of the way of salvation, the Word of God being our guide.* (Rom. x. 17.) Eternal life hinges upon it. “This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John xvii. 3). It is by this knowledge we are justified. “By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many” (Isa. liii. 11). 2. *It implies an experimental acquaintance with him.* It is he himself who gives us the knowledge of himself. “He hath given us an understanding that we may know him who is true” (1 John v. 20). We thus realize Christ in pardoning mercy, in subduing grace, in abiding peace.

II. THE EXCELLENCE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. This may be set forth either positively by the nature and effects of the knowledge in question, or by contrasting it with all the things the apostle classes among “loss.” 1. *Positively.* (1) The experience of all God's people attests its excellence. (2) The Word of God proclaims its excellence (Jer. ix. 24). (3) It is through this knowledge we become partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 3). (4) It is by it we are enabled to escape the corruptions of the world (2 Pet. ii. 20). 2. *By contrast with all things classed as loss.* “I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” He had already included in this class all the distinguishing privileges and prerogatives of his Jewish descent, as well as three points in his personal character which, as a Jew, he had made the subject of boasting. But he now expands the language so as to include all things whatsoever, conceivable or inconceivable, as lying under the category of loss. Everything was valueless under the sun when weighed against the knowledge of Christ.

III. THE APOSTLE'S CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS POSSESSING CHRIST. “Christ Jesus my Lord.” This is the happy language of assurance.

IV. HIS PRESENT AND ABIDING SENSE OF THE EXCELLENCE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. He spoke before in the past tense, “I counted these things loss for Christ.” He now gives us his present judgment respecting the whole momentous concern, “I do count them but loss and dung.”—T. C.

Vers. 8—11.—*The true ground of a sinner's hope.* The apostle then sets forth, in very impressive terms, the familiar way of salvation: “That I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith.” Consider—

L CHRIST THE PRESENT GAIN AND THE PRESENT SHELTER OF THE SINNER. The

subject is presented under two aspects. 1. *Christ the present Gain of the sinner.* "That I may gain Christ." Consider: (1) *The person to be gained.* "Christ." The Lord of heaven and earth, who has all treasures of happiness in his keeping, who is the supreme object of angelic worship and saintly adoration. It is the Lord, not man, even the highest man on earth, whose favour can prosper or save us. (2) *How is Christ to be gained?* (a) Not by tears; (b) nor by confession to a priest; (c) not by good works; (d) nor even by our "suffering the loss of all things." We gain Christ simply in the act of our believing; but, in accepting the righteousness of God in him by faith, we throw overboard all our righteousness and all our unrighteousness, just as the shipwrecked sailor, to save his life and his ship, throws his precious cargo into the sea. (3) *The peculiar characteristics of this gain.* (a) A man may gain much in this life and yet lose it again. This cannot be the case of the sinner who gains Christ. (b) A man may gain much and be disappointed after all. The world is full of such disillusionments. But the sinner who gains Christ obtains bliss without end. (c) If a sinner does not gain Christ he loses his immortal soul. Christ is the one star of hope in the sky of heaven. 2. *Christ the present Shelter of the sinner.* "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." (1) *The apostle repudiates all dependence on his own personal righteousness, even upon that righteousness which is of the Law,* touching which he considered himself "blameless" from the Pharisaic standpoint. (a) It is in keeping with his doctrine everywhere (Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16). (b) Human experience confirms the statement of the prophet that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). (c) Salvation is everywhere in Scripture represented, not as of debt, but as of free grace (Rom. iv. 4, 5). (2) *His entire dependence is on another's righteousness, which is described in two forms.* (a) "That which is through the faith of Christ;" that is, a righteousness which becomes ours through our believing in Christ, faith being in this case merely the receptive organ or instrumental cause. (b) "The righteousness of God by faith;" that is, the righteousness which God provides for man's salvation as received by faith. The whole phraseology is thoroughly Pauline (see homiletical hints on Gal. ii. 16).

II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AS CONNECTED WITH THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." The saving knowledge of Christ must take in the fact of his resurrection as well as the fact of his death, because his resurrection was but the seal and crown of his redeeming sacrifice. Therefore the believer's aspiration is always to know Christ in the power of his resurrection. 1. *The power of his resurrection.* (1) There is a polemic aspect of this power; for he is declared to be "the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 3, 4). (2) There is an apologetic aspect of it, as attesting his Divine mission (1 Cor. xv. 15). (3) There is a dogmatic aspect of it, as indicating the acceptance of his sacrifice, and as it is the pledge of our justification (Rom. iv. 24, 25). (4) There is an ethical aspect of it, presented by its relation to our pursuit of holiness. (a) It is the resurrection-power of Christ which gives the new life. "Because I live ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). (b) It is by virtue of the resurrection that the Holy Ghost comes to abide in the Church, as a Spirit of truth, grace, and consolation. (c) It is by the same power we are enabled to subdue sin (Eph. i. 19, 20; Rom. vi.; Gal. ii. 20). (d) It is the same power which inspires hope (1 Pet. i. 3; 1 Cor. xv.; Col. i. 5). (5) It has a prophetic aspect; for it is the pledge of our future resurrection (Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14). 2. *The fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* We are to share in the sufferings he suffered, and to drink of the cup which he drank, not in relation merely to the suffering of persecution, but all suffering that arises out of our conflict with sin. We can thus understand such passages as 2 Cor. i. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 13; Rom. vi. 5; viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

III. THE ULTIMATE OBJECT CONTEMPLATED BY THE APOSTLE. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead." 1. *What he desired in the future.* (1) Not a part in the general resurrection. (2) Not spiritual resurrection, for that was already past. (3) But a part in the resurrection of the just (Luke xx. 35; Acts iv. 2; 1 Pet. i. 3). It is the resurrection of life. 2. *Why he desired it.* (1) It would be a

final escape from evil. (2) It would be the occasion of his final and blessed recognition by his Saviour-Judge. (3) It would be a pledge of his eternal happiness in heaven.

3. *What his desire implies.* (1) A high appreciation of the value of this resurrection from the dead. (2) A sense of its difficulty, as regarded from the human side. (3) The persuasion of it may be attained in various degrees. There is a touch of hypothetical humility in his language. (4) A disposition to submit to all providential arrangements that lead to it.—T. C.

Vers. 12—14.—*The apostle's confession of his imperfection and his method of Christian progress.* There is a touching and instructive humility in the language of these verses.

I. **HIS CONFESSION OF IMPERFECTION.** “Not as though I had already attained or have been made perfect;” and again, “I count not myself to have apprehended.” 1. *This language argues a high estimate of a Christian's duty.* There is no inconsistency in the consciousness of hidden imperfection and the thought of a lofty ideal. We must ever keep Christ himself before us as the only ideal to be copied and followed after through life. 2. *It argues a humble estimate of himself.* It is a remarkable confession from such a man. He had done and suffered much for Christ, yet he says, “I have not been made perfect.” Such an experience ought to rebuke the lofty pretensions of perfectionists of every class. 3. *Yet this humble estimate of himself, as well as his aspiration for higher holiness, is sure evidence that he had made some progress.* A writer says, “That which is best in you is your appreciation of what is better in others.”

II. **HIS METHOD OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.** This is expressed in two separate and significant sentences. 1. “I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also was apprehended by Christ Jesus.” (1) This language evidently points to the scene on the road to Damascus, when the Lord “apprehended” him and changed the whole bent of his life. Conversion is, indeed, an apprehension, a laying hold upon a heart under the sway of worldliness and sin, and bringing it under the sway of all-conquering grace. Nothing but the arresting hand of the Lord can stop any of us on our downward course, or break the dominion of the world over us, or destroy the power of sin in the heart. (2) This language implies that the loving hand of the Saviour is never lifted off any heart thus arrested till all that is implied in the gracious contact has been accomplished. There are two apprehensions. The believer has only, in the one case, to receive the gift of God, but, in the other case, the salvation which has become ours through that act is to be wrought out in a continuous, faithful reception of all that is involved in it. 2. “This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are past, and reaching forth to the things that are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (1) There is here the oblivion of the past, not that we are to forget past errors or sins, or are not to repent of past mistakes which must always be subject of penitential thought, but we are not to allow a rueful temper to kill out heart and hope. We are to regard the past as so much really gained or accomplished that is to exercise no dragging or injurious effect upon our forward progress. (2) There is here the concentration of all energies. “This one thing I do.” A dispersion of energies is fatal to success in any work. The great heroes of the Church and of the world have been men of one idea, and concentrated all thought and effort in carrying it out. So the apostle had but one idea always before him, and made everything in providence and nature and grace contributory to the great work of his Christian sanctification. (3) Untiring activity. “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (a) The mark is perfect holiness. (b) The prize is perfect blessedness. (c) All his activity in this Divine race is sustained by the thought that he stands in the “high calling” of God and is supported by the grace of Christ Jesus. It is a high calling, high as heaven, and seemingly inaccessible to men of such passions and infirmities as ours, but then it is the high calling of God *in Christ Jesus.* This is our hope and our consolation.—T. C.

Vers. 15, 16.—*Practical exhortation to unity in religious life.* The apostle gathers up the conclusion to be drawn from the preceding verses. “Therefore let us, as many as be perfect, mind the same thing.”

I. **CONSIDER THE DUTY OF BELIEVERS TO WALK IN THE FULNESS OF PRESENT TRUTH.** The saints, who are here described as perfect, including that very apostle who had just

said he was not perfect, are to be regarded as perfect in the sense of adulthood of understanding. They were not "babes in Christ;" they had put away childish things; they had assumed the apostle's position concerning the Law. But on this very ground they were to stand strongly consistent in all moral and spiritual development. They were to be like the apostle, forgetting the past and pressing onward to the mark for the heavenly prize.

II. BELIEVERS MAY NOT SEE EYE TO EYE, BUT ARE ENCOURAGED TO LOOK TO THE LORD FOR FULLER KNOWLEDGE. "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you." The principle is ever true. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." If a believer is rooted in the faith of Christ, the Lord will help him to see the truth respecting minor matters.

III. SO FAR AS BELIEVERS AGREE, THEY OUGHT TO SHOW A VISIBLE CONFORMITY OF LIFE AND OPINION. "But let us walk according to that we have attained." Thus (1) God is glorified; (2) believers are maintained in a peaceful fellowship; (3) the world is impressed and won by the exhibition of Christian unity.—T. C.

Ver. 17.—*The imitation of good men.* "Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them who walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

I. THE DUTY OF FOLLOWING GOOD EXAMPLES. 1. *We are commanded to do so.* (1 Cor. xi. 1.) 2. *The lives of many saints are expressly recorded for our imitation.* (Jas. v. 10, 11, 17; Phil. iv. 9.) 3. *The imitation is limited by several circumstances.* (1) By the example of Christ: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1). (2) We are not to imitate such actions of good men as are to be condemned, nor even all such as are not condemned (Gen. xix. 8; xlii. 15, 16; xxvii. 25-27). (3) The Word of God is to decide the rightness or the wrongness of the actions of good men.

II. THE USES OF SUCH IMITATION. 1. *It stimulates to higher and better living.* We are therefore to imitate good men in the graces for which they are most distinguished (Numb. xii. 3; 1 Sam. iii. 18; Job i. 21; Acts v. 41). 2. *It is a fresh recommendation of the gospel.* (Matt. v. 16.) 3. *It gives greater glory to God.* (Rom. vii. 4.)—T. C.

Vers. 18, 19.—*The walk of mere worldly professors.* "For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." The allusion is not to errorists merely, but to the antinomian formalists in the visible communion of the Church.

I. MANY PERSONS ARE FOUND IN THE COMMUNION OF THE CHURCH WHO ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST. They were there even in apostolic days, in spite of gifts of discernment and the power of discipline. It is an altogether chimerical idea to think of a perfectly pure Church. There was no such Church in the days of Christ or the apostles. The persons here described appear to be of the same class as those referred to elsewhere as "they who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" (Rom. xvi. 18); persons who caused "divisions and offences," whose life was a practical denial of the principle that they who are Christ's "have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24).

II. MORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE FORMALISTS AND THE DOOM THAT AWAITS THEM. 1. *The real object of their worship.* "Whose god is their belly." Like those referred to at Rome, they "served not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" (Rom. xvi. 18). They were sensual and self-indulgent, forgetting that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" (Rom. xiv. 17). 2. *The gross perversion of their moral judgments.* "Whose glory is in their shame." They gloried, under the name of liberty, in what ought to have inspired feelings of shame, so as to bring upon them the retribution, "I will turn their glory into shame" (Hos. iv. 7). 3. *The earthly cast of their life.* "Who mind earthly things." (1) The apostle does not encourage the neglect of earthly things, much less cast any discredit on those natural feelings which link us to the realities of earthly life. (2) But he censures the living for this present visible world to the neglect of the invisible kingdom by which we are surrounded. The earthly things may be pleasures, riches, honours, power, place. "Seest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (Jer. xlv. 5). To mind them is (a) to desire them

(Col. iii. 2; Ps. lxxiii. 25); (b) to admire them (Luke xxi. 5, 6); (c) to labour after them (John vi. 27; Matt. vi. 23); (d) to concentrate thought and interest upon them. (3) Reasons for not minding earthly things. (a) They are beneath the consideration of Christians; (b) we have higher things to mind (Phil. iii. 20); (c) the minding of heaven and earth is an inconsistent service (Matt. vi. 24); (d) earthly things are essentially uncertain, unsatisfying, inconstant, and momentary (Eccles. i. 8; Prov. xxiii. 5; Luke xii. 20). 4. *The doom of these formalists.* “Whose end is destruction.” Notwithstanding their high professions and their ecclesiastical privileges, their end is eternal death. There is but one end of such a life: “The end of those things is death” (Rom. vi. 21); “Whose end is to be burned” (Heb. vi. 8); “Whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. xi. 15).

III. THE EMOTION OF THE APOSTLE AT THE CONTEMPLATION OF SUCH A CLASS OF SINNERS. “I tell you even weeping.” He wept at their wickedness as much as at the thought of their deserved doom.

IV. THE NECESSITY OF REPEATED WARNINGS AGAINST EVIL IN THE CHURCH. “Of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping.” It was needful that the apostle should lift the voice of warning against a tendency as fatal in its ultimate results as the deadliest heresy.—T. C.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The heavenly citizenship and its blessed expectations.* The apostle seems to say that these souls, with their earthly instincts, can have no fellowship with us; for we are citizens of a heavenly state. “For our citizenship is even now in heaven.”

I. THE HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP. 1. *Consider its source.* It comes, not by birth or manumission, but by the ransom-price of Jesus Christ. It is in Christ we become “fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God” (Eph. ii. 19). 2. *Consider the duties this citizenship involves.* We are to obey its laws and watch over the interests of Christ’s kingdom. 3. *Consider its privileges.* We receive protection, guidance, and comfort.

II. ITS BLESSED EXPECTATIONS. “From whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1. *Believers are always looking for the second coming of the Lord to judgment.* (Titus ii. 13; Acts xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6, 7; 1 Thess. i. 10.) It is the “blessed hope” of the saints (Titus ii. 13). 2. *There is the expectation of a transfiguration of our bodies by Christ’s power.* “Who shall fashion anew our vile body, that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.” This allusion to the glorious destiny of our bodies may have been due to the thought of the sensuality of the formalists just condemned. (1) *Consider the vileness of our bodies.* Though fearfully and wonderfully made, and though temples of the Holy Ghost in case of all saints, our bodies are vile (a) as to the materials of which they are composed—we are mere dust and ashes; (b) as to the diseases and infirmities that often darken the soul’s life; (c) as to sinful desires which find their principal seat or instigation in the body. (2) *Consider the transformation of our bodies.* They are to be fashioned according to the likeness of Christ’s glorious body. The change will be (a) necessary, that the body may be a fitting dwelling-place for the glorified soul; (b) amazing, for we cannot imagine its nature or extent; (c) Divine, for it is to be conformed to Christ’s glorious body. (3) *Consider the power which effects the change.* “According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.” (a) It is not according to his power merely, but by its exercise, that the transformation will come. (b) He who is able to subdue all things, even death itself (1 Cor. xv. 26), will subdue our bodies into their finally glorified condition.—T. C.

Vers. 1—3.—*Spiritual Judaism.* Having called upon the Philippians for public spirit, he now speaks, as if about to close the Epistle, about joy in the Lord. Inasmuch, however, as the Judaizers were abroad, he deems it best to insert a parenthesis, which the world could ill spare, about the true people of God and the progress towards the “citizenship” of heaven. This third chapter is a magnificent parenthesis, in which the spiritual life is laid bare from its inception to its glorious close. In the verses now before us we have false and true Judaism contrasted.

I. CONSIDER THE JEWS FALSELY SO CALLED. (Ver. 2.) The custom of the Jews, in their pride, was to regard themselves as children at God's table and all others as only "dogs" below it (Matt. xv. 26). Paul reverses the figure, and has no hesitation in saying that the ritualists of his day, that is, the Jews who were preaching salvation by ceremonies, were only the "dogs" below the table, while believers in Jesus were the children at the feast. Moreover, as the dogs in the East are often captious scavengers, the Jews he here calls dogs were to be avoided by the Philippian converts just as one would avoid dangerous dogs. That he is not too severe in this judgment he shows by asserting that they have been "evil-workers." What had the history of the Judaizers been but that of "marplots"? They had done evil instead of good all through the infant Churches, turning the young converts away from the simplicity that was in Christ. Not only so, but the circumcision which they practised and sought to enforce was only "concision" (*καταροῦν*), i.e. mere *mutilation*. For once a man assigns a false value to a bloody rite like circumcision, and fancies he can contribute to his salvation by subjecting himself to the knife, he is merely mutilating the body and not benefiting the soul. These are not "the people of God," therefore, they are "Jews" only in name, who go about substituting ceremony-keeping for the faith as it is in Christ.

II. CONSIDER WHO ARE THE TRUE JEWS. (Ver. 3.) Paul states very succinctly the characteristics of the true people of God. Those are truly circumcised (*τεπιροῦν*) who have been so circumcised in heart as to worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Let us take these up in the reverse order. 1. The true people of God have *given up confidence in the flesh*. They have seen that no incision in the flesh can render them acceptable to the Supreme; that no *physical* breeding can secure a prize in the great day of judgment; that nothing that they are or can be or do can *win* acceptance before God. Self has ceased to be the ground of confidence. 2. The true people of God *rejoice in Christ Jesus—rejoice in him as their Lord*. (Vers. 1, 3.) Self having ceased to be a ground of confidence or source of joy, Jesus has become the true Source. Pardon and acceptance are seen to be secured in him, and in his fellowship there is an unfailing fountain of delights. Out of the invisible comes a joy unspeakable and full of glory. We rejoice in him as all our Salvation and all our Desire. 3. The true people of God *worship the Father in Spirit*. This differentiates them from the formalists, whose delight and hope are in ceremonies. The Father, as an infinite spirit, can, we come to see, be approached acceptably only by our spirits. The bodily genuflexions, which go to make up the formalities, cannot be accounted worship. Unless the spirit moves reverentially within, all the formality is vain. The spirit, moreover, as we have just seen, realizes that it cannot be accepted by the Supreme on account of any supposed personal merit, but solely on account of the merit of the Lord Jesus. The worship which pleases the Father is the joyful worship which has its source in his Son. The outcome of felt obligation unto Jesus, it becomes fragrant in the nostrils of the Most High. Thus the spiritual Jews are made manifest. They gather spiritually minded around the feet of the great Father and adore him.—R. M. E.

Vers. 4—7.—*Pride of birth and breeding.* Having touched on the subject of self-confidence, Paul can quote his own experience on the point. For many years he thought he might plume himself even more than other men on his pedigree and his personal power. He had lived in the haze of self-satisfaction, and could quote a genealogy and personal record second to none. It becomes amusing in a Pharisee of the first century, and yet we have people who are just as ridiculous in their pride of birth and of breeding in the nineteenth century. It is surely worth a moment's analysis.

I. NO MATTER HOW WELL BORN OR BREED A MAN MAY BE, IT CONSTITUTES NOT HIS MERIT, BUT HIS OBLIGATION. Paul was a thorough-bred Jew, and fancied this fact should save him. But whatever good we receive through inheritance is not our merit; it simply increases our obligation. It is a confusion of thought, therefore, to suppose that the Supreme will save any man because of the accident of his birth or his breeding. We shall be called to account for these advantages, and they should minister to humility and fear rather than to pride.

II. EXERTIONS TO SECURE A REPUTATION, INSTEAD OF TO GLORIFY GOD, INCREASE

**OUR SELFISHNESS INSTEAD OF ESTABLISHING ANY CLAIM TO SALVATION.** Paul's zeal was undoubtedly in persecuting the Christians. He was the first persecutor of his time; so that, in addition to his pride of birth and breeding, he could plume himself upon a religious reputation without a parallel among his people. He thought that no one had such a claim upon the tribal God, the God of the Jews, as he. If self-righteousness could be established by mortal man, Paul believed he had accomplished it. He forgot that the establishment of reputations is a selfish motive at the best, and can have nothing but condemnation from a holy God. In analyzing our motives, consequently, we must be most careful. Unless we are on our guard, we shall find ourselves living the selfish life, manufacturing reputations rather than strictly regarding usefulness and God's glory.

**III. BOTH OUR PEDIGREE AND OUR ZEAL ARE LOSSES TO US IF THEY DETAIN US FROM CHRIST.** Paul had spent long years in thinking how well-bred and reputable a Jew he was. Occupied with self, he had never turned his eyes to the radiant Christ, who alone is worthy of such constant contemplation. His fancied merits had thus kept him for years from the profitable study of the person and character of Christ. As soon as, on the way to Damascus, he became acquainted with Christ, the loss of the self-righteous years pressed itself painfully upon him. He wondered that he had so long neglected such a Saviour. He saw in him a subject worthy of eternal study, and he regretted that he had been so tardy in entering upon it. We are surely taught here that anything which shuts out Christ from us, it matters not what it may be, is a distinct loss to us. He is the only object worth absorbing our attention. When other objects—self in any of its forms—eclipse him, we are losers and not gainers by the distraction. Things good in themselves even, such as birth and breeding and activity, prove serious losses to us if they withdraw our souls from the contemplation of the Saviour.—R. M. E.

**Vers. 8—11.—*The enthusiast.*** Paul now exhibits himself to us in the light of an enthusiast in whose eyes the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ is all and in all. He regrets that so many fruitless years were spent away from Christ, and now he shows us all he hopes from him. He has surrendered everything for the sake of his Lord and Master. He has put away the thought of what he might have been had he remained a Jewish partisan. There was nothing beyond the ambition of Saul the persecutor had he remained true to the Jewish tradition. But he had cheerfully sacrificed every worldly prospect, he had cheerfully accepted a life of privation and contempt, he had learned to count such worldly advantages as but "the refuse of the table" when compared with the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is such enthusiasm that makes men of us! Let us now look at the gain got from Christ.

**I. ACCEPTANCE IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.** (Ver. 9.) We have seen how self-righteousness died within Paul. The sight of Christ on the way to Damascus cured him of all his self-satisfaction. Henceforth his religious reputation seemed but "filthy rags," utterly insufficient to clothe his spirit before the all-searching King. But instead of self-righteousness, he found provided by Christ a perfect righteousness, whose protection before God he could rejoice in. The idea of merit being transferred and imputed, though ridiculed by some superficial thinkers, is an everyday experience in life. The whole department of personal influence for the benefit of another is an illustration of it. We all benefit by the character and influence of others. We are glorified by their merits. The person from whom we want the favour knows the value and honour of our friend, and he considers us favourably because of him. In the very same way, then, God the Father regards sinners with favour because of the merit and righteousness of his Son, in whom poor sinners are asked to trust. Christ's glory is sufficient to encircle with radiance all the world.

**II. ACQUAINTANCESHIP.** (Ver. 10.) The difference between "knowing a person" and "knowing about a person" must never be forgotten. We may know a great deal about a person whose acquaintanceship we never acquire. We may in the same way know a great deal about Christ; we may be erudite theologians; and yet if we do not "know him" as our incomparable acquaintance, our Saviour, our best Friend, all will be vain. Paul got acquainted with Christ on the way to Damascus, and that acquaintanceship he cultivated ever after by prayer, meditation, co-operation in Christ's

work, and every means in his power. It is the essence of religion and of eternal life. "This is life eternal, to know [i.e. to be acquainted with] thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). Let no man be content with anything short of this acquaintanceship with Jesus.

III. THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. (Ver. 10.) This is a present experience. Our hearts are dead in trespasses and sins, as Christ's body lay dead in Joseph's tomb. But the Spirit who quickened his dead body by a similar act quickens our dead souls, so that we experience in our spirits the power of our Lord's resurrection. Paul had passed through this experience. He had entered into "newness of life." He had risen out of the corruption of sin and spiritual death into the power of a new and spiritual life. The thrill of resurrection is first felt in this life. The dead soul hears the voice of the Son of God and starts into new life (John v. 25). Well may we say of this resurrection, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection; on such the second death can have no power."

IV. FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING. (Ver. 10.) It seems strange that Paul should reckon pain among the advantages obtained from Christ. But we must remember that as Christ's sufferings were vicarious, so the sufferings he sends upon his servants are so far vicarious also as to be for the good of others. Of course, in atonement we can have no fellowship with Christ. He was alone therein. But outside the atoning quality of Christ's suffering there is an element in which we can all share. Paul had serious suffering, but as he felt it was to make him a better workman, and so for the good of others, he was content to share it with his Lord. And here we must observe that *sympathy* is the closest fellowship between souls. What is sympathy? It is *fellowship in suffering*. It is in distress, in fiery trial, that hearts come nearest to one another. The Hebrew children never knew such fellowship in Babylon before as the Son of God gave them in the fiery furnace. It is here that the reason of our fiery trials lies. They are to bring us nearer the heart of Jesus. *His* sympathy is cheaply purchased by any pain. Paul's suffering life lay closer than other lives to the heart of Christ. How this should reconcile believers to trial! We may well "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations" (Jas. i. 2).

V. CONFORMITY TO CHRIST'S DEATH. (Ver. 10.) To be reconciled to death is a great experience. It was this which Jesus experienced on the cross. The amazement of Gethsemane and its sinless shrinking from the experience of death gave place to radiant welcome as the last hour came. "Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit," was the utterance of a Son fully satisfied with the Father's will in the matter of his death. Now, this brave spirit is within our reach. We, too, may look without blanching into the eye of the king of terrors. The sufferings and discipline of life are meant to bring us to this sweet conformity.

VI. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. (Ver. 11.) This is the crowning experience which Jesus is to give to Paul and all the faithful departed. The attainment of the resurrection is the climax of a spiritual process. We have risen spiritually into newness of life; we have been advancing steadily in the knowledge of Christ's mind and heart, and largely through life's trials; and physical resurrection will be the top-stone of the great experience. The notion is broached that resurrection is an immediate experience at death, so that we practically bid our bodies good-bye for evermore when we depart. This doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus, however, will not stand investigation. We must believe in a bodily resurrection at the last day. Then shall our full spiritual experience be reached and Christ's last great gift be ours.—R. M. E.

Vers. 12-16.—*The river of forgetfulness.* Paul has sketched in the preceding verses what we may call his spiritual programme. Much of the attainment lies before him still, so much, in fact, that he lives in the future instead of in the past. His life is a race towards a goal. Now, just as in a race the runner forgets the ground gone over in his occupation with the remainder and the goal, so, in the spiritual life, there is a forgetfulness essential to progress. There is a river of Lethe in the city of God, which the prize-winners must drink if they are to run as giants refreshed. Let us study for a moment or two this river of forgetfulness.

I. THE MEMORY OF PAST SINS AND FAILURES MAY ONLY REPRODUCE THEM. (Vers. 12, 13.) Memory is a precious gift; without it progress would be impossible. It is

memory which enables us to carry on the advantages of past ages to the coming time. But the misery is that we burden memory with thoughts and feelings which cannot help, but hinder our future development. It is these thoughts and feelings which we must learn to forget. We content ourselves with mentioning here two. 1. *Sins*. Brooding over sin is a very unhealthy process. It is not the self-examination God recommends. It only reproduces and increases sin. Repentance is a grace which sorrows over sins as offences against God which must not be repeated. We must not allow repentance, therefore, to be turned into repining. But can we safely forget past sins? Yes; if we come to the blood of Jesus and get washed therein, we may with safety forget our past sins, so far as the remembrance of them would detain us from a better record in time to come. 2. *Failures*. These, too, may be remembered so as to quench all hope of improvement. We may regulate our hope by the probabilities of the past, like calculations based upon statistics. But there is one factor in the spiritual life, the Spirit of God, who can put all past experience to shame and silence. Hence we are encouraged not to regulate our hope by the failures of the past, but by Lethean grace to face the future as if we had a successful record behind us. To translate a paragraph from a modern French author: "Feeble natures live in griefs instead of changing them into the apophthegms of experience. They saturate themselves with them and use them to retrace their steps daily into past misfortunes. To forget is the grand secret of strong and creative natures—to forget as Nature does, who never regards herself as *passé*, but recommences every hour the mysteries of her indefatigable births (*enfemtements*)."

II. THE MEMORY OF PAST SUCCESSES AND ATTAINMENTS MAY DETAIN US FROM MORE SPLENDID TRIUMPHS. (Vers. 12—14.) The temptation is to make the past the standard and so to cut down the possibilities of the present and the future. But, as it has been well said, "It would be better to forget our whole life, sins and all, than to look back with a sense of satisfaction." Contentment with the past is fatal to all progress. Christianity never meant us to dote upon a golden age behind us, but to expect a golden age to come. Hence we must forget past attainments and successes and forge ahead. It is the looking back that endangers the climber who is passing upwards. His one hope of reaching the summit is by forgetting the things behind him and "grinding" on.

III. BY THIS POWER OF FORGETFULNESS WE SECURE PROPER CONCENTRATION OF CHRISTIAN PURPOSE. (Ver. 13.) For it is essential to enthusiasm to have our nature *unified* into a single glorious purpose. Hence Paul could say, "This one thing I do." He would not allow the past to distract him from proper concentration. One purpose of perfection dominated his whole life and conduct. Hence his draughts of the Lethcean river fitted him for the sublime and single purpose of attaining the ideal of Christ. The soul who refuses to be distracted by the past, and sets himself steadily to fulfil the mission God has given him, will find in his concentration the secret of power.

IV. WHEN CHURCH MEMBERS FOLLOW UP THIS PRINCIPLE OF FORGETTING THE PAST, THEY COME TO SEE EYE TO EYE IN THE END. (Vers. 15, 16.) Paul advises the Philippians to be "thus minded," that is, to unite in forgetting the past, and if in other things they do not see eye to eye as yet, they will come to unity at last. It is a most important principle to follow. When individuals fall out, we advise them to "let bygones be bygones," and begin again. This is exactly Paul's idea. There seems to have been some dissension in Philippi, as ver. 2 of next chapter shows. Here is Paul's recommendation: "Forget the things behind." It is upon the past our squabbles are built. Take away the memory and then we can begin afresh. It would thus seem that the city of God could ill spare this river of forgetfulness. Indeed, it is only in the city of God that it flows in crystal purity and can be drunk without danger. There are muddy streams which ingenuity provides, intoxicants which rob mankind through the senses of their memory; but the waking-time comes, and the furies are afoot once more. In the Lethe of God, on the contrary, we may drink and forget a painful, imperfect past, so far as this would keep us from a nobler future. "God," says Vinet, "in the ineffable power of his Spirit, makes us date from where he pleases. He separates us from that which was ourselves. He creates a new man, to which the old one is a stranger. For him there is no crime that cannot be blotted out, nor any restitution impossible; for him there is no time flown on without recall,

no destruction, nor any manner of death. The past can swallow nothing up." Let us, then, judiciously cultivate this forgetfulness, and make the past the subordinate thing Christian progress requires it to be.—R. M. E.

**Vers. 17—21.—Celestial citizenship.** Paul, having urged the duty of forgetting the things behind, now speaks of his own example still more pointedly. He has been minding this rule and walking before men as an illustration of its power. And in this occupation with the future, his idea has been that he is a citizen of heaven, and is conducting himself daily as one who belongs to that better country. But, while advancing to the statement of this celestial citizenship, he pauses parenthetically over the state of those whose citizenship is of the earth and earthly. The contrast of this paragraph is between the *citizens of the world* and the *citizens of heaven*. We shall look at them in the order presented by the apostle.

**I. THE CITIZENS OF THE WORLD.** (Vers. 18, 19.) And here we have several things to notice. 1. *The object of their adoration is the "belly-god."* In heathenism the aim of life is for the most part to gratify the flesh. Appetite is master. The mind and heart are simply the slaves of appetite. Now, it is clear that, as a worshipper can never rise above the object of adoration, the man who worships appetite sinks into a mere quivering mass of appetite. Lust calls for satisfaction. Eating, drinking, and the gratification of the fleshy lusts become the sum total of life. The meaning of this devotion is the degradation of the man below the level of the beast. 2. *Their glory is in their shame.* That is to say, instead of being ashamed of their lustful courses, they actually glory in them. They parade their degradations. It is a terrible descent when men lose the sense of shame and brazen it out. 3. *They mind earthly things.* That is, they look no further for their rest. They settle down in this plague-stricken land. They allow their notions to be bounded by the horizon of the seen and the temporal. They take no broader view than this life affords them. 4. *They are consequently enemies of Christ's cross, over which the holy are compelled to weep.* For the cross is the great foe of worldly mindedness. It opposes the lusts of the flesh; it opposes the adoration of the appetites; it opposes self-indulgence in every sinful form; and consequently the citizens of this world are its foes. But do we weep over these misguided men with the pathos of a Paul? Do we shed over them the tears of compassion, of zeal, of charity? We ought not to be content until the world's state evokes our tears.

**II. THE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN.** (Vers. 20, 21.) Paul declares here that "our citizenship (*πολιτευμα*) is in heaven." Now, this idea suggests: 1. *That we ought to feel as "strangers and pilgrims here."* Just as citizens of a foreign country do not feel at home, so heavenly citizens cannot feel at home on earth. They will recognize a certain strangeness in their environment, and be evermore looking away from earth and things seen to their "*fatherland*" (*πατρίδα* of Heb. xi. 14). But: 2. *Our hope should centre in the heavenly city.* Earth cannot satisfy our longings; our hope flits away from earth to heaven. "We look for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." Heaven is regarded as our home, and we feel drawn as by a home-sickness towards the celestial world. We have "a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." 3. *We expect the advent of the Saviour and the transformation of the body.* The Lord Jesus has his home in heaven and is seated in the focus of power. His energy (*ἐνέργεια*) is such that he can subdue all things unto himself. And he is to appear for the special purpose of transforming our bodies of humiliation that they may be conformed "to the body of his glory" (Revised Version). His glorious body in the vigour of immortal youth is the type to which our changed bodies shall be conformed. Hence we hope for physical adaptation to an immortal career. And these gifts we expect from heaven and through the advent of our Saviour. "Able-bodied citizens" we are yet to be. We are to lay down these tenements of clay and to be clothed with temples which will stand the wear and tear of an eternal existence. In these magnificent bodies we hope to serve God ceaselessly. As citizens of heaven, we shall need no respite from active service; there shall be no night and no repose in heaven; unwearying work shall prove life's lasting benediction.—R. M. E.

**Vers. 1—16.—The true circumcision. Contemplated close of the Epistle.** "Finally

my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." It would seem that, at this point, the apostle contemplated bringing the Epistle to a close. He intimates that, in addition to what he has already said, he has only this further to say. He falls back on what has already been noticed as the key-note of the Epistle. Addressing them as his brethren, he calls upon them to rejoice in the Lord. He recognized no joy but what was in the Lord. We are to rejoice in our earthly blessings, as having them in the Lord. We are to rejoice even in our afflictions, as having them in the Lord. We are to rejoice in any success attending our efforts to bless others, as having it in the Lord. We are to rejoice especially in privileges of adoption, as having them in the Lord. " Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." *New start in the Epistle.* "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe." The apostle would not have concluded the Epistle without recording his thanks for the contribution and sending salutations. But at this point he seems to have been interrupted, and meantime to have had his attention called to some fresh manifestation of Judaistic zeal. When he takes up his pen it is with this in his mind. And, before writing the words with which he had intended to close, he must sound the note of alarm. He deems it necessary, however, to give his reason for introducing the old theme. He had written as well as spoken much on the subject of Judaism; but it was not irksome to him to repeat what he had said. He had written as well as spoken so much on the subject to the Philippians that he feared it might be irksome to them to have a repetition. The reference would seem to be to a lost Epistle or lost Epistles. To this there is a manifest allusion in the Epistle of Polycarp. Writing to these same Philippians, about the beginning of the second century, he says, "Neither I nor another like me can attain to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, coming among you, taught the word of truth accurately and surely before the men of that day; who also, when absent, wrote letters to you, into which, if ye search, ye can be builded up unto the faith given to you." It did not lie within the design of the Spirit of inspiration to preserve all the words that Paul wrote to the Churches, any more than to preserve all the words that Christ spake in the course of his public ministry. What Paul had previously written during the ten years to the Church of Philippi alone on the one subject of Judaism was so extensive that he was afraid it might be irksome to them to have the same things repeated. But, whether irksome to them or not, he was assured that it would be safe. And on that ground he does not hesitate to repeat.

**I. HE WARNS AGAINST THE JUDAIZERS.** What he had before given at length he now gives in few, but expressive words. 1. *Dogs.* " Beware of the dogs." As Jesus called Herod a fox, so Paul calls the Judaizers dogs. We have laid hold more on the fidelity of the dog; the Greeks laid hold more on its bad habit of snarling; the Jews laid hold more on its want of niceness, in eating all manner of meats. Prowling about the city and living especially on the offal and refuse, it seemed to the Jews to picture the Gentiles, who, making no distinction of meats, were ceremonially unclean. By means of this appellation of the Gentiles, Christ made trial of the Canaanitish woman. And when John says, "Without are the dogs," he seems to refer generally to exclusion on the ground of moral impurity. In calling the Judaizers dogs, Paul is to be understood as throwing back on them their own term of reproach. They called the Gentile Christians dogs, because they made no distinction of meats, did not observe the washing of cups and platters. They, says Paul, were really the dogs, who, instead of the rich gospel provision, had only the "garbage of carnal ordinances." 2. *Evil-workers.* " Beware of the evil-workers." They are characterized in another place as deceitful workers. Here they are characterized as evil workers, *i.e.* where others were sowing the good seed they came and sowed the tares; where others were doing good work they came and tried to have it undone. And that was really their character; they did not seek fields of their own, but fields where the seed of the gospel had already been sown. They were especially workers against Christ, and all who preached Christ as the sole ground of the sinner's justification. 3. *Concision.* " Beware of the concision." As pope said of antipope, that he was not consecrated but excommunicated, and as Coleridge said of the French philosophy, that it was psilosphy, or the bare kind of philosophy; so Paul refuses to say of the Judaists that they were the circumcision, he will only say of them that they were the concision, *i.e.* they cut the body to no purpose, there was

no real symbolism connected with it, as when the Mosaic economy had Divine sanction. They were cutters of the body, as the priests of Baal in Elijah's time, who, with loud crying, cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. They had no more reason for continuing the cutting of the body from Mosaism than the heathen had for cuttings in connection with their religion. Therefore he will not allow them to be the circumcision, but only the concision, or mutilators of the body.

II. HE DESCRIBES THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION. "For we are the circumcision." Whether circumcised in body or not, simply as Christians they answered to the idea, bore the character of the circumcision. 1. *Spiritual worshippers.* "Who worship by the Spirit of God." If he had characterized them by their outward mark, he would have said "the baptized;" but he prefers to point to the inward reality. The meaning of the mark of circumcision on the Jew was that he was set apart as a worshipper of God; in his own home and when he went up to the temple, he was to acknowledge God according to the appointed forms. As answering to the circumcision we also are set apart as worshippers of God, and the catholic element in our worship is that it is by the dynamic influence of the Spirit of God that we worship. There is a power of the Spirit exerted over our carnality by which we are enabled to render an inward and a cordial worship. "The hour cometh, and now is," said Christ, "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." 2. *Who have Christ as High Priest to glory in.* "And glory in Christ Jesus." As worshippers we cannot approach God without having the services of a high priest. And Jesus is the High Priest of our confession. We glory in him because he has made real and fully satisfying atonement for sin. We glory in him as still making intercession for us. With such a High Priest we can have hope under the consciousness of sin, which is our daily experience. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may not sin. And, if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." 3. *And have renounced the flesh.* "And have no confidence in the flesh." Glorying in what is outside of us, in Christ and his work, excludes having confidence in the flesh. Even under the Jewish theocracy outward earthly marks were not to be trusted in. One might have a special theocratic mark on him, and yet be untrue to the theocracy like Saul the King of Israel. If natural descent from Abraham had been sufficient to constitute a child of Abraham, then God of the very stones could have raised up children unto Abraham. Only on Christ, on no fleshy marks, must we place our dependence for justification and adoption.

III. HE THINKS OF HIMSELF AS IN A BETTER POSITION FOR HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH THAN ANY OF THE JUDAIZERS. "Though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more." He singles himself out from the "we" of the previous verse. He had, in fact, renounced confidence in the flesh; but, for the moment, taking up the same ground with the Judaizers, he challenges comparison with them. He claims to be in a better position for confiding in the flesh than any of them. 1. *Four marks connected with inherited privilege.* (1) *Circumcision.* "Circumcised the eighth day." The heathen were uncircumcised. Proselytes from heathenism were circumcised, but not the eighth day. The rite of circumcision was duly performed on him. He thus could claim to belong to a circle within the circle of the circumcised. (2) *Race.* "Of the stock of Israel." There were some who were circumcised the eighth day who were not of pure Israelitish extraction. They were descended from members of an alien race who had been grafted into the stock of Israel. There had been no grafting in of any of Paul's ancestors; he was of the original stock. He could thus claim within the narrower circle, to belong to a narrower still. (3) *Tribe.* "Of the tribe of Benjamin." He also mentions his tribe in writing to the Romans. His original name, Saul, pointed to his being of the same tribe with the first king of Israel. The renegade tribes were represented among the Jews. He was not a Jew of pure extraction belonging to any of the ten tribes, but he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, which alone had remained faithful to Judah when the kingdom was rent. (4) *Language and customs.* "A

Hebrew of Hebrews." Among the many Jews who were scattered abroad there were not a few who, while conforming to the Jewish religion, did not conform to the Hebrew language and customs. These were properly Hellenists. He was born at Tarsus, but he had been as strictly brought up as if he had been born in Judaea. He belonged to a family strict among Jewish families beyond the Holy Land, in which the Hebrew language was spoken and Hebrew customs retained. 2. *Three marks involving personal choice.* (1) *Law.* "As touching the Law, a Pharisee." In a sense he inherited Pharisaism, for he tells us in another place that he was not only a Pharisee, but the son of a Pharisee. To inherited Pharisaism, when he came to the years of reflection, he gave his full assent, especially as against Sadduceeism. "The Pharisees stood in the closest and strictest relation to the Law, as they with their traditions were regarded as the most orthodox expositors, defenders, and observers of it." Paul could thus say, "After the straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." (2) *Zeal.* "As touching zeal, persecuting the Church." He was not only a strict Pharisee, but a Pharisee of the greatest fervour. He rightly gauged the strength of the Christian Church. He saw that, with its doctrine of a crucified and risen Saviour, it had a peculiar power to enchant men's minds. It seemed to him to threaten the extinction of his loved Law-religion. And so he put himself forward as champion of the Law, and distinguished himself as persecutor of the Church. And that he now strangely puts into the scale as against the Jewish zealots. Regarding it as though it still belonged to him, and not as in Gal. i. 23 as what once belonged to him, he claims to be a better persecutor than any of them. (3) *Righteousness.* "As touching the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless." Saul the Pharisee was one of those who went about to establish a righteousness of their own. In his youthful enthusiasm he felt equal to the task, and so successfully did he apply himself to it that, in the judgment of men, he was blameless. There was not the minutest particular in which he did not meet the Law's requirement. And, when the limitation is made to the judgment of men, we are not to understand that, in his thought at the time, which he now enters into to turn the scale against the zealots, he excluded, but rather that he took to himself justifying merit before God.

IV. **He is IN THE SPIRIT OF THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION.** 1. *His past reckoning to which he adheres.* "Howbeit what things were gain [gains] to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." The reference is to actual things in his pre-Christian position. Those which he has mentioned and others which he has not mentioned, were gains to him. The plural, which is not brought out in the translation, indicates that they were separate items by which he profited. They were not gains merely in his own judgment or expectation, but they were actually gains. "By means of them he was, within the old theocracy, put upon a path which had already brought him repute and influence, and promised to him yet far greater honours, power, and wealth in the future; *a career rich in gain* was opened up to him." But he was led to form an altered judgment regarding these things. This was not due to fickleness of judgment. This new judgment was characterized by wisdom. It was because there was discovered to him a greater gain in Christ. As interfering with this newly discovered gain, it seemed to him that he should sit down and write them under one category as *loss*. The use of the perfect brings down his past judgment to the present moment. 2. *His reckoning in view of the present.* "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." "Yea verily, and" prepares for an outbidding of what he has said. He goes beyond the actual things by which he profited in his past position. He takes things by which there may be profit in their utmost universality. And his present reckoning regarding the wide range of things is that they also are to be written down under the category of loss. The greater gain by which he is attracted in this case is not Christ, but rather the knowledge of Christ as the greatest Gain. If he is actually the greatest Gain, then it behoves us to have an experimental knowledge of him according to what he is. We are especially to have the knowledge of him as Christ Jesus our Lord, i.e. as the Anointed of the Father to be Saviour, to whom, as having accomplished salvation, we owe deepest submission. To this saving knowledge there belongs a supereminence, a surpassingness. It would be of no avail that, beyond all that science has reached, we knew all the secrets of nature, that we knew the whole constitution of the human mind, if we did not know Christ

for salvation. 3. *His past action passing into his present reckoning.* "For whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ." The reference is to the great crisis of his life. It showed him to be no mere theorist. He carried his judgment out into practice, though it entailed the loss of all things. He renounced the profit they had been to him at the time. And, thinking of them as what might still have been a profit to him, he is in no mood to retract. He adheres to his former renunciation in the strongest terms. His language now is, "*I do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ.*" This will be considered too depreciatory a view of things. It will be considered too high doctrine by not a few who profess faith in Christ. What an incongruity would be caused by some professed Christians adopting this language! Is it not evident that they count many things as all-important to their existence, other than Christ? It must be admitted, too, that some whose Christian experience, though real, is not clear enough, will find difficulty here, and it is possible that, in the desire to be true to Christ, they may take to some perversion of Christianity. But there is no exaggeration in the apostle's language. (1) *All things are but as dung compared with Christ.* There are certainly good things in the world. Our ingratitude makes us wonder that there are so many, and that our path is not strewed thick with ills. And, of things which are good, some are more desirable than others. We can compare them with one another, as good and better and best. But what can we compare with Christ? Shall we merely call him the best of all things, the highest good, allowing other things to be good alongside of him? No; he is the incomparable good, and, if other things are to be thought of at all in comparison with him, they are dross, refuse; while he alone is entitled to be called good. Excellent it may be in comparison with many other things; in comparison with him they have no positive value, but fall below the point of good. He is incomparable in his *moral excellence*. Challenged to say what our Beloved is more than another beloved, after exhausting all comparisons, we may well say, "Yea, he is altogether lovely." He is the bright, full manifestation of the beauty of God. He is incomparable, in the *blessing* he has procured for us. What are all earthly blessings in comparison with the salvation of the soul? If they are to be compared at all, are they not to be put down as dross, perishable, worthless, while the salvation of the soul alone stands the eternal tests? (2) *All things are to be pursued only for Christ.* He alone is to be sought as our supreme End. On him alone we are to set our hearts in the full compass of their affection. Christ begins by saying, "Lovest thou me more than these?" and, after putting others out of comparison, he still continues to press the question, "Lovest thou me?" and again, "Lovest thou me?"—that our affection may more and more be drawn up toward him. Hear him again saying, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." That is to say, our love to father, to mother, to child, is to be subordinated to our love to Christ. Hear him again using startling language, "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." That is to say, we are to be so independent of them as even to hate them as coming between us and our supreme End. All things are to be as dross when it is a question of duty to Christ. We are to be willing to part with earthly emoluments and expectations, as though they were utterly worthless, when it is necessary to our obtaining Christ as our Saviour, or to our proving our faithfulness to him. We are to be willing even to part with our dearest friends, as having no absolute claim to them, at the call of Christ. Only there is to be noticed, for our comfort, that, when we pursue our earthly calling and love our earthly friends for the sake of Christ, esteeming them as dross in themselves and to be parted with as dross at the call of Christ, then it is true that they are redeemed from their worthlessness and are made to partake of the worthiness of Christ. The true wisdom, then, is to use all things, even our friends, as means, to make Christ alone the End.

V. THE GAIN THAT CHRIST IS. "And be found in him." The apostle desired to be regarded by God, and by man too, as within Christ as the sphere and element of his life. Thus it is that Christ becomes gain. 1. *Beginning.* "Not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." His former thought was to have a

righteousness of his own, *i.e.* a righteousness wrought out from his own resources, of which he was the efficient cause, and to which, therefore, he could lay meritorious claim, of which he could boast. In another aspect it was a righteousness which was of the Law, *i.e.* which proceeded from its commands being followed. And so completely was he considered to have succeeded that, as he says in the sixth verse, he was found blameless. But a new light was thrown in upon this righteousness, which showed it to be utterly worthless. And he was led to abandon it for the sake of another righteousness which was to be found within Christ. This righteousness he laid hold of by faith. The object of his faith was Christ, *i.e.* as having wrought out a righteousness infinitely worthy and well-pleasing to God, in the possession of which he was at once and fully justified, obtaining eternal covenant standing before God. This is a righteousness which is of God, *i.e.* of which God is the efficient cause, of which, therefore, he has all the glory. It is only ours by faith, or, as it should be translated, upon faith, *i.e.* as made over to us it rests upon a basis of faith. 2. *Glance forward to the end.* "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." The object of our justification is that we may know Christ especially in connection with his resurrection. The resurrection was the crowning point of his life. It showed him to be completely victorious over sin and death. It was the Father's seal upon his work on earth. The power of his resurrection is most naturally regarded as the power which it has to make us personally victorious over sin and death. The "knowing" seems to belong to the present state, inasmuch as it is followed by suffering and dying. We know the power of his resurrection in our being quickened together with him; but this not by itself. We know it rather as the earnest of a power that will make us completely victorious over sin and death. We think of the resurrection of Christ as a power exercised from the future. It is that by which we are being moulded, up to which we are being drawn. 3. *The fact noted that we must suffer and die before coming to the resurrection from the dead.* "And the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." The mere fact of our suffering does not bring us into fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. Our sufferings must have a *Christian character*. There was a specialty in the apostle's sufferings. He was notably a sufferer for the cause of Christ, a sufferer in place of others, in some such way as Christ was a sufferer in place of others. It is this element of vicariousness that prominence is given to in his remarkable language to the Colossians, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake which is the Church." But the language is not to be restricted to vicarious sufferings. Inasmuch as our ordinary sufferings are appointed by Christ, inasmuch as they are to be endured in the spirit in which Christ endured, inasmuch as Christ is to be magnified in them, we also may have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. We may aspire to drink of the cup that he drank of, to be baptized with the baptism wherewith he was baptized. The apostle thinks of his sufferings as having their consummation in his *death*. His sufferings made him look forward to death; and the kind of sufferings made him look forward to martyrdom. And how did he contemplate his martyrdom? As a being conformed unto Christ's death. His ambition was that his death, whenever it happened, should bear the stamp of Christ's death. The process of conformation was already begun. He was becoming conformed unto Christ's death. In another place he refers to himself as "bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus." He protested that he was dying daily. In his sufferings, in the uncertainty as to his life, he was becoming accustomed to die. And he was taking that form which was to be completed in his martyrdom. Our circumstances do not point to our needing to die a martyr's death. But inasmuch as it is Christ who appoints our dying, inasmuch as we are called to die in the spirit in which Christ died, inasmuch as we are called to magnify Christ in our dying, we also may cherish the ambition of our having the stamp of Christ's death on ours. And in our present sufferings, in the constant uncertainty of life, we should already be receiving its form. The apostle wished to be in the closest accord with Christ in his sufferings and death, if by any means he should attain unto the resurrection from the dead. He finds upon our Lord's language, "But they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead." This is what is called the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

This points us to the full manifestation of the power of Christ's resurrection. It marks the obtaining of the condition, viz. the reunion of soul and body, upon which our perfected existence depends. It is putting the crown, once and for ever, upon our life. The apostle feels that the object is difficult of attainment. He will try all means of attaining to it. He will even drink of the cup of Christ's suffering; he will have the stamp of Christ's death on his, if that will secure its attainment.

VI. **TWO ELEMENTS IN HIS STRIVING.** 1. *Stated.* (1) *He is humble.* "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect." At the root of his striving there was the consciousness that he had not already obtained, i.e. the resurrection from the dead, or was already made perfect, i.e. in the disposition which was necessary for obtaining the resurrection from the dead. (2) *He is intent on his aim.* "But I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus." The apostle had been apprehended by Christ Jesus at his conversion. The power of a Stronger than he had been laid upon him, arresting him in his sinful career. This was with a view to his obtaining the resurrection from the dead. In sympathy with Christ in this aim he had made it his own aim, and was now pressing on that he might without fail apprehend it, have it safely within his grasp. 2. *Illustrated.* The illustration of the racer, already suggested, is now distinctly brought out. (1) *He is humble.* "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended." There is no greater obstacle to success than self-esteem. The runner who, in his preparation or at any point in the race (which is principally to be thought of), counts that he has apprehended, i.e. makes himself sure of gaining the prize, calculates that he has safely distanced all competitors, is likely in the end to be unsuccessful. Paul was a runner in the Christian race. And he had made great progress from the starting-point toward the goal. He was a very different man in Christian experience, in power of service, from what he was when apprehended on the road to Damascus. But he would have the Philippian brethren know, for their benefit, seeing their danger was self-esteem, that he did not count himself to have apprehended, i.e. did not make himself sure of having all that was needed for grasping the prize. The inevitable effect of such a disposition would have been the relaxation of his energies, which would have made him a loser of the glorious prize within his reach. (2) *He is intent on his aim.* "But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Of the man intent on his aim there is no better illustration than the runner in the race. This one thing he does. For this he has girt up his loins, gathered his scattered energies into a unity. He does not self-contentedly occupy himself with the things which are behind, i.e. the part of the course that has been traversed. That would be to distract his attention and to give away an advantage. Upon the traversed course his back is turned, his eye does not wander back over it and measure its extent, it is even banished wholly from his memory, there is room in his mind for only one thing. He stretches forward to the things which are before, i.e. the part of the course that is yet to be traversed. His eye stretches away over it, and, as Bengel puts it, the eye reaching before draws on the hand, and the hand reaching before draws on the foot. See how his energies are on the stretch and are bent toward their aim. Mark where he is at present, and see him again how he is steadily, unweariedly, pressing on. His thought is to be the first to grasp that pole which is the goal—the first to grasp it, then he shall be called forward by the president of the games to obtain the prize, to be crowned with the laurel. Such a runner was Paul. One thing he did. He had a singular unity of purpose, even when he was mistaken in his end. As a Christian runner he girt up the loins of his mind, gathered his scattered energies into a unity, brought them to his one purpose. He did not please himself by dwelling on the past, telling the Philippians and others what he had accomplished. No; his thought was what was yet to be accomplished. What was there yet possible to him of Christian experience, of Christian usefulness? It was over this that his eye was stretched. It was toward this as an earnest runner that his energies were bent. See him when he is writing one Epistle, how earnest he is! See him again when there is taken up another production of his pen, how he is still pressing on! As he comes nearer the goal, with associations of martyrdom, how he increases in eagerness! His thought is to grasp what God had appointed him in his earthly career of Christian perfection.

And, grasping that, then he knew that the great President of the games, seated high in heaven, would, in God's Name, call him forth to receive the immortal prize, to crown him with the unfading laurel.

VII. THREEFOLD EXHORTATION. 1. *Let us aspire after higher attainment in the future.* "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." There is a distinction to be made between those who are perfect and those who are made perfect. The perfect (as the Greek word suggests) are those who are in sympathy with the end and in the right course, although they have not yet come to the end or are made perfect. There may thus be a kind of perfection from the beginning. But especially are those perfect who, when opportunity has been given, have gone on from the state of babes or mere starters in the race to a certain maturity of Christian experience. Opportunity being given, we should be numbered amongst the perfect, those who have attained to a certain skill in running. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Let us not be satisfied with present attainment. Let us feel the attraction of the goal of Christian perfection. Let our eye stretch forward as over the intervening space up to this goal. Let our energies be bent as toward that which is difficult of attainment, toward that which will require all our singleness and intensity. And, for our own encouragement, let us also feel the attraction of the prize. Let us feel the attraction of the moment when, for faithfulness to him and to his end in apprehending us, the righteous Judge shall call us forward to receive the crown of righteousness. 2. *Let us pray against present error.* "And if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you." It is a case which is very likely to occur. We may be earnest in the main, and yet there may be some particular thing in regard to which we are self-satisfied, about which we are not sufficiently enlightened, and so we wander from the right course. Who can understand his errors? Under the consciousness of our own inability to understand, let us have recourse to God. The promise here is that he will discover every particular mistake to us. Let us look to God to show us wherein we are in error. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." 3. *Let us learn from past attainment.* "Only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk." We may not go to past attainment for self-contentment, but we may go for lessons to be learnt. If we have attained to any skill in the Christian race, it is because we have followed the Bible as our rule. It has prescribed to us our course. Let us hold fast that which we have proved to be good. Let us act on the same principles on which we have hitherto acted in any attainment we have made. Let there be "faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth unto us the blessings of redemption." Following the rules we shall unfailingly advance up to the goal and receive the prize.—R. F.

Vers. 17—21.—*Contrasted characters and destinies. I. WHOM TO LOOK TO.* "Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample." There was no assumption in Paul putting himself before the Philippians for their imitation. He was simply proceeding on what belonged to the relation subsisting between them. It devolved on Timothy to be an example to believers in the various places where he laboured in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity. So it devolved on Paul, as having the care of the Gentile Churches, to walk before them so that they might be directed in their walk. And, although he did not count himself perfect, yet he had earnestly endeavoured to come up to this idea of his duty. He had carried his faithfulness to Christ to the extent of suffering imprisonment for him for a long period. In a brotherly manner, then, he asked them to imitate him. Let them hold to Christ under all circumstances. Let them not refuse the hardships to be endured in his service. Others were imitators of him and were proving themselves valiant for Christ and against persecution. Let them also be numbered among his imitators. He did not set himself exclusively forward for their imitation. He leaves the singular for the plural. "As ye have us for an example." He could join with himself other Christian teachers known to the Philippians. There was one type according to which they walked. *Mark them among them who followed this type.* "Mark the perfect man," says the psalmist. The New Testament form given to it

by Paul is that we are to mark those who have, in their walk, the common Christian features.

II. WHOM TO TAKE WARNING FROM. There were others who walked differently. We are apparently to think of them as *nominal Christians*—owning the cross of Christ in their profession, disowning it in their *practice*. 1. *Feelings with which the apostle calls attention to them.* “For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping.” In this Paul echoes the words of the psalmist, “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law.” He echoes the words of the weeping prophet, “Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride: and mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears.” Chrysostom says here, “Paul weeps for those over whom other men laugh and are uproarious.” It is an aggravating circumstance when men dishonour the Christian circle with which they are connected. But there is this, that Christ needed to weep over us when we were sinners, and still needs to weep over us for the sin which doth so easily beset us. And the more that others are in a state of sin, there is only the more need for our weeping over them and desiring their emancipation from their unhappy thraldom. Another circumstance which led to the tears of the apostle was their number. There were many who had disgraced their Christian profession. It was like a catastrophe involving the loss of many lives. But why did the apostle tell this to the Philippians? Why had he not been content with telling them once? Why had he continued telling them in his addresses when with them and in his messages when absent? Why, as he now thinks of it, with the pen in his hand or dictating to his amanuensis, do the tears begin to flow? It was because, being many, there was danger of this class appearing also in the Church of Philippi. Persistently, tearfully would he endeavour to stave off, to prevent, such a catastrophe. 2. *Described generally.* (1) *Character.* “That they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” It is said of the heathen that they refused to have God in their knowledge. It is said of the Colossians in their heathen state that they were enemies in their mind in their evil works. It is in darker colours that the persons before us are painted. They are enemies of God, not in his unity or spirituality, but in the brightest exhibition of his moral excellence. The cross of Christ is a great fact, of which the great expression is this, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” The cross of Christ is God approaching men in greatest kindness—kindness displayed to his foes, kindness fitted to subdue the most hostile. It is the condemnation of the persons before us that, having had the cross of Christ presented to them so that they could not refuse to acknowledge the justice of its claims, they yet did not in reality yield to its claims, but opposed their will to the Divine benignity. (2) *End.* “Whose end is perdition.” It is an oppressive thought, that this should be the end of any who have been created for God’s glory. But it is the inevitable consequence of opposing the cross of Christ. As the Foundation-stone of the Church, when not used as Foundation, is to become the Stone of vengeance, so the cross of Christ, when not used as the instrument of salvation, is to become the instrument of perdition. It is as though a beautiful work of art, on which much loving labour has been expended, were taken and broken into a thousand fragments. So is every one the object of perdition in his spiritual nature, lost to beauty and usefulness and happiness, who does not submit to the saving power of Christ. 3. *Described more particularly.* (1) *Indulgent of appetite.* “Whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame.” The apostle writes to the Roman Christians of those who served not our Lord Christ, but their own belly. They are described in more startling language here, as making a god of their belly. That is to say, the place belonging to God is usurped by the very lowest part of their nature. We are to eat and drink in order that we may do the great business of life; these make it the great business of life to eat and drink. Their supreme concern is, “What shall we eat, and what shall we drink?” To this object, as devotees, they consecrate their thoughts, their energies. As professed Christians, they should glory in the cross of Christ; their real antagonism to the cross comes out in their glorying in what is fitted to pamper appetite. It is

glorying in their shame. It is unworthy of rational men, it is especially unworthy of men who profess to be Christians, that they should be taken up with their eating and drinking. It is taking the glory which belongs to them as made for God, as intended for a Christian immortality, and giving it to their animal nature. It is in gluttony, and also in drunkenness, stupefying themselves, obscuring their vision of God, unfitting themselves for his service. And those deserve to be covered with shame who so walk.

(2) *Class to which they are referred.* "Who mind earthly things." They belong to the earthly order of things; within it their thoughts and interests are confined. One characteristic of the earthly is its perishableness. Such Epicureans as are here referred to make this even a reason for their indulgence of appetite, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But what a skeleton does this introduce into their feasts! "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall bring to nought both it and them." Without being Epicureans and taken up with our eating and drinking, we may mind earthly things. If our minds do not rise above our earthly business, then we are living within the earthly order of things, that which is lower and which is doomed to perish.

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherits shall dissolve,  
And, like the insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind."

**III. THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH.** 1. *Its seat.* "For our citizenship is in heaven." More exactly it is the state in connection with which we have citizenship. We properly belong to a heavenly order of things. And this points to the possession of higher privileges. (1) *Right of access to the sovereign.* This is very rarely taken advantage of under an earthly polity. We cannot weary our heavenly Sovereign by our frequent approaches to him, if only we are sincere. In Christ we have an established place before him. And our present mode of access to him by prayer will be turned into an eternal abiding with him. (2) *Right of protection.* If a British citizen is within the law in travelling or trading within the bounds of a foreign state, he may rely upon the British power for his protection. Earth is like a foreign state to Christians; we may rely upon Christ meantime defending us from all our enemies. And ultimately he will withdraw us from the presence of enemies, to dwell entirely under the shadow of the Almighty. (3) *Right of education.* It is right that a state should make provision for the education of all who are to be its citizens. The British state, to a certain extent, acts upon this principle. As Christian citizens, there is provision for our education, in the Bible and the ordinance of the ministry. And ultimately we shall be directly taught of God. (4) *Right of maintenance.* The new-made citizen of a town has the right of trading within its boundaries for the purpose of maintenance. As citizens standing in a right relation to our liege Lord, he undertakes our maintenance in this world. And ultimately he will call us to sit at his own table.

2. *Obtaining the condition necessary for the full enjoyment of privileges.* (1) *He who obtains the condition.* "From whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The seat of the polity to which we belong being in the heavens, it is fitting that our aspiration should be heavenward. Our great Hope in that world is Christ, who has taken possession in our name. We wait for him to come, with his saving power, to us on earth, *i.e.* to bring us out of present disabilities, and to bring us into the full enjoyment of privileges. (2) *The condition to be obtained.* "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory." (a) *Transformation from a psychical body to a spiritual body.* Our present body is psychical—so it is called in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians—*i.e.* it answers to our lower or animal nature. It has a certain material grossness about it; and it is very much hemmed in by material surroundings. Christ at his resurrection exchanged the psychical body which he shared with us for a spiritual body—so it is named, *i.e.* it is a body answering to our higher or spiritual nature, as the present body answers to our lower or animal nature. As seen in him, it was a body to which matter was no barrier. He appeared in the midst of his disciples when the doors were shut. It was a body to which distance was completely conquered. With it, when

the time came, he could, at once and of his own accord, *go up* into heaven, only lingering in view for the sake of those whom he left behind. And his spiritual body is to rule the form of ours. (b) *Transformation from the state of the Fall to the state of redemption.* Our present body is called the body of humiliation. It is so in the aspect we have already considered. It is especially so in that the Fall has left its mark upon it as well as upon the soul. It is a body that is subject to weakness and disease terminating in death and corruption. Humiliation reaches its depth when this body becomes the prey of worms. Christ, in the body of his flesh, was subjected to the humiliation of weakness and suffering. He was also subjected to the humiliation of death. And, in addition, he was subjected to the humiliation of burial. At his resurrection the body of his humiliation, which had not seen corruption, was exchanged for the body of his glory, of which we can form some conception from the description of him as he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and also as he was seen by the prisoner of Patmos in heaven. It was a body which bore a certain relation to previous humiliation; for there were the marks of the wounds in his hands and in his side. We are to think of it as a body which has received immortal power and beauty. And that gloriously transformed body of Christ is to *rule* the form of ours. (3) *Guarantee for the condition being obtained.* “According to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself” Following upon his resurrection was his being invested with universal power. “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.” The final adjustment will bear witness to his being able to subdue all things unto himself, i.e. unto his thought, his way of adjusting things. We may, therefore, feel assured, seeing that is his thought, that he will subdue the present material fallen body to the spiritual glorious type, which he has asserted in his own resurrection-body. This condition being obtained, we shall be admitted as Christian citizens to full privileges.—R. F.

Vers. 1—3.—*Rejoicing, eschewing, and imitating.* “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord,” etc. These verses present three subjects for reflection—the Being to rejoice in, the men to avoid, the worship to imitate.

I. THE BEING TO REJOICE IN. “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” “The Lord” means undoubtedly Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all men. But why rejoice in him? 1. Because of his *peerless excellence*. He is the morally beautiful. Every moral virtue is united, harmonized, and coruscates in his character. Nothing inspires the heart with higher and purer joy than *beauty*. Admiration is happiness of a high type. The admiration of *art* is a joy, the admiration of *nature* a greater joy, the admiration of *moral excellence* is the highest joy of all. “Rejoice in the Lord.” 2. Because of his *vital relationship*. He is our dearest Friend, our elder Brother, our all-merciful, and almighty Redeemer. Well might we rejoice in such a relationship. “My Beloved is mine, and I am his.” 3. Because of his *benevolent enterprise*. What philanthropic heart does not rejoice in the enterprise of any man to mitigate the woes and increase the happiness of his species? But what an enterprise is the enterprise of Christ! It is to break every fetter, unlock every prison door, dispel every cloud of ignorance and sorrow; it is to tread all human evils in the dust, hush all sorrows, wipe away all tears from off all faces. Well might the apostle enjoin the Philippians to “rejoice in the Lord.” Sad that such an injunction should be required, for it might well have been supposed that all who knew the Lord would “rejoice” in him. This is a command, as truly a command as the command to believe, repent, not to steal, not to murder; and to break this command is as great a sin as to break any command in the Decalogue. To be happy in the Lord—and there is happiness nowhere else—is a moral obligation.

II. THE MEN TO AVOID. “To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous [irksome], but for you it is safe.” What things does the apostle mean? Manifestly the warning which follows, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers.” The apostle here characterizes a class of men as “dogs.” In Rev. xxii. 15 this class—there also called dogs—are described as excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Christ to the Syro-phœnician woman spoke of the Gentiles as dogs (Matt. xv. 26). He did this, however, in accordance with the usage of his countrymen. Elsewhere the heavenly Teacher speaks of some men as “swine.” The temperaments, disposition, and characters of men are widely different. “All flesh is not the same flesh.” The men against

whom the apostle warns the Philippians here were: 1. Men of a *canine spirit*. Ill-tempered men, snarling at all who differed from them. Who does not know men of the dog spirit? The querulous tone, the curl of scorn on the lip, the sardonic grin, reveal their canine nature. 2. Men of a canine spirit, who were in *connection with the Church*. "Beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision." They were Judaizing teachers, who endeavoured to turn away men from the simplicity of the gospel by promoting Jewish rites and ceremonies, and thus they were evil-doers. Show me the man whose religion is sensuous, ritualistic, and technical, and you will show me the man who in all probability displays this canine spirit. A more ill-natured class of men I have never known than members of Calvinistic, Antinomian, and Ritualistic Churches; and they reveal more of the dog than of the angel. Now, Paul says avoid such, do not argue with them, do not "cast pearls before swine," do not put yourself in their power, stand aloof from them, heed neither their bark nor their grin.

III. THE WORSHIP TO IMITATE. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The worship here is marked by three things. 1. *By spirituality*. "Worship God in the Spirit." 2. *By joyousness*. "Rejoice in Christ Jesus." There is no worship without happiness; true worship is happiness. 3. *By Divine confidence*. "Have no confidence in the flesh."—D. T.

Vers. 4—8.—*The cost and the value of personal Christianity*. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh," etc. Notice—

I. THE COST WHICH THE APOSTLE PAID FOR HIS CHRISTIANITY. Metaphorically he sold a property that he at one time valued beyond all price, and that his countrymen regarded as the wealthiest inheritance. Here he gives a summary of the distinguished privileges which belonged to him. 1. *He refers to his Church status*. "Circumcised the eighth day." Therefore not a proselyte, but a Jew. By this rite he became a member of the great Jewish commonwealth, or, as some call it, the Jewish Church. 2. *He refers to his illustrious ancestry*. "Of the stock of Israel." A true scion of the royal race. "Of the tribe of Benjamin." The tribe from whence came many of their distinguished monarchs, and the tribe to whom belonged the holy city. 3. *He refers to his religious persuasion*. "An Hebrew of the Hebrews." Elsewhere he says, "I truly am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers, and was zealous before God" (Acts xxii. 3, 4). A thorough Hebrew. Paul had something to boast of here. In his veins ran the blood which had quivered amid Egyptian plagues and rushed to the hearts of those that heard the voice of Sinai's trumpet. 4. *He refers to his zealous devotedness*. "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church." He carried out his religious convictions with such zeal that he persecuted all who differed from him. Which is the worse—enthusiasm in a bad cause or lazy profession in a good one? 5. *He refers to his ceremonial righteousness*. "Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless." All the commandments he kept "from his youth up." Such were the privileges that Paul enjoyed, and to him, as well as to his countrymen, they were beyond all price.

II. THE VALUE WHICH THE APOSTLE ATTACHED TO HIS CHRISTIANITY. He gave up Judaism with its gorgeous ritual and mighty memories and matchless histories, and does this for Christianity. Does he regret the loss, deplore the costly sacrifice? No. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." When he practically accepted the religion of Jesus, all that he once gloried in became contemptible. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Christianity is the science of sciences. Three remarks will illustrate the incalculable value of this science. 1. It *accords* with all true sciences. 2. It *encourages* all true sciences. 3. It *transcends* all true sciences. Chrysostom says, "When the sun doth appear it is loss to sit by a candle."—D. T.

Vers. 8—11.—*Phases of Christ*. "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Paul presents Christ in four aspects.

I. AS A PRIZE. "That I may win Christ." What is it to win Christ? It is something more than to become acquainted with his *biography*, something more than to

understand the *doctrines* he taught or the *theory* of his life and mission. To gain him is to gain his moral *spirit*. His moral spirit is himself—that which marked him off from all other men that have lived—that is the Christ. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

II. **AS A REST.** “Found in him.” For the soul to be found in Christ is to be found in his *character*. We are all living in the characters of others. The unregenerate world lives in the fallen character of Adam. The regenerate world lives in Christ, in the character of Christ. Resting in his character as the branch rests in the trunk of the tree, deriving from it its life, its form, its hue, its fruit. Oh to live in his character, in his spotless purity, in his immeasurable love, in his matchless excellence! Those who do so will not have their “own righteousness, which is of the Law,” etc., but his moral rectitude.

III. **AS A THEME.** “That I may know him.” The knowledge here does not mean intellectual knowledge, but heart-knowledge, experimental knowledge. 1. *Know him* by experience personally. Before you can know a person you must have the spirit that animates him. Love alone can interpret love, etc. 2. Know by experience *the power of his resurrection*. All the spiritual significance and benefits of his resurrection from the dead. 3. Know by experience *his sufferings*. “Have fellowship with his sufferings.” There are three kinds of suffering: (1) those in which Christ could have no fellowship; (2) those which he experienced, and in which men could have no fellowship; and (3) those in which men are bound to have fellowship with Christ. We are commanded to be partakers of some of his sufferings. (1) We should have fellowship with the intense regret which he felt on account of the existence of moral evil. The fact of evil sat as a mountain of agony on the heart of Christ. Sin was a horrible thing to him, the “abominable thing” which he hated. (2) We should have fellowship with the sorrowful sympathies which he had for the sufferings of men. His tears over Jerusalem, etc. (3) We should have fellowship with those sufferings which he endured on account of the dishonour sin does to the infinite Father.

IV. **AS A MODEL.** “Conformable unto his death.” What does this mean? To die in the manner which he died on the cross? No. But to live and die in the *mood* he did, which was self-sacrifice. He died, not for himself, but for others. “He gave himself a ransom for many.” Self-sacrificing love is the essence of personal Christianity, and nothing else.—D. T.

**Vers. 12—14.—Moral onwardness.** The Grecian racecourse was well known to Paul and to all his readers, and hence he often uses it as a figure to illustrate the Christian life. The subject is spiritual advancement, onwardness in Divine excellence. The words suggest that this progress implies three things.

I. **A CONSCIOUS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PRESENT.** By this I mean, not dissatisfaction with the events and circumstances of life—Divine providences—this would be foolish and impious, but with present moral attainments, for he says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” He was not satisfied with his present assimilation to Christ. He painfully felt the discrepancy. This dissatisfaction is ever the first step in soul-progress and the impelling motive afterwards. Indeed, dissatisfaction with present attainments is the spring of all advancement in everything in life. Dissatisfied with huts, men build houses; with the loose skin of beasts for their covering, they manufacture garments; with caligraphy, they invent the printing-press; with waggons, they construct steam-engines. He who feels satisfied with what he has, whether it be material, mental, or spiritual, will never seek to lay hold of something yet unattained.

II. **A COMPARATIVE OBLIVIOUSNESS TO THE PAST.** “Forgetting those things which are behind.” The Olympic racer did not look behind him on the course, but on to the goal until he reached and grasped the pole. In soul-onwardness there must be a comparative obliviousness. We say *comparative*. Of course there must be and ought to be remembrances of past mercies to inspire our gratitude, of past sins to humble us before God. But attention to the past should be as nothing to that which we give to the future. Let the past go: it is irreparable and unavailing; the grand future must loom before us and absorb the soul. Look not behind you. Keep your eyes right onward upon the enchanting scenes that are spread out on the sunny heights.

III. **A CONCENTRATED STRUGGLE FOR THE FUTURE.** “I press toward the mark for

the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The prize of the Grecian racer was a garland of olive, or laurel, or pine, or apple. What is the moral prize? Moral perfection. To this all men are divinely called in Christ. In the true moral race men are to reach forth, not after happiness as an end, but after holiness; not after Paradise, but after perfection. This requires concentration. There must be no half-heartedness, no divided faculties; it must be the *one* thing; the whole soul must be set upon it. Concentration is essential to success in almost every department of life. Noah built his ark because he concentrated his being on the work. Abraham lived a pilgrim life because he set his heart on a city that had a foundation. Napoleon became nearly the master of Europe because he had set his heart on the infernal work. Demosthenes became one of the greatest orators of the world because oratory was the work on which he set his heart. So in all things. The attainment of holiness must be the "one thing" in life. Learning, literature, business, recreation, must be rendered subservient to this "one thing."—D. T.

Vers. 15-17.—*Moral perfection.* "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Three thoughts are suggested here concerning *moral perfection*.

I. THAT MORAL PERFECTION IS ATTAINABLE IN THIS LIFE. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect." What is the perfection? No being is absolutely perfect but God; fallibility belongs to all rational creatureship. The perfection consists in the *ruling* principle of action, and that is supreme sympathy with the supremely Good. This is a thing perfect in itself; it can be strengthened, but is incapable of any modification. The perfection is, therefore, that of the *embryo* of character. The acorn is perfect as an acorn, not as an oak; the babe is perfect as a babe, not as a man; the dawn is perfect as a dawn, not as a noon. There is incompleteness in development, but completion in the *rudimentary* element. All Christians have this or they are not Christians.

II. THAT THE MORAL PERFECTION ATTAINABLE IN THIS LIFE IS ESSENTIALLY PROGRESSIVE. Hence Paul speaks of "pressing towards the mark," of "walking by the same rule." The germinal principle is essentially growable. All life struggles for advancement. The acorn struggles to rise into majestic forests, infants into men, the unfledged eagle to soar into the heavens and to bask itself in sunny azure. Life not only creates its own organization, but goes on strengthening and enlarging it. There is the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear.

III. THAT PROGRESS IN MORAL PERFECTION IS AN URGENT OBLIGATION. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Like all life, it has not only an instinct and a capacity for growth, but it has a moral obligation to grow. There is no obligation on plantal or irrational life to grow, but on moral life it presses with all the force of the Divine will. The progress is here indicated by four things. 1. *By a walk.* "Let us walk." Walking implies life, deliberation, and outwardness. 2. *By a walk in loving union with others.* "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." We are so constituted that social intercourse is essential to the quickening, the development, and the satisfying of our natures. The society that is required for this is the society who attend "the same rule, mind the same thing," one in supreme aim and purpose. Thus walking, the soul advances, gets not only new energy for the old faculties, but new faculties developed. 3. *By following the best examples.* All life has its archetypes or ideals. The growth of true moral life requires this; hence Paul says, "Be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." He does not say, I am a perfect example. But, on the contrary, he says, elsewhere, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am a follower of Christ." Be followers of me so far as I follow Christ.

CONCLUSION. Perseverance in goodness, then, is not to be preached as a doctrine, but propounded as a law and urged as a duty.—D. T.

Vers. 18, 19.—*Conventional Christians as viewed by genuine.* "For many walk, of PHILIPPIANS.

whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." The apostle here refers to those who had joined the Christian Church, but whose hearts were unchanged and whose theology was antinomian. In sooth they were mere nominal Christians, having a name to live, but were dead. Observe—

I. THAT THE CONDUCT OF MERE PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY IS VERY BAD IN THE EYES OF GENUINE CHRISTIANS. To the eye of Paul, who was Christly in spirit, idea, and aim, the conduct of these men was revolting and lamentable. It appeared to him: 1. *As anti-Christian.* "They are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Enemies not to the mere *fact* of the cross. To this, perhaps, they would have no hostility, but otherwise. But to the *spirit* of the cross, which was *self-sacrificing love*, they were practically opposed; they did not "take up the cross" and deny themselves. *Theoretically* they believed in it, *practically* they denied it. For some reasons the greatest "enemies of the cross" are mere conventional Christians; they *practically* deny that which they profess *theoretically* to believe. All selfish, carnal, formalistic, ritualistic men are "enemies of the cross of Christ," and they are "many." 2. *As ruinous.* "Whose end is destruction." The conduct of the genuine Christian is restorative; that of the spurious or conventional, ruinous. Sin, the principle of death, is in it. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." 3. *As sensual.* Their sensuality is here indicated: (1) By a particular carnal indulgence. "Whose god is their belly." They ate and drank, not merely to allay the cravings of appetite and to sustain their frame, but in order to gratify their gastric tastes and sensibilities. The table to them was greater than science, literature, the universe; it was their "god." (2) By a general habit of mind. "Who mind earthly things." No man should disparage "earthly things." The earth is the production, the revelation, and the minister of God, and to appreciate it as a school of instruction, a temple of worship, and a means of subsistence is what all should do. But to "mind earthly things," to live entirely *in* them and *for* them, this is the wrong; and conventional Christians as well as heathens and worldlings do this. They "set their affections on them," seek their glory from them, and look for their happiness in them. They are practical materialists, though theoretic spiritualists.

II. THAT THE CONDUCT OF MERE PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY IS VERY HEART-DISTRESSING TO GENUINE CHRISTIANS. "Of whom I tell you even weeping." The sight of a genuine tear has an electric force; no eloquence so mighty. Such a tear streaming from the eye of a weak woman is powerful, from a strong man more powerful, from a man of transcendent greatness it is the most mighty moral force. Such a man was Paul, and a greater than Paul never lived; and here he is in tears. "Of whom I tell you even weeping." Such a man must have had a strong reason for such tears. Why did he weep? 1. Because the conduct of such mere conventional Christians was a *mal-representation of Christ, the chief object of his love.* Nominal Christians are the great slanderers and calumniators of the world's Redeemer. That man who ignores Christ is a saint compared to him who calumniates him. Such is the mere nominal Christian. All genuine Christians may well weep at the conduct of conventional Christians, who constitute the vast majority of our population, and are the reigning "principalities" in Church and state. 2. Because the conduct of such mere conventional Christians *obstructs the progress of spiritual Christianity in the world.* As obstructives to the flowing river of spiritual Christianity in the world, the Bradlaughs, as compared to the hireling preachers and the un-Christly members of Churches, are but as small pebbles to huge boulders. The waters roll comparatively smoothly over the former, but are chafed and blocked by the latter.

CONCLUSION. It is time, brothers, for us to estimate truly and to feel deeply the awful incongruity between the spirit of modern Churches and the spirit of Christianity. Talk about converting the world, the first thing to be done is to convert the Church! —D. T.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The blessedness of the Christly.* "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the [a] Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,

[who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory] according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue [subject] all things unto himself." The word *πολιτεία*, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, does not mean "speech" or "conduct," but "citizenship." The word "is" is emphatic, signifying "actually exists." If we are *Christly* our citizenship is not something to be, but *is* now. The passage, therefore, reveals to us glorious facts connected with the life of a Christly man.

I. **HE IS A CITIZEN OF THE HIGHEST STATE.** He is "in heaven"—heaven the glorious metropolis of God's spiritual empire. But how can this be? Is not heaven millions of leagues away, far beyond the reach or ken of men? Suppose it so, citizenship is not dependent on distance. Are not those at the antipodes citizens of the same commonwealth as ourselves? Two things make us citizens of a state. 1. *That we be governed by its laws.* What are the laws of heaven? The laws of love. In the New Testament these laws are sometimes called "the law of life," the "law of liberty," etc. Love is the supreme law of heaven, and every genuine Christian is governed by this law. 2. *That we be invested with its rights.* What are the rights which a good government secures to its citizens? *Protection, liberty, freedom, facilities for advancement.* Heaven secures all these to its citizens, wherever they are, on this planet or on any other. A Christly man enjoys perfect guardianship, glorious liberty, and facilities for everlasting progress.

II. **HE IS A SUBJECT OF THE HIGHEST HOPES.** Not only is a Christly man a citizen of heaven now, enjoying all its rights, but he is looking for, or waiting for, something glorious in the future. 1. *The advent of a Saviour.* "From whence also we look for the Saviour." Waiting for the return of him who is the supreme Object of his love. This attitude of mind implies four things. (1) A belief that his Saviour is somewhere in existence. (2) A conviction that there is a period when he will appear. (3) A consciousness of fitness to meet him. (4) An assurance that his advent is desirable. 2. *A glorious transformation.* "Who shall change our vile body"—"body of humiliation." The body is not *normally* "vile;" not vile, either, in its organization or functions. As an organism it is exquisitely perfect—"fearfully and wonderfully made;" but in its abnormal state it is "vile" by reason of the diseases to which it is subject, the uses to which it is put, and the undue influence which its pampered appetites have obtained over the intellect, conscience, soul. But a glorious transformation awaits it. (1) The model. "His glorious body." How glorious was his resurrection-body as he ascended to the heavens! How glorious will it appear as he comes on a great white throne to judge the world! The transformation to be wrought in this body is described in 1 Cor. xv. 42—54. Observe: (2) The agency. "According to the working." That is, in virtue of the effectual working of his power to subject all things to himself. His power is not a dormant element, but an active force, a force working towards glorious results on behalf of his genuine disciples.—D. T.

**Ver. 1.—Sameness.** I. **ITS NECESSITY.** In ordinary life there must be much of sameness. The same duties, occupations, interests, events, occur from day to day. The same temptations have to be met by the same spiritual weapons. This is very clearly seen when our duties are concerned with the training and teaching of others. The same faults must be rebuked, the same advice given, the same disappointments experienced.

II. **ITS TEDIOUSNESS.** Many feel this keenly and long for a greater variety and a life full of excitement and change.

III. **ITS SAFETY.** 1. *For ourselves.* Excitement ends in revulsion and exhaustion. Sameness builds up a regulated life. Our characters are formed by the repetition of ideas rather than by experiencing a succession of startling events. 2. *For others.* In dealing with them it is most important that we should be always the same. There is need of justice, self-control, an even temper, and an absence of caprice and partiality.

IV. **ITS DIVINE CHARACTER.** God is ever the same and works by his own divinely arranged laws. Our moods and our circumstances change, but our Lord is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Where would be our confidence if he were to change? Blessed to have an unchanging Friend and an unchanging home, where there is rest amidst all the changes of our external lives.—V. W. H.

**Vers. 2, 3.—Identity not to be found in continuity of form, but in harmony of the inner spirit.** I. USELESSNESS OF OUTWARD FORMS WHEN THEIR SPIRIT HAS PASSED OUT OF THEM. The Judaizing party clung to their circumcision as if it were their title to acceptance with God. St. Paul shows that, since the substance, of which circumcision was the shadow, has been bestowed upon men, to insist upon the outward form was to forfeit the reality of which it was the forecast. The truly circumcised were such as, with or without the form, worshipped God in spirit and in truth. All forms have a tendency to lose their informing spirit and to become empty husks. If this takes place through the lukewarmness of those who use them, the true remedy is to seek to breathe in them once again the spirit which is their life. If that which was formerly their life now finds true expression in newer forms, it may be a sign that the old has accomplished its purpose and should now cease to be.

II. OBSOLETE FORMS MAY BE HARMFUL AS WELL AS USELESS. They become so as soon as they are regarded as essential, apart from the inner spirit which makes them live. They then become loss instead of gain, and actual hindrances to the promotion of that which they were designed to promote.

III. SEEK TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN MEANS AND END. This is necessary, not only in the cultivation of spiritual life, but in the promotion of any purpose. Not unfrequently *means* are so multiplied that the *end* is obscured rather than forwarded. See that the means used are actually means to the desired end and are not tacitly usurping its place. Even the means of grace may cease to be means of grace.—V. W. H.

**Vers. 8, 9.—The knowledge of Christ the one thing needful.** I. WHAT IT IS. To know him is to know God, and to know God is eternal life. It is not knowledge *about* him, but knowledge *of* him, that we need. We must know him as we know a person.

II. HOW WE MUST SEEK THIS. All things that hinder us from obtaining this knowledge must be surrendered. Even such things as we have hitherto made a boast of must go if they are preventing us from knowing him. Our reputation for consistency, our hitherto unsuspected character, our most cherished occupations or friends,—all these are “loss” in comparison with the knowledge of him which is to be found in obedience to him.

III. WHAT IT WILL DO FOR US. 1. It will win Christ as Friend, Advocate, Redeemer, King. He will be on our side, however coldly earthly friends may regard us. 2. Thus winning him we shall be *found in him*. When the tempter comes to allure us he will not dare approach, for he will find us in him. When the accuser stands up at the last day to charge us with our many sins his words will fall powerless, for we shall be found in him who is our Defence.

IV. WHAT IT WILL BESTOW UPON US. Righteousness; not the merely external righteousness which may be secured by the punctual observance of legal duties, but the righteousness which is of God. This righteousness of his is incarnate in Christ, and is imparted by him to all who are in union with him through faith. This is complete righteousness, for it is the perfect righteousness which Christ himself has and is.—V. W. H.

**Vers. 10, 11.—The knowledge of Christ: its degrees and its purpose.** I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PERSON. This is the initiatory step. We must first recognize him to be our own God and Saviour, and One who is to be altogether longed for. Nathanael thus knew him (John i. 49), and St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 16).

II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. This is a step beyond the simple knowledge of his person. It can be found only in our own spiritual experience when we recognize his power in the victory which he wins in us over the power of sin. St. Peter did not learn the power of Christ's resurrection until he had received the Holy Ghost.

III. THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS. When we have experienced the power of his resurrection we begin to find that his sufferings are ours and ours are his. We begin to feel something of that keenest of all his sufferings, the misery of the presence and the power of sin. At the same time, we find that, by a certain law of reciprocity, our own sufferings are no longer exclusively *our own*, but that he is bearing them with us and for us.

IV. BY THESE STAGES WE ARE MADE CONFORMABLE TO HIS DEATH. His death was an entire death unto sin ; by our thus dwelling in him and he in us we also die unto sin.

V. THUS DYING UNTO SIN WE ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD ; i.e. not merely to the extension of life after physical death, but to the complete resurrection, which is the entire victory over every form of death, natural or spiritual.—V. W. H.

Vers. 12—14.—*The Christian race: conditions of victory.* 1. The recognition that we are not yet conquerors, and that every effort on our part is necessary if we would secure the prize. 2. The knowledge that we are not running the race in our own strength, but that we are seeking to seize upon a victory already designed for us. When we realize that Christ has grasped us we know that we are being upheld by him, and our confidence of final victory is no longer in ourselves, but in him. 3. The faith that we are freed from our past sins by the atoning power of Christ. If we cannot feel assured of this we are for ever worrying about the things which are behind instead of forgetting them, and are thus powerless to look forward to the things that are before. Look forwards and upwards, rather than backwards, if you would succeed in life's race. 4. Striving under such conditions we are more than conquerors through him who loves us.—V. W. H.

Vers. 15, 16.—*A deficient faith will be accepted and enlightened if it be held in a good conscience.* The true law of spiritual progress has been laid down by St. Paul in the foregoing verses. At the same time, there are many who appear to be making such progress without any clear idea of these conditions or any definite grasp of the gospel scheme. How are we to regard such ?

I. AS NOT FULLY ENLIGHTENED. He who is perfect, i.e. full grown in Christian experience, will realize that the progress described by St. Paul is the only true form of spiritual growth.

II. THEIR WANT OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS FROM WANT OF KNOWLEDGE AND NOT FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE. Such ignorance will not hinder them from receiving God's grace if they persevere in that to which their conscience guides them.

III. SUCH PERSEVERANCE WILL LEAD THEM INTO THE LIGHT. However deficient their knowledge may be, their faith is true and will not be left uninstructed. "If any man wills to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17). The woman who sought healing by touching the hem of Christ's garment is an example of uninstructed faith not without its reward. She is in error in imagining that his healing power proceeded from some magic effluvium from his body rather than from his love. But it was an error of the head and not of the heart. She is right enough in her simple faith in him. By her faith she gains that which she sought ; and more, even his blessing, "Go in peace!"—V. W. H.

Vers. 20, 21.—*Our heavenly citizenship.* The Christian is living in two spheres at the same time. Locally, he is a citizen of the world ; spiritually, he is in heaven. Compare our Lord's description of the twofold condition of the apostles whom he was leaving—they were "in the world" and yet they were "in him" (John xvi. 33). These spheres are not of necessity opposed the one to the other, but they become so when the lower attempts to usurp the place which belongs to the higher.

I. THE DIFFICULTY OF REALIZING THIS HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP. We are surrounded by the circumstances of our external lives, which press upon us very closely. We are now clothed with a "body of humiliation."

II. THE BLESSINGS WHICH PROCEED FROM REALIZING IT. 1. Faith in the power of our King ; if we are his subjects he has a duty towards us which he will surely fulfil. 2. Love for the grace which he bestows. 3. Hope that he will come to free us from this divided service.

III. HE HAS HIMSELF SHARED IN THIS TWOFOLD LIFE. While on earth he was still "in heaven" (John iii. 13).

IV. WE ARE TO SHARE IN HIS VICTORY OVER THE WORLD. The body of his humiliation has been changed into the body of his glory. We are to be changed in like manner, so that our outward condition as well as our inner life may partake of the heavenly citizenship.—V. W. H.

Ver. 1.—(See on ch. iv. 4.)—W. F. A.

Ver. 2.—“*Dogs.*” Jews regarded the Gentiles as dogs (Matt. xv. 22, *et seq.*). The unclean feeding of these animals—the scavengers of Eastern cities—was supposed to be analogous to the Gentile freedom in eating all kinds of meats. St. Paul turns the tables, and calls the Judaizers who feed upon carnal ordinances dogs in comparison with Christians who live on the higher spiritual food.

I. **CONTEMPTUOUS LANGUAGE MAY BE OCCASIONALLY PERMITTED IN CONTROVERSY.** It is a most dangerous weapon. Rarely is it called for. Only they who have great kindness of heart can use it safely, and these people are the most loth to employ it at all. Still, even Christ called Herod a fox and spoke of casting pearls before swine. Contempt should only be for the baseness of a character, never for the human soul in which that baseness dwells. But there are some habits and thoughts which we should heartily despise, and which can be best condemned by contempt.

II. **OPPROBRIOS EPITHETS ARE APT TO REVERT ON THE HEAD OF THOSE WHO COIN THEM.** Jews who regard the Gentiles as dogs merit the same name when they cling to lower thinking and living than is consistent with Christianity. In despising others we may be preparing the way for contempt to fall on ourselves.

III. **LACK OF SPIRITUALITY IS THE ROOT OF UNCLEANESS.** The Judaizers are dogs because they cling to carnal ordinances. The unspiritual is carnal, and the carnal in its unrestrained exercise is the unclean. Therefore the remedy for impurity of thought and action is not the observance of rigorous ritual, but the cultivation of a spiritual tone of mind.

IV. **AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE REQUIRED TO SHUN THE FIRST APPROACH TO WHAT IS UNHOLY.** The carnal ordinance must be avoided because it is the first step towards the carnal sin. We ought not to ask how far we can go safely in the direction of evil, but rather to strive to keep as far as possible away from it. Even the company of those who are unholly must be shunned. We are not only not to behave like the dogs; we are to beware of the dogs.—W. F. A.

Vers. 7, 8.—*All loss for Christ is gain.* No one of the early Christians was favoured with richer religious endowments or with higher rank than those enjoyed by St. Paul, and no one was called to make more heavy social and ecclesiastical sacrifices in entering the Church. Yet the apostle regarded his former wealth of privileges as so much loss because it was a hindrance to his receiving true wealth in Christ, and the winning of Christ as not simply a balance of profit, but as wholly a gain; so that, though in the eyes of the world he had made an astounding sacrifice, in his own estimation he had made no sacrifice at all, but had got a pure and simple advantage from the exchange.

I. **RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES MAY BECOME RELIGIOUS HINDRANCES.** In their origin and primary purpose, of course, they could not be so, or they would never be privileges. But changing circumstances and abuse of them may make them of more harm than good. A pure Jewish birth, Pharisaism, and the Law were once all good. But in St. Paul's day and in relation to Christianity they became positively injurious. So now a man's position and education in religion may be converted into a hindrance to his real Christian life. 1. We may be *satisfied* with these privileges and so not care to go on to the higher blessings. The self-complacent Pharisee does not ask for and therefore misses the grace which the penitent publican seeks and therefore finds. The religious possessions of the former result in his poverty, the poverty of the latter in his wealth. 2. We may be *prejudiced* by the nature of these privileges or by our experience of them. An imperfect religion is in itself better than no religion, but it becomes worse when it prejudices us against a higher faith.

II. **THE GREATEST RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES ARE OF NO USE WITHOUT CHRIST.** St. Paul counts them as “but dung.” To be born of Christian parents, to be educated in Christian truths, to be associated in Christian fellowship, and to be zealous in Christian work,—all these things will count as nothing for our soul's profit if we do not know, trust, love, and follow Christ. It is true that they who have not an opportunity of knowing Christ may be benefited by other religious aids. But when Christ is accessible a higher standard is set before us, and to live in the beggarly elements is worse than foolish.—it is fatal.

III. WE MAY HAVE TO MAKE GREAT SACRIFICES IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CHRIST. We may have to give up worldly position, pleasant social connections, etc. We shall have to renounce all our Pharisaic righteousness. That structure which we have been building with so much care and admiring so devoutly must be razed to the ground. Let us count the cost.

IV. TO GAIN CHRIST IS SO PROFITABLE THAT THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS ELSE COUNTS AS NOTHING IN COMPARISON. It is not simply that the scale dips. It is that the weight on the other side is not felt; nay, that the value of the things given up is converted into its opposite, because they hindered the reception of Christ. In the great equation, all earthly things that stayed us from seeking Christ are lumped together and a minus sign affixed to the whole. If we have truly won Christ at the greatest cost we are conscious of no sacrifice. It is all infinite gain.—W. F. A.

Ver. 10.—“*The fellowship of his sufferings.*” I. THE CHRISTIAN IS CALLED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS LORD'S SUFFERINGS. 1. He is called into *fellowship with Christ*. This is further implied by the clause, “becoming conformed unto his death.” It is St. Paul's conception of the heart and essence of the Christian life. He constantly describes the process of our union with Christ as involving our repetition of Christ's experience of life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. The Christian life is an “*Imitatio Christi*.” 2. The Christian is called to *suffer with Christ*. His life is not all suffering. Much Divine gladness shines across the path of his pilgrimage. But while new joys come with the gospel, new sorrows unselt before also accompany it. Christ's joy is in his people (John xv. 11). So also is his sorrow. The Christian has his Tabor and his Olivet; he has, too, his Gethsemane and his Calvary (Rom. vi. 5; 2 Cor. iv. 10). 3. The *necessary experience of the Christian life* involves a fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. The sufferings are not accidental. (1) *Externally*, they are caused as Christ's were caused. “A servant is not above his lord. If they persecuted me they will also persecute you” (John xv. 20). St. Paul suffered from Jewish jealousy, as Christ did before. More generally the hatred of darkness to light which raged against the great Light of the world besets and attacks all the children of light. (2) *Internally*, we have to fight all evil, and the mortal conflict is painful. (3) *Sympathetically*, our union with Christ leads us to sorrow with him in his sorrow.

II. THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES. We might naturally take it to be quite otherwise. We might think it a thing to be submitted to simply as part of the necessary cost of entering the kingdom of heaven. But St. Paul reckons it as part of the gain in comparison with which all conceivable earthly advantages are but as refuse. How can this be? Surely we cannot embrace and love pain for its own sake. 1. Fellowship with Christ's sufferings is a *great honour*. It is something to be counted worthy to suffer with him. We honour our noblest heroes by selecting them for the most arduous tasks. 2. This fellowship *preserves us from many evils*. Sorrow is a spiritual antiseptic. It kills the germs of corruption that breed freely in luxury. To be admitted into the sacred temple of the sorrows of Christ, to be touched with the solemn awe of his agony, and to feel in ourselves some faint throbs of this sublime passion, all this is to be called above the earthly scenes of folly and sin and to receive a baptism of purification. 3. This fellowship leads us to *participation in Christ's glory*. The story does not end with the suffering. It looks tragic; but it is no tragedy; for it issues in glad hallelujahs. But as even Christ was perfected through suffering, so much more must his disciples tread the *via dolorosa* in order to reach their triumph. It is they who suffer with him who will also be glorified together with him.—W. F. A.

Ver. 13.—*Forward.* Like the runner who will lose the prize if he mistake any point short of the goal for the end, or if he waste his time in looking back on the course traversed, the Christian must press forward with his face towards Christ, unresting till the great race is won.

I. WE MUST NOT CONSIDER ANY PRESENT ATTAINMENT SUFFICIENT. St. Paul was no novice when he wrote this Epistle. An old man, rich and ripe in many graces, far and away beyond the experience of most Christians, he still felt that he had not reached

the great end of his efforts. How much less can inferior Christians allow themselves to be satisfied with what they have as yet acquired! The end is to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 48). We are not blamed if we have not yet reached that crown of goodness. But we are blamed if we are not pressing on to it and rest contented with anything short of it. Height above height rises before us. Let no inferior aim lull us to unfaithful indolence with its soothing prospects.

II. WE MUST LOOK FORWARD, NOT BACKWARD. Some men stand with their faces to the west, regretting the lost radiance of the setting sun. Others turn their gaze on the east, eager to catch the first streak of dawn. Surely the latter are the wiser. Our faces look forwards that we may see the path we are about to tread instead of looking only on the path already trodden. 1. We must forget *past attainments*. Otherwise they will be a snare, and out of the very fruit of good deeds may be distilled the poisonous narcotic that will prevent the repetition of them. Let the sweet fruit be cast away that the seed may be sown to produce future fruit. 2. We must forget *past failures*. It is foolish to dwell in idle regrets, for thus we neglect the duty of to-day in lamenting the neglect of yesterday's duty! It is positively wrong to clog our future efforts by carrying the burden of past sin. If God has forgiven our sin we should forget it. 3. We must forget *past joys and sorrows*—this only in a measure, of course. We are human, and there are wholesome uses of memory. But still the dreamy life of reflection is sadly hindering to progress. Greater joys open before us—even before the saddest, most desponding of us, if we are truly following Christ—than any that lie buried in the graves of the past. They who may hope for the joy of the resurrection reunion do foolishly to weep for ever at the tomb.

III. WE MUST STRETCH FORWARD TO THE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE. The picturesque figure represents the eager runner who stretches out his hand and bends his body towards the long-sought end of his endeavours. The eye must precede the foot. If our hearts are not already in heaven our souls cannot be travelling thither. Great effort is also necessary. The Christian must put forth all his energies. His life is a battle, a wrestling, a race.

IV. CHRIST IS THE END OF THE RACE. 1. He is the *Goal*. We are to strive to attain unto him. The Christian course is marked out by the footprints of Christ. Every right step brings us nearer Christ, both in resemblance and in fellowship. Perfection is absolute Christ-likeness. 2. Christ is also the *Prize*. The end of the race is its own reward. And it is enough. To possess Christ is worth the loss of all earthly possessions (ver. 7). It is, however, in the end, to give us the inheritance of all things (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).—W. F. A.

Ver. 15.—“*Otherwise minded.*” I. DIVERSITY OF OPINION IS POSSIBLE AMONG GENUINE CHRISTIANS. St. Paul was writing to a Christian Church which he honoured with rare commendation for its fidelity and spiritual attainments. Nevertheless, he admitted that some of his readers might not see truth as he saw it.

II. WE MUST NOT ATTEMPT TO FORCE OTHERS INTO AGREEMENT WITH OURSELVES. Every honest thinker must believe that his own view is correct, or he would abandon it. In fact, he only adopts it because he believes it to be true. Therefore he must wish others to agree with him. But he has no right to use violence, abuse, and recrimination. He should respect his brother's right to think. St. Paul was far superior to the Christians of Philippi. Yet he treated their possible difference of opinion with courtesy and gentleness.

III. IF WE ARE RIGHT IN THE COURSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON SPECULATIVE POINTS WILL NOT BE FATAL. They are not unimportant. All truth is useful and all error injurious. Still, fidelity to Christ in practice is far more important than all else. And even men who are clogged and maimed by egregious errors—as we Protestants think Roman Catholic and Greek Christians must be—will reach the end safely if they are truly pressing forward to Christ.

IV. FIDELITY TO CHRIST WILL LEAD TO A REVELATION OF TRUTH ON THOSE POINTS WHERE WE ARE AS YET IN EBBOE. It is not by controversy, much less by excommunication and brauds of heresy, that error is eliminated from the Church. Nothing opens our eyes so clearly as faithful service. He will know the doctrine who keeps the commandment.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 17.—Imitation.** When a man invites others to become imitators of himself he must be either possessed by an absurd self-admiration or almost entirely devoid of self-regarding feelings. The latter was the case with St. Paul. He saw the plain fact that there were points in which it was desirable for the Philippians to imitate him, and he was so unselfishly concerned for their welfare as never to have a passing thought that he might be laying himself open to a charge of self-glorification. The self-forgetful man will dare to do things which the self-conscious man shrinks from in modesty, and yet the former is the bumbler of the two. It is the perfection of humility and self-abnegation to be able to stand as a model for others without a suggestion that one's own glory is advanced thereby, with nothing but regard for the interests of the others.

**I. WE ARE NATURALLY IMITATIVE.** If we do not follow good examples we go after the bad. Absolute originality is almost impossible. Imitation is largely unconscious. But it is profitable for us to make use of this powerful instinct by turning it towards the best models.

**II. HUMAN EXAMPLES MAY BE FOLLOWED WITH GREAT ADVANTAGE.** Our highest model is God, for we are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Christ is our great Example. Still, there is large room for the influence of other men. Several things give force to this influence. 1. *Similarity of circumstances.* We can select an example from among men who have similar duties and temptations to our own. Our fellow-men have all to fight the same battle with sin. 2. *Personal knowledge.* We can understand best the examples of those lives which pass before our own eyes. 3. *Affection.* This draws us to follow those we love. 4. *Special characteristics.* In particular circumstances certain men become the best examples. Hence one use of biography, knowledge of mankind, etc.

**III. THE EXAMPLE OF ST. PAUL IS OF PECULIAR VALUE.** This may be considered in regard to his whole life and character. Note three particulars suggested by the context. 1. *His liberality of sentiment.* This was a special point for the Philippians who were threatened by Judaizing narrowness. 2. *His ceaseless efforts after spiritual progress.* (Vers. 12—16.) 3. *His spirituality.* (Vers. 18—21.)

**IV. EVERY TEACHER SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE.** Example will affect teaching one way or another. If it is bad it will either lead people astray or, if they resist its influence, it will discredit the teacher and frustrate his work. Without posing for imitation, every leader and teacher of men should be careful to be worthy of it.

**V. IMITATION, TO BE PROFITABLE, MUST BE DISCRIMINATING AND FREE.** 1. *Discriminating.* (1) That good models may be chosen; and (2) that these may be followed in their good points and not in their bad points, for there is no more fascinating snare than the temptation to copy only the weakness of great men. 2. *Free.* A servile copying may lead us into positive wrong-doing, since "circumstances alter cases," and at best it is devoid of moral principle. We must imitate the spirit of our examples, translating this into the terms of our own individual requirements.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 20.—Citizenship in heaven.** I. **THE FACT.** Christians are citizens of heaven. 1. They are under *heavenly government*. Other men are ruled by earthly influences—laws of the state, social customs, worldly expediency, etc. The true followers of Christ obey higher laws and serve an unseen King. It is their recognized aim to do God's will on earth as the angels do it in heaven. They confess supreme allegiance to a heavenly Lord. 2. They perform *heavenly functions*. To be a loyal citizen means to share in the common municipal life. This Christians undertake in their relations with the city above. Their conversation is to be in heaven. They are to set their affections on things above. Their chief concern is to do their work on earth so as best to promote the glory of heaven. Generally they are to shape their lives according to the celestial polity. 3. They enjoy *heavenly privileges*. Citizenship is a privilege. This was well understood in St. Paul's day, when some men prided themselves in being born Romans, while others were willing to pay a great price to obtain the rights of Roman citizenship (Acts xxii. 28). Englishmen now claim protection and immunity from foreign exactions in all parts of the world on account of their nationality. So Christians have the high privileges of Divine liberty, safety, and honour that accompany a heavenly citizenship.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF THIS FACT. If it be a truth that Christians are citizens of heaven, it must be a most important truth. Yet many men who consider themselves Christians live as though they had not the faintest conception of the significance of their heavenly relationship. Others have taken the opposite course; forsaking the joys and duties of earth, and treating the world as a sort of Siberia, they have lived like exiles waiting only for the time of their departure. Clearly this is not the use of the heavenly citizenship which the apostles would have advised. 1. It should lead to *living worthily*. It is a disgrace for an Englishman, on visiting a country of savages, to abandon the decencies of civilization and adopt the practices of the natives. Christians belong to a higher kingdom than anything earthly. They are, therefore, to see to it that they do not degrade their citizenship by following the evil customs of the world, but abstain from fleshly lusts as strangers and pilgrims (1 Pet. ii. 11). Living in the world, enjoying its innocent fruits, and doing their daily work, they are to keep themselves undefiled and to behave with the purity and charity that befit the fellow-citizens of angels. 2. This citizenship should *prevent Christians from being disappointed at receiving adversity in this world*. They are to expect it. This is not their rest. Sojourners on earth, they are not to be surprised if they miss some of the treasures of those who have only earthly possessions. 3. This fact should *inspire a constant hope*. True Christians must live in the future. Their heavenly citizenship is the promise and pledge of the enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints in light. They are to look for "a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." Members of the higher kingdom, they should live in expectation of the glorious advent of their great King.—W. F. A.

Ver. 21.—*The renewal of the body.* I. OUR BODY IS A MARK OF OUR HUMILIATION. It is "the body of our humiliation," not "our vile body," as the Authorized Version has it. St. Paul did not share the Stoic contempt for the body; much less did he anticipate the Manichean hatred of it which is the true parent of asceticism. But neither did he altogether admire the body in its present condition, as the disciples of our modern school of carnal aestheticism glory in doing. He regarded it as a great evidence of our humiliation. His words give little warrant for Origen's strange doctrine that pre-existing human souls, having sinned and fallen in a purely spiritual sphere, were imprisoned in bodies for their punishment and discipline, and that, if they profit by the purgatorial earthly life, they will be liberated from these bodies and restored to the spiritual world. Two simpler facts come nearer to the teaching of St. Paul. 1. We have *outgrown our body*. The body which is glorious in the animal becomes in many respects a hindrance and a source of shame to the man. The fact that the body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, is a mark of humiliation, proves that we have a higher nature and belong to nobler living. 2. We have *degraded our body*. By making that a master which should be a servant we show our own humiliation. By lowering the body itself to sinful ends we turn it into a visible proof of our degradation.

II. WE NEED A SUITABLE BODY. The body will not simply be cast aside as a worthless thing, like the old skin sloughed off by the serpent. It is a work of God who made all things well. It has great purposes to serve, for it is our medium of communication with the external world. A disembodied spirit is an insulated spirit. By means of the body we receive information from without, and we also execute our will on things outside us. The scholar must have eyes and ears as well as an attentive mind; and the workman must have muscular arms and deft fingers as well as good plans and aims. Probably we shall always need some sort of body, some sort of medium through which to receive knowledge and accomplish actions.

III. CHRIST WILL FASHION OUR BODY ANEW. The gospel comes to man as a whole, body and soul; and it offers salvation to both parts of his nature. It begins the double process on earth. Christ healed the sick. Christianity cares for the bodily condition of men. The hospital is a most Christian institution. By ameliorating the sanitary condition of men we indirectly help even their moral and spiritual life. Hereafter a bodily renewal is to be accomplished. What it shall be we cannot tell. But the distinct teaching of the New Testament is that the resurrection will not revive the body as we now have it. We are to be "changed," to have a spiritual body; what is

sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption. Christ's risen body is the type of this. We may be assured that all that is humiliating and provocative of evil will vanish, while greater sensitiveness and flexibility in ministering to the soul and responding to its ideas and volitions will be enjoyed.—W. F. A.

## EXPOSITION.

## CHAPTER IV.

**Ver. 1.**—Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown. The apostle here, as in 1 Cor. xv. 58, urges the hope of a glorious resurrection as an incentive to steadfastness in the Christian life. He seems scarcely able to find words adequate to express his love for the Philippians; he heaps together epithets of affection, dwelling tenderly on the word "beloved." He tells them of his longing desire to see them, repeating the word used in ch. i. 8. He calls them his "joy and crown"—his joy now, his crown hereafter. He uses the same words of the other great Macedonian Church in 1 Thess. ii. 19, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye?" The Greek word for "crown" (*τρέφασ*) means commonly either the wreath ("the corruptible crown," 1 Cor. ix. 25) which was the prize of victors at the Grecian games; or a garland worn at banquets and festivities. The royal crown is generally *διάδημα*. But *τρέφασ* is used in the Septuagint for a king's crown (see (in the Greek) 2 Sam. xii. 30; Ps. xx. 4 (A.V., xxi. 3); Esth. viii. 15). The crown of thorns, too, which was used in mockery of the Saviour's kingly title, was *τρέφασ* *εἰς ἀκανθῶν*, though this may possibly have been suggested by the laurel wreath worn by the Roman Caesars (see Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament,' sect. xxiii.). "The crown of life," "the crown of glory that fadeth not away," is the emblem both of victory and of gladness. Yet it is also in some sense kingly: the saints shall sit with Christ in his throne; they shall reign with him; they are kings ("a kingdom," R.V., with the best manuscripts) and priests unto God (Rev. i. 6). In this place victory seems to be the thought present to the apostle's mind. In ch. ii. 16 and iii. 12-14 he has been comparing the Christian life with the course of the Grecian athletes. Now he represents his converts as constituting his crown or wreath of victory at the last; their salvation is the crowning reward of his labours and sufferings. So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. So; that is, as ye have us for an example; or perhaps, as becomes citizens of the heavenly commonwealth. The same word (*στήκετε*) is used in ch. i. 27, also in connection with the idea of citizenship.

**Ver. 2.**—I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord; rather, *Euodia*. It is plain from the next verse that both are female names. The narrative in Acts xvi. shows that the female element was more than usually important in the early Philippian Church. These ladies seem to have held a high position in that Church; possibly they may have been deaconesses, like Phoebe at Cenchrea. Their dissensions disturbed the peace of the Church. The repeated "I beseech" is emphatic; it may, perhaps, also imply that both were in fault. St. Paul earnestly begs them to be reconciled, and to be reconciled as Christians, in the Lord, as members of his body, in the consciousness of his presence. Mark how often the words, "in Christ," "in the Lord," occur in this Epistle; how constantly the thought of spiritual union with Christ was present to the apostle's mind.

**Ver. 3.**—And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow; rather, *yea*, with R.V. and the best manuscripts; *kai* is a particle of earnest appeal (comp. Philem. 20 and Rev. xxii. 20); *I ask or request*. The Greek word *ἐπωτῶ* is used in New Testament Greek (in classical Greek it means "to inquire") of requests addressed to an equal; *αἰρῶ* is used in addressing a superior (comp. Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament,' sect. xl.). Who was the "true yokefellow"? Some, following Clement of Alexandria, interpret the words of a supposed wife of St. Paul. But the Greek adjective has the masculine termination; and it is plain, from 1 Cor. vii. 8, that St. Paul was unmarried. Others take one of the Greek words as the proper name of the person addressed, Syzygus or Gnesius. On the first supposition, the play on the meaning of *Syzygus*, yokefellow, would resemble St. Paul's reference to Onesimus in Philem. 11. But neither of these words seems to occur as a proper name. Some again, as Chrysostom, interpret the word of the husband of Euodia or Syntyche: this does not seem likely. Others think that Lydia may be addressed here. The omission of her name is remarkable; but she may have been dead or no longer resident at Philippi. Others understand the chief pastor of the Church at Philippi, who may very possibly have been Epaphroditus himself, the bearer of the letter. This, on the whole, seems the most probable

conjecture. The omission of the name implies that the person addressed was in a conspicuous position, so that there was no danger of mistakes. An important duty is assigned to him. And it may be that the word "yokefellow," as distinguished from "fellow-labourer," denotes something more of equality with the apostle. Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel; rather, as R.V., help those women, for they laboured with me. Help Euodia and Syntyche towards a mutual reconciliation, and that, inasmuch as they laboured in the gospel. With Clement also. Are these words to be connected with "help" or with "laboured"? Is Clement associated with the "true yokefellow" in the work of reconciliation, or with the women who laboured with St. Paul? The balance of probability seems to be in favour of the first alternative; there appears to be no reason for mentioning Clement's labours in this place; while, on the other hand, St. Paul's anxiety for the reconciliation of Euodia and Syntyche might naturally urge him to ask for the combined efforts of all his fellow-labourers. Whether this Clement is to be identified with St. Clement the Bishop of Rome is an open question; there are no sufficient data for deciding it (see Bishop Lightfoot's detached note). And with other my fellow-labourers; rather, as R.V., and the rest of my fellow-workers. St. Paul appeals to them all. Whose names are in the book of life. St. Paul does not mention their names; there is no need that he should do so—they are written in heaven (comp. Exod. xxxii. 32; Ps. lxix. 28; Dan. xii. 1; and Rev., *passim*). The book of life is the roll of the citizens of the heavenly kingdom. The passages quoted do not necessarily involve the doctrine of an unconditional, irreversible predestination, or the phrase, "to blot out of my book," could not be used.

Ver. 4.—Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice; rather, as R.V., again I will say. St. Paul returns to the key-note of the Epistle, Christian joy. He writes again the same things (see ch. iii. 1); he will say it again, he never wearies of repeating that holy joy is a chief Christian duty. Rejoice in the Lord; in his presence, in communion with him, and that always; for he who rejoices in the Lord, as Chrysostom says, always rejoices, even in affliction: "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. vi. 10).

Ver. 5.—Let your moderation be known unto all men; rather, forbearance, or gentleness. The word *ἐπιεικεία* (here the neuter adjective is used) is translated "gentleness" in 2 Cor. x. 1, where it is attributed to our Lord himself. In the Aristotelian 'Ethics' it stands for the temper which contents

itself with less than its due, and shrinks from insisting on its strict rights. There is no joy in a narrow selfishness; joy involves an open heart, a generous love. Joy in the Lord tends to make men gentle and mild to others. "Gaudium in Domino," says Bengel, "parit veram equitatem erga proximum." *Unto all men*; heathen as well as Christian. Compare our Lord's word: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." St. Paul would have the heathen say, "See how these Christians love one another." Their mutual love would be the blessed means of drawing fresh converts to the faith. There may possibly be an allusion here to the differences between Euodia and Syntyche; let there be no more disagreements, but rather mutual forbearance. The Lord is at hand. The Aramaic *Maran-atha* ("the Lord cometh") in 1 Cor. xvi. 22 seems to imply that these words were current in the Church as a formula of warning, like "Hallelujah" as a set form of praise. The Lord is at hand; therefore be not careful to exact your full rights; love is more precious than gold in the treasury of heaven. Comp. Jas. v. 8, "Be ye also patient, . . . for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Others interpret the words, not of the future advent, but of the Lord's present nearness. Comp. Ps. cxlv. 18, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him." But this seems scarcely so appropriate here.

Ver. 6.—Be careful for nothing; rather, as R.V., in nothing be anxious. *Μέρυψα* is anxious, distracting care. St. Paul does not wish his converts to be careless, but to be free from that over-anxiety about worldly things which might distract their thoughts from the service of God, and hinder their growth in holiness. Comp. 1 Pet. v. 7, where the apostle bids us cast all our care (*μέρυψα*) upon God. The thought of the Lord's nearness should lead us both to be forbearing in our relations to others, and also to keep ourselves free, as far as may be, from worldly anxieties. "He careth for us." But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. "Curare et orare," says Bengel, "plus inter se pugnant quam aqua et ignis." *In everything*; in each emergency, little or great, as it arises, pray; cultivate the habit of referring all things, great or small, to God in prayer. The two words rendered "prayer" and "supplication" (*προσευχή* and *δίησις*) occur together also in Eph. vi. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 1 and v. 5. The first has been defined by Chrysostom and others as prayer to obtain a good; the second, prayer to avoid an evil. Better, perhaps, as most modern commentators, *προσευχή* is the general word, covering the idea of prayer

in its widest meaning; while *δέησις* is a special act of supplication for some particular object of need (see Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament,' sect. li.). *With thanksgiving.* Thanksgiving is the necessary accompaniment of prayer; it ought never to be absent from our devotions; it springs out of that holy joy which St. Paul so constantly sets before us in this Epistle as the bounden duty of Christians. St. Paul himself is an example of constant thanksgiving. All his Epistles, except those to the Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus, open with a thanksgiving. In the dungeon at Philippi he and Silas "prayed and sang praises unto God" (Acts xvi. 25). Our requests, the things for which we ask, are to be made known unto God; *πρός τὸν Θεόν*, before God, in the presence of God, by prayer, the general converse of the soul with God; and by supplication, direct petitions for the supply of our necessities. Indeed, he knows our necessities before we ask; but we are encouraged to make them known before him, as Hezekiah took the letter of Sennacherib and spread it before the Lord.

Ver. 7.—*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.* The peace which God gives, which flows from the sense of his most gracious presence, and consists in childlike confidence and trustful love. This peace passeth all understanding; its calm blessedness transcends the reach of human thought; it can be known only by the inner experience of the believer. The similar passage, Eph. iii. 20, "Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," seems decisive for the ordinary interpretation. Bishop Lightfoot, Meyer, and others take another view of the passage: "Surpassing every device or counsel of man, i.e. which is far better, which produces a higher satisfaction, than all punctilious self-assertion, all anxious forethought." *Shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus;* rather, as R.V., *shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.* Peace shall guard—"a verbal paradox, for to guard is a warrior's duty" (Bishop Lightfoot). The peace of God abiding in the heart is a sure and trusty garrison, guarding it so that the evil spirit, once cast out, cannot return. The thoughts issue from the heart; for the heart, as commonly in the Hebrew Scriptures, is regarded as the seat of the intellect, not of feeling only. *In Christ Jesus;* in the sphere of his influence, his presence. True believers, abiding in Christ, realize his promise, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

Ver. 8.—Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true. He repeats the "finally" of ch. iii. 1. He again and again prepares

to close his Epistle, but cannot at once bid farewell to his beloved Philippians. He urges them to fill their thoughts with things good and holy. Christ is the Truth: all that is true comes from him; the false, the vain, is of the earth, earthly. Perhaps the verb (*τερτίνη*) may be emphatic. Sceptics may deny the existence of absolute truth; men may scoffingly ask, "What is truth?" Truth is real, and it is found in Christ, the Truth. *Whatsoever things* are honest. The word (*σεμά*) occurs only here and four times in the pastoral Epistles. It is a word difficult to translate. "Honourable" or "reverend" (the renderings of the R.V.) are better equivalents than "honest." It points to a Christian decorum, a Christian self-respect, which is quite consistent with true humility, for it is a reverence for the temple of God. *Whatsoever things* are just; rather, perhaps, *righteous*, in the widest meaning. *Whatsoever things* are pure; not only chaste, but free from stain or defilement of any sort. The word used here (*ἀγαπός*) is not common in the New Testament. The adverb occurs in ch. i. 16, where it is rendered "sincerely," and implies purity of motive. *Whatsoever things* are lovely (*προσφιλῆ*); not beautiful, but pleasing, lovable; whatsoever things would attract the love of holy souls. *Whatsoever things* are of good report. The word (*εὐφημία*) means "well-speaking" (not "well spoken of"), and so "gracious," "attractive;" in classical Greek it means "auspicious," "of good omen." Of these six heads, the first two describe the subjects of devout thought as they are in themselves; the second pair relate to practical life; the third pair to the moral approbation which the contemplation of a holy life excites in good men. *If there be any virtue.* This word, so very common in the Greek moralists, occurs nowhere else in St. Paul. Nor does any other of the New Testament writers use it except St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 9 (in the Greek); 2 Pet. i. 3, 5). Bishop Lightfoot says, "The strangeness of the word, combined with the change of expression, *εἰ τις*, will suggest another explanation: 'Whatever value may reside in your old heathen conception of virtue, whatever consideration is due to the praise of men: as if the apostle were anxious not to omit any possible ground of appeal.' And if there be any praise; comp. Rom. xii. 17 and 2 Cor. viii. 21, where St. Paul bids us "provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." Nevertheless, in the highest point of view, the praise of the true Israelite is not of man, but of God. Think on these things; or, as in the margin of R.V., *take account of.* Let these be the considerations which guide your thoughts and direct your

motives. The apostle implies that we have the power of governing our thoughts, and so are responsible for them. If the thoughts are ordered well, the outward life will follow.

Ver. 9.—*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.* St. Paul turns from contemplation to practical life: they must translate into action the lessons which they received from him. The verbs are aorists and refer to the time when he was among them. He taught not by word only, but by living example; they saw in him when present, and heard of him when he was absent, a pattern of the Christian life. *And the God of peace shall be with you.* God dwells with those who think holy thoughts and live holy lives; and with him comes the peace which is his, which he giveth (comp. Rom. xv. 33).

Ver. 10.—*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again.* St. Paul thanks the Philippian Church for the gifts brought by Epaphroditus; his expressions, so courteous and yet so dignified, bespeak, like all his writings, the perfect gentleman in the best sense of the word. *I rejoiced in the Lord;* he fulfils his own precept (ver. 4). His joy rises from the gift to the love which prompted the gift, and thence to the Divine Giver of that love. *Greatly.* Bengel says, “*Hoc vix placuerit Stoico. Paulus ingentis affectus habuit, sed in Domino.*” The R.V. rendering of the following words is more literal: “*Ye revived your thought for me.*” The verb is properly used of a tree putting forth fresh shoots after its winter sleep. Bengel thinks that the metaphor was derived from the season: the apostle was writing in the spring. Others, as Meyer, render differently, “*Ye flourished again (i.e. in your circumstances) so as to mind my interests.*” As the words might seem to imply some degree of blame, St. Paul hastens to ascribe the delay of the Philippians to causes beyond their own control. *Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lecked opportunity;* more literally, *wherein ye did indeed take thought, as R.V.* It may be that they had no suitable messenger; but St. Paul speaks of the “deep poverty” of the Macedonian Churches in 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, where he also praises their liberality.

Ver. 11.—*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* He explains himself; it is not want that prompted his words. Literally, *I learned* (the verb is aorist); that is, when he became a Christian. The A.V. is verbally inaccurate in the following words, which mean literally, “*In the*

circumstances in which I am.” But the sense is the same. St. Paul is speaking of his present condition: he is content with it, though it involves all the hardships of captivity; his present contentment is a sample of his habitual frame of mind. *Αὐτάρκης*, here rendered “content,” is a common word in Greek philosophy. It means “self-sufficient,” “independent.” It is of frequent occurrence in Stoical treatises; but St. Paul uses it in a Christian sense; he is *αὐτάρκης* in relation to man, but his *αὐτάρκεια* comes from God (2 Cor. ix. 8).

Ver. 12.—*I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.* St. Paul had experience both of sorrow and of joy, both of distress and of comfort; he knew how to bear himself in both, because his chiefest joy was “in the Lord.” This abiding joy raised him above the vicissitudes of this mortal state, and gave him an *αὐτάρκεια*, a Christian independence, which enabled him to act becomingly both in adversity and in prosperity. *Everywhere and in all things I am instructed;* literally, as R.V., *in everything and in all things;* as we say, “in each and all,” in every condition separately and in all collectively. The R.V. translates more accurately, “*have I learned the secret.*” The Greek *μεμίνημαι* means properly, “I have been initiated.” It is a word adapted from the old Greek mysteries; comp. Bengel, “*Disciplina arcana imbutus sum, ignota mundo.*” St. Paul represents the advanced Christian life as a mystery, the secrets of which are taught by God the Holy Ghost to the soul that longs to prove in its own personal experience “what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” St. Paul frequently uses the word *μυστήριον*, mystery, for the truths once hidden but now brought to light by the gospel. Both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. The word rendered “to be full” (*χορτάεσθαι*) is strictly used of animals, and means “to be foddered;” in the New Testament and later Greek it is used also of men, without any deprecatory significance, as in Matt. v. 6, “*They shall be filled* (*χορταθεούσαι*).”

Ver. 13.—*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me; rather, as R.V., in him that strengtheneth me.* The best manuscripts omit the word “Christ” in this place. *In him.* It is only in Christ, in spiritual union with him, that the Christian is *αὐτάρκης*, self-sufficient. His presence gives strength to do and suffer all things (comp. 2 Cor. xii. 9).

Ver. 14.—*Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction;* rather, as R.V., *ye had fellowship with my affliction.* St. Paul values the sympathy, the fellow-feeling, more than the

gifts; he could have done without the gifts, but they were precious as a proof of love.

Ver. 15.—Now ye **Philippians** know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from **Macedonia**. He reminds them delicately of their former liberality to show his love for them; he was not unwilling to receive kindnesses from them. He had always refused to accept contributions from the Corinthians; but the bonds which bound him to the Macedonian Churches were closer and tenderer. *In the beginning of the gospel;* when he first preached in Macedonia, ten years ago. The words, “when I departed from Macedonia,” may refer either to some gifts not mentioned elsewhere, sent to him when he left Berea for Athens; or, if the aorist be taken in a pluperfect sense, to the supplies afterwards sent to him at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9). **No Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.** Chrysostom understands this of giving worldly things and receiving spiritual things (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 11). But the context seems to restrict the meaning to temporal gifts: the Philippians gave, St. Paul received. Bengel says, “Poterant dicere, Faciemus, si alii fecerint: nunc eo major horum laus est: ceterorum, eo minor.”

Ver. 16.—For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. This shows the promptness of their generosity; they not only helped him when he departed from Macedonia; but, before that time, while he was still at Thessalonica, the city which he visited next after leaving Philippi, they sent more than once to supply his needs; comp. 1 Thess. ii. 9 and 2 Thess. iii. 8, where St. Paul says that he avoided being chargeable to the Thessalonians; for which purpose he laboured with his own hands; but, it seems, he needed additional help, and this was supplied from Philippi.

Ver. 17.—Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account; rather, as R.V., not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. He shrinks sensitively from the danger of being mistaken; his words are not to be understood as a hint for further gifts. It is not the gift that he desires; but there is something which he longs for, and that is, charity, the fruit of the Spirit, showing itself in the generosity of the Philippians—the fruit of good works, continually increasing, and set down in heaven to their account.

Ver. 18.—But I have all, and abound: I am full. I have to the full all that I need, and more. (For the word *ἀπέχω*, comp. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16, and Luke vi. 24.) Having received of **Epaphroditus** the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to

**God.** He uses another metaphor: in ver. 17 the gift was fruit, now it is a sacrifice: given to the servant of God, it is in truth offered to God himself. “How high does he lift their gift!” says Chrysostom; “it is not I, he says, who have received it, but God through me.” The words, *στρητικός εὐωδίας*, an odour of sweet smell, occur often in the Old Testament in connection with sacrifice (see Gen. viii. 21; Exod. xxix. 18; also for the metaphor, Eph. v. 2). In Heb. xiii. 16 almsgiving is also described as a sacrifice with which God is well pleased. The first and chiefest offering we can make is ourselves: “We offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies” (comp. Rom. xii. 1); in that chief offering is involved the lesser gift of alms.

Ver. 19.—But my God shall supply all your need; rather, as R.V., *every need of yours. My God;* the pronoun is emphatic, as in ch. i. 3. God will accept your offerings as made to him; you have supplied my need, he will supply every need of yours. According to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Not *by*; it should be “in Christ Jesus.” The reward is given to his saints through union with him: “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” *In glory;* that is, by setting them in glory—the glory of holiness now, the glory of eternal life hereafter.

Ver. 20.—Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen; rather, with R.V., *unto our God and Father be the glory.* The thought of God’s present mercies, and the hope of glory to come mentioned in the last verse, suggest the doxology. Observe, St. Paul says, “our God and Father” here. He said, “my God” in ver. 19, where he was speaking of the reward which God would give for kindness shown to himself; but now “our God,” as the one Object of praise and worship from the universal Church. *The glory;* the article is commonly used with *δόξα* in these doxologies—the glory which is God’s peculiar possession, which is essentially his (comp. John xvii. 5). Bishop Lightfoot says, in his note on Gal. i. 5, “It is probable that we should supply *εἰστιν* in such cases rather than *εἰστι*. It is an affirmation rather than a wish. Glory is the essential attribute of God. See 1 Pet. iv. 11, “ἡ εἰστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κυρός, and the doxology added to the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. vi. 13).” *For ever and ever;* literally, for the ages of ages; for the ages which consist, not of years, but of ages, for the countless ages of eternity (comp. Gal. i. 5 and 1 Tim. i. 17).

Ver. 21.—Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. Every saint individually—an expression of personal affection. The words,

"in Christ Jesus," may be taken with "salute," as in Rom. xvi. 22 and 1 Cor. xvi. 19. It is a Christian salutation, an acknowledgment of spiritual relationship; or better, perhaps, as in numerous passages, with "saint." All saints are in Christ, members of his body, knit together into one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Christ. It is this union with Christ which makes them saints. The brethren which are with me greet you. Observe, he calls them "brethren," though he had none like-minded with him, save only Timothy (ch. ii. 20, 21).

Ver. 22.—All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. All the Christians at Rome, not only St. Paul's personal friends and companions. It is not clear why he lays a special stress on those belonging to Nero's household. The reason given by Chrysostom seems somewhat fanciful: "If those who dwelt in palaces despised all things for the sake of the King of heaven,

much more should the Philippians do so." Some of them may have been known to the Philippian Christians. The term *familia* or *domus Caesaris* included all ranks, from the highest official to the lowest freedman or slave. It is probable that those alluded to here belonged to the humbler classes. But at any rate St. Paul's words prove that his preaching had penetrated into that abyss of all infamy, the palace of Nero. (For the Christianity of Seneca, and the supposed correspondence between him and St. Paul, see Bishop Lightfoot's dissertation on 'St. Paul and Seneca.' See also his detached note on 'Caesar's Household'.)

Ver. 23.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen; read, with the best manuscripts, *with your spirit*. St. Paul begins with "grace" (ch. i. 2), and ends with "grace." The gracious love of the Lord Jesus was the joy of his heart.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1-3.—*St. Paul's relations to his flock.* I. ST. PAUL HIMSELF (see on ch. i. 3-8) AN EXAMPLE TO ALL CHRISTIAN MINISTERS. 1. *In his urgent appeals.* Mark how he enforces the necessity of perseverance, how he brings the privileges and the hopes of the Christian to bear upon the daily life of practical duties. "Therefore," he says, "because you are citizens of the heavenly country; because you look for the Saviour's coming; because you hope for a glorious immortality;—therefore, stand fast in the Lord." The faithful minister knows the extreme difficulty of perseverance, of patient continuance in well-doing; he will constantly enforce it upon himself, upon his people; he will use all the motives suggested by the study of Holy Scripture and by Christian experience to press home this paramount obligation. "So stand fast," he says. St. Paul can point to his own example: would that we could do the like! "Stand fast:" it is the word used already in ch. i. 27; it involves a military metaphor. Stand firm in your ranks; present a serried front against all temptations; quit yourselves like men, like fellow-citizens of the saints, in the good fight of faith. And that, in the Lord, in his strength, in habitual communion with him. There is no perseverance, no hope of final victory, unless we abide in Christ. 2. *In his love for his flock as a whole.* He calls them his brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, his joy and crown. And these were not mere words with St. Paul; he showed by his labours the truth of his affection. His ardent love for Christ issued in a strong constraining love for the souls of men. To save souls was his joy now; he knew that it would be his crown hereafter. The crown of glory that fadeth not away is the reward, St. Peter tells us, of those presbyters who feed the flock of God willingly and of a ready mind. St. Paul speaks of his converts as themselves constituting his crown. When he had finished his course, his wreath of victory would be the salvation of those precious souls which had been saved, under God, by his self-denying labours. The sight of their blessedness would increase and deepen even the gladness of heaven, even his own joy in his own salvation. 3. *In his care for individual members of the Church.* He thinks of Euodia and Syntyche; he has heard of their dissensions; he begs them earnestly to be of the same mind, and that in the Lord. The Christian minister should know his flock by name, should think of their individual needs, should pray for them, should urge them to live together in love. 4. *He asks others to help in the work of restoring peace.* The Christian pastor should gather helpers round him. It is good for his people, good for the helpers themselves. To work for Christ strengthens and benefits the soul.

II. ST. PAUL'S FELLOW-LABOURERS. 1. *Euodia and Syntyche.* (1) They laboured with St. Paul in the gospel. The word is a strong one; they were fellow-athletes with the

apostle; they were engaged with him in many struggles, hard, it may be, and perilous, for the cause of Christ. St. Paul gladly acknowledges the help which they had given him. The remembrance of their good deeds made him feel a deeper interest in their spiritual welfare. Women did much for Christ in the Philippian Church. Christian women can do much now, much that men cannot do so well; their gentle tact, their quiet influence, is often of the greatest value. (2) Yet they quarrelled. Their disagreement was doing harm to themselves and to the Church. The indulgence of unkind feelings impairs the spiritual life and checks our growth in holiness. The dissensions of Christians are a grievous hindrance to the spread of the gospel. Mutual love was to be the mark of Christ's disciples; alas! how often there has been more hate than love! Note St. Paul's extreme anxiety to reconcile the two women; he entreats them himself; he begs others to help; he knew the immense importance of Christian union. 2. *Clement and others.* We know not who they were. Clement may possibly be the famous Bishop of Rome; of the others the very names are unknown. They are not in the world's roll of heroes. But what was earthly fame to them? Their names were in the book of life, the book of remembrance, that is written before the Lord for them that fear the Lord and that think upon his Name. We may well be content to be obscure here, like Lazarus the beggar, if our name, like his, is known in heaven. \*

LESSONS. 1. To love souls, to count the winning of souls the noblest work, the salvation of souls the most precious crown. 2. To do all that lies in us to heal dissensions and to promote Christian unity. 3. To desire above all things that our names may be written in the Lamb's book of life.

Vers. 4—7.—*The key-note of the Epistle: holy joy, with its blessed results.* I. THE DUTY OF REJOICING. 1. *The Christian should learn to rejoice always.* The word "always" is emphatic. There lies the difficulty, there too lies the blessedness, of rejoicing in the Lord. It is easy to rejoice in moments of excitement, but to rejoice *always*, in affliction, in pain, in weariness, in disappointment, is difficult indeed. St. Paul had learned the lesson which he teaches—he rejoiced in hardships and in chains. 2. *Christian joy is joy in the Lord.* Rejoice in what he did, in what he is, in himself. Rejoice in his incarnation, his holy life, his sufferings for us, his precious death, his resurrection, his ascension, his perpetual intercession. Rejoice in his humility, his purity, his unselfishness, his holy courage, his love, his gentleness, his sympathy, his power, his glory, his majesty. Rejoice in himself, in spiritual fellowship with him, in his most gracious presence abiding in the Christian heart.

II. THE RESULTS OF HOLY JOY. 1. *Christian joy leads to gentleness and forbearance towards others.* He who rejoices in the Lord, happy in that great possession, is not selfish, does not insist eagerly on his own rights, but will give way to others, will be gentle and kind; and that because the Lord is at hand. The Christian who rejoices in the Lord loves his appearing, loves to think on it, to prepare for it. He does not set overmuch store on his earthly rights, in view of the coming of the Lord and the great reward reserved for the faithful servant. 2. *Holy joy dispels anxious care.* He who rejoices in the Lord is not disturbed by distracting anxiety about worldly things. Holy joy keeps the mind clear and calm; it concentrates the thoughts upon the great gladness of the presence of the Lord, in comparison with which the objects of worldly pursuit are insignificant indeed. If we are learning to rejoice in him, we shall learn in like measure the difficult lesson to cast all our care upon him, for we shall know that he careth for us. 3. *Inner spiritual joy must express itself in prayer and supplication.* (1) For prayer is converse with God, and we must take delight in holding converse with him whose presence is our chiefest joy. Hence our love for prayer is a sure index of our love for God. The more we love him, the more constant our prayers will be; we shall learn to pray always, on all occasions, great and small. The Christian makes his requests known unto God in *everything*, in all the difficulties of his daily life. Nothing is too small to ask God's counsel upon, nothing so great and engrossing as to keep the Christian from his prayers. (2) *Prayer* is the general converse of the soul with God; *supplication* consists in direct petitions for ourselves and for others. Intercessory prayer is the bounden duty of the Christian. We must pray for our family, our neighbours, our Church, our nation, for all Christian people, for the heathen, for missions.

Christ encourages us to come to him with all our wants. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (3) But to be able to pray in times of distress and crushing sorrow, when prayer is most needful and most helpful, we must learn to pray in health and prosperity; we must pray in *everything*. Daniel, in the hour of danger, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." He had formed the *habit* of prayer. That habit is the result of long practice; it is deepened and strengthened by perseverance. Happy are they who by the grace and help of the Holy Spirit form that habit in early life.

4. *Holy joy implies habitual thanksgiving.* "In everything give thanks" is the precept of St. Paul. He illustrates his teaching by his own example: he sang praises unto God in the dungeon at Philippi; his Epistles abound in doxologies, in thanksgivings. He had formed the habit of giving thanks continually; it grew out of that holy joy which filled his soul. Holy joy finds its natural expression in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The soul which is blessed with that highest joy which is the fruit of the Spirit must give thanks always for all things; for such a one knows by his own happy experience that God maketh all things work together for good to them that love him. Daniel gave thanks in the extremity of peril; Job, in his deep distress: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

5. *Holy joy expresses itself in prayer and thanksgiving; prayer and thanksgiving bring peace.* Peace is the fruit of the Spirit, and the Spirit is given in answer to earnest prayer. "My Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." It is the peace of God, the peace which he giveth. It is the peace of Christ, such peace as he had. "Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you." It is trustful love and childlike confidence; it implies the blessed consciousness of forgiveness and acceptance with God. The heart in which that peace abideth is not troubled, neither is it afraid. For (1) the peace of God passeth all understanding; none can tell its calm blessedness but those to whom it is given. No energy of thought can comprehend it; no effort of imagination can picture it; only by our own happy experience can we tell its exceeding preciousness. And (2) it keeps the heart and thoughts. It is like a garrison of angels; it fills the heart with holy thoughts, holy memories, holy hopes; it keeps it safe from the temptations of the evil one; it leaves no room for sinful imaginations to pollute the shrine that is dedicated to God. Wicked desires cannot enter the heart where the peace of God keeps guard. Like all good gifts, it blesses us in Christ Jesus, in the sphere of his influence, flowing, as it does, from his grace and his atonement.

LESSONS. 1. The truest, the most abiding joy is joy in the Lord. The best of earthly joys comes from the society of those whom we dearly love. Christian joy springs from fellowship with Christ. Pray for grace to win Christ, to know Christ, to love Christ. 2. Love, joy, peace, are the fruit of the Spirit; pray for the blessed experience of the working of the Spirit in the heart. "Ask, and ye shall have."

Vers. 8, 9.—*Exhortation to cultivate habits of holy thought.* I. THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNING THE THOUGHTS. 1. *The thoughts are an index of the character.* The current of thought seems ever changeful, dependent on the varying circumstances of the passing hour. It may be so within certain limits; but in truth its general direction is determined by the character. The thoughts run in channels worn for them by the oft-repeated actions which form our habits, good or bad. If the peace of God rules in the heart, the thoughts will be holy; if room is left for the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, they will be of the earth, earthly. The thoughts show what the character is. 2. *And, on the other hand, the thoughts react powerfully on the character.* A sinful thought, brought again and again before the mind, strengthens the natural tendency of the will to evil and leads to the sinful deed. Therefore the thoughts must be disciplined and brought into captivity to the law of Christ. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Here is the hardest battle of the Christian life; to govern the thoughts there is need of constant watchfulness and persevering prayer.

II. THE LESSON DRAWN OUT INTO DETAILS. 1. "Whatsoever things are true." God is true; his promises are true, so are his most awful warnings. Christ is true; he is the Truth; his gospel is true. Holiness is true, real; "Now abideth faith, hope, charity.

The devil is a liar and the father of lies. He said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die;" it was the first wicked falsehood. The world is false with its cheating pleasures; it passeth away and the lusts thereof. 2. "*Whatsoever things are honest.*" Whatsoever things are deep and earnest, honourable and reverend. The Christian life hath a decorum of its own, a calm, grave dignity. Reverence and godly fear are essential to acceptable service. Charity "doth not behave itself unseemly." 3. "*Whatsoever things are just.*" The saintly life is not of the world, but it is in the world and hath its duties there. Holiness is not separate from morality; it transcends morality, but it implies it. We must bear always in our thoughts the Saviour's rule: "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." 4. "*Whatsoever things are pure.*" The pure in heart shall see God. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil." Nothing that defileth can enter into his presence. The Christian heart is the chosen temple of God the Holy Ghost. To bring unclean thoughts into that most sacred presence is an awful sin. The Christian's thoughts must be pure and holy. 5. "*Whatsoever things are lovely.*" The Christian character is lovable; gentleness, humility, charity, naturally attract love. "Think on these things;" see them in their perfection as exemplified in the Lord Jesus Christ; meditate much on his perfect holiness. 6. "*Whatsoever things are of good report.*" Think on such things as are gracious and attractive. Let nothing coarse or vulgar occupy your thoughts; let images of true beauty fill your souls. 7. "*If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise.*" "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Do not neglect even the more human conceptions of goodness. All good thoughts have their value; think on every form of virtue, all things worthy of praise.

III. THE LESSON ENFORCED BY EXAMPLE. 1. *Holy thought leads to holy living.* St. Paul was able to illustrate his precepts by his own holy life. Nothing enforces religious teaching so powerfully as the example of the teacher. He gave them a rule of thought; he exhibited in his own life a rule of conduct. 2. *The blessed result.* St. Paul's holiness flowed from the presence of God; the God of peace will abide with all who, like St. Paul, strive always to think holy thoughts and to live holy lives.

LESSONS. 1. Pray for grace to govern the thoughts. 2. It is most important to mark what the thoughts naturally turn to in times of leisure; this should be a frequent subject for self-examination; it shows the bent of the character. 3. Remember the influence of example.

Vers. 10—13.—*St. Paul's happy temper.* I. HIS JOY OVER THE AFFECTION OF THE PHILIPPIANS. 1. *Their loving thought for him gave him great joy.* He greatly loved his converts; their love for him was, next after the blessed love of Christ, his greatest comfort and support. He rejoiced in the proof of their love; it was sweet to him; it was good for them, an evidence of their spiritual progress. 2. *He may perhaps have feared that their love was growing cold; now he rejoiced.* The spiritual life has its seasons, its winter and its spring, its times of depression and its times of fervour. It cannot but be affected in some degree, while we are in the flesh, by physical causes and by outward circumstances. We must not allow ourselves to be cast down; we must struggle on, looking always unto Jesus. Our moods and feelings are changeful. He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

II. HIS CONTENTMENT. 1. *He had learned to be independent of external circumstances.* That joy in the Lord of which he speaks so much in this Epistle armed his soul against the trials of life. He that hath found Christ will not be wholly cast down by outward troubles. "Cast down [rather, 'being cast down'], but not destroyed" (2 Cor. iv. 9). "Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy laden . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." No one was ever more tried than St. Paul; but he was content in the midst of hardships, self-sufficient in the Christian sense, not with the independence of pride or Stoicism, but resting upon Christ. 2. *He was armed both for prosperity and adversity.* Christian self-sufficiency, which is really the sufficiency of Christ, is shown in sorrow and in joy; "in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth." The true Christian can bear misfortune and hardship with dignity, without ill humour and complaints; he can bear riches and honour with self-possession, without arrogance or elation. This true self-sufficiency manifests itself in all the circumstances of life, "in every thing and in all things." 3. *He was taught of God.* "I have been

instructed ; " "I have learned the secret." This Christian self-sufficiency comes from the teaching of God the Holy Ghost; it is a secret which he alone can teach. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." The soul in its converse with God learns many mysteries of spiritual experience, mysteries of grace, mysteries of self-renunciation, mysteries of self-consecration. St. Paul had been initiated into all. Long training, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, had led him through all the deep and holy mysteries of the life that is hid with Christ in God. We must ask the same Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. 4. *He was strengthened in Christ.* Here is the source of Christian self-sufficiency. It is only in Christ, in spiritual union with Christ, that the Christian possesses strength. Without him we can do nothing; in him we can do all things. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Therefore the Christian must not be discouraged; he must not shrink from the battle against evil in himself and in the world. He is indeed weak and helpless, but he has the presence of Christ, and in the strength of that presence he can do all things. "We are able," said the sons of Zebedee. We may in all humility say the same if we do verily believe in Christ. All things are possible to him that believeth. God giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

LESSONS. 1. It is easy to say, "Thy will be done;" it is very hard to work that prayer into our lives. St. Paul did so; so may we by the grace of God. 2. It is a secret to be learned only of God the Holy Ghost. 3. That teaching can make us contented always, self-sufficient through the strength of Christ.

Vers. 14—20.—*The sympathy of the Philippians with St. Paul.* I. THEIR GIFTS. 1. *They had fellowship with him in his affliction.* They made it their own; they showed the reality of their sympathy by their gifts. They were themselves in a great trial of afflictions, in deep poverty. They did not make their afflictions or their poverty an excuse for not aiding the apostle; they assisted him again and again. They did well, he says. Christian sympathy is a beautiful thing; it sweetens the cup of sorrow; it is one of God's most precious gifts. St. Paul felt it deeply. He did not seek their alms; that, indeed, helped him in his trouble. But he could have done without it, he had learned the great lesson of contentment. But the sympathy of Christian love was very precious to him; he yearned for it; it was his chiefest comfort next after the presence of Christ. He prized it for their sake as well as for his own; it proved that his labours had not been in vain. It was good for them too; it was good for them to show sympathy, as it was for the apostle to receive it. Christian sympathy, like mercy, is twice blest—"it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." 2. *They gave readily, spontaneously.* It was "in the beginning of the gospel;" they had but just become Christians; St. Paul had but just left them. He was at Thessalonica, the chief city of Macedonia. The Philippians did not leave the duty of ministering to the apostle's wants to the Thessalonians; they sent once and again, the little town to the great city, unto his necessities. They were the first, it seems, to have the great privilege of supporting St. Paul in his apostolic labours. They did not wait to see what others would give; they set the example; they gave what they could, and that at once. 3. *They were not weary in well-doing.* They sent again and again, twice at least, to Thessalonica; a third time, when St. Paul departed from Macedonia. "Brethren from Macedonia" supplied his wants at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 9). "The Churches of Macedonia" abounded in their liberality towards the poor brethren at Jerusalem (2 Cor. viii. 1, 2); and now they sent Epaphroditus to relieve the apostle's wants in his Roman imprisonment. 4. *They gave unasked.* St. Paul did not desire gifts; he was even unwilling to receive assistance from other Churches. "I seek not yours, but you," he said to the Corinthians. But the Philippians loved him for his work's sake and for his own sake. They gave freely out of love; they gave gladly, for they had learned of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Teacher, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

II. ST. PAUL'S FEELINGS ON RECEIVING THEIR CONTRIBUTION. 1. *His sensitive nature is deeply touched with the evidence of their love;* but he shrinks from appearing to invite further liberality. It is not the gift, he says, that he seeks. He is pleased, he rejoices, but not for his own sake; it is for the givers, for the sake of the Philippians, that St. Paul's heart is touched with holy joy. It is good for them to give; he knows

it. Their bounty is set down to their account in the treasury of heaven, and this thought is full of sweetness to the apostle's soul. 2. *His contentment.* He needed nothing more, he said; Epaphroditus had brought all he wanted, and more than he wanted. Mark the unworldliness of the apostle. We are never satisfied; whatever we have we want more. He was satisfied amid hardships, in captivity. For he had the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and, having that, he could not crave for earthly comforts.

III. THE ACCEPTABLENESS OF THEIR GIFT. 1. *Those gifts relieved St. Paul's wants, but they had a far higher character—they were, he tells us, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."* Christian almsgiving is a very sacred thing; God accepts the gift as given to himself. It has a sacrificial character; for it issues out of that spiritual sacrifice offered to God by the royal priesthood—the sacrifice of self. We are bidden to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. The offering of ourselves sanctifies the lesser offering of our earthly goods. 2. *The reward.* The cup of cold water given in the name of a prophet would bring a prophet's reward. The Philippians had supplied the apostle's needs; they had done it for Christ's sake, whose servant he was; God would supply all their needs. They had given according to their means, out of their deep poverty; God would reward them according to his riches. What a word is this! The riches of God are infinite; infinite, then, is the reward, not of almsgiving in itself, but of the faith and love which prompted it. "Can two mites buy the kingdom?" asks St. Chrysostom. Yes, if they are given in the spirit of the poor widow, in undoubting faith and self-sacrificing love. God will reward those who minister to his saints, in glory—in the glory of his grace and presence now, in the glory of heaven hereafter. He will reward them in Christ Jesus, in virtue of that living union with Christ, through which alone all spiritual blessings flow into the believer's soul. 3. *The thanksgiving.* The glory is God's. It is he who giveth his people a willing heart to offer willingly. The glory is his. Men see their good works and glorify their Father. All glory is his, all majesty, dominion, and power, and that throughout the ages of eternity.

LESSONS. Learn: 1. The beauty of Christian sympathy. 2. The blessedness of Christian almsgiving. 3. To give like the Philippians, gladly. 3. To receive, if need be, like St. Paul, prizeing the love more than the gift. 4. Always to ascribe the glory to God.

Vers. 21—23.—*The salutations.* I. THE APOSTLE'S OWN SALUTATIONS. 1. *They teach the duty of Christian courtesy.* A Christian salutation is real; it is a benediction, not a mere form; for it is the expression of that love which ought to be the distinguishing mark of Christians. 2. *He salutes every saint.* He does not single out individual names in this Epistle; he sends his love to *every saint*. We have noticed more than once how often the word "all" occurs; there was no schism in the Philippian Church; all loved St. Paul, and all were dear to him. There were personal quarrels, but no religious animosities. It was a united Church, one in faith and love. 3. *He calls them "saints in Christ Jesus" at the end of his Epistle, as he had done in the first verse.* It is one of the highest titles by which Christians can be addressed. It reminds us of our high privileges and of our great responsibilities. We are saints by dedication, we have been once made members of Christ. We must walk "worthily of the calling wherewith we were called;" it must be our most earnest effort to follow after holiness of heart and life, and to abide in Christ. It is an awful as well as a blessed thing to be a Christian, redeemed with the most precious blood, reconciled to God by the tremendous sacrifice of the cross. The word "saint" reminds us of our duties and of our hopes. Therefore St. Paul loves to repeat it.

II. SALUTATIONS SENT FROM ROME. 1. *From the brethren which were with him.* He means his personal companions who had come to Rome with him or joined him there afterwards. Except Timothy, they were not like-minded with himself (ch. ii. 20, 21); yet he calls them "brethren." He had that charity which "hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." 2. *From the Roman Christians.* "All the saints," he says, "salute you." He mentions especially the Christians of Nero's household. The gospel had reached that sink of all impurity; there were saints there. Whether slaves (as they probably were) or officials of the court, whether of higher or lower

rank, they were attached to the person of Nero and witnessed the abominations of his loathsome life. God's grace is sufficient for us, whatever our outward lot may be. St. Paul in chains, these Christians of Nero's household in the palace, lived a holy life. Holiness is possible in all conditions of life, in the deepest poverty, and amid all the temptations of wealth and evil example. It needs only the grace of God. 3. *Therefore the apostle ends, as he began, with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Christ is the Alpha and Omega, his grace is the beginning and the end. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. His grace is sufficient for us. To him be the glory for ever and ever.

**LESSONS.** Learn : 1. To be courteous to all men. 2. To strive with all earnestness to become saints, not in name only, but in deed and in truth. 3. Not to lay blame on our circumstances, but to strive, whatever our circumstances may be, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. 4. To trust only in God, to pray constantly for his grace.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1.—*The duty of steadfastness.*** The apostle grounds this duty upon the heavenly citizenship and the hope of the coming Saviour. **Mark—**

I. **HIS ENDEARING ADDRESS.** “My brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast, beloved.” The accumulation of epithets marks the intense affection and delight of the apostle in converts so worthy of his concern for their good. The twofold repetition of the term “beloved” in a single sentence marks love as the dominant feeling; the other terms indicate either his anxiety to see them, the joy which their Christian kindliness carried to his heart, or the triumph of Divine grace in their conversion which redounded so signally to his own final victory.

II. **THE ABIDING ATTITUDE OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS.** “So stand fast in the Lord.” It implies : 1. *That they are exposed to influences calculated to mar the integrity of their walk.* There is a threefold hostility always at work against a believer—the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. vi. 12), tending to shake heart or mind. Probably the apostle thought of the spiritual risks that threatened from the side of Judaistic zealotry. 2. *The true spring of Christian steadfastness is in the Lord, as the element of the spiritual life.* We are said to stand in faith (2 Cor. i. 24) and to stand in grace (Rom. v. 2), but these phrases only represent the methods in which the believer finds his weakness linked with the omnipotence of Divine grace. The counsel of the apostle is needful in every age. The caprice of opinion was never more marked than in our time. There is a lifting of anchora that bodes no good, with a drifting any whither, but usually toward intellectual darkness. Therefore believers must, in the imbroglio of strange beliefs, “stand fast in the Lord.”—T. C.

**Vers. 2, 3.—*A touching personal appeal.*** “I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

I. **WOMEN HELD A LEADING PLACE IN THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY OF PHILIPPI.** 1. *It was to women that the apostle first preached the gospel in that Roman town.* (Acts xvi.) They were the first converts to Christianity in Europe. 2. *It was women who first gave hospitable reception to the apostle in a town which never ceased to show him substantial kindness.* 3. *It was probably owing to the prominence of Christian women at Philippi that the apostle became such a debtor to the most liberal of all the Churches.* Their sympathetic natures would initiate and sustain projects of Christian generosity.

II. **THE TWO WOMEN HERE ADDRESSED WERE EVIDENTLY INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.** 1. *They were ladies of rank, who displayed an active zeal for the cause of Christ.* Their names appear in the ancient inscriptions. The women of Macedonia held a high social place in that age. These good women helped the apostle in Christian labours, “Inasmuch as they laboured with me in the gospel.” As women were not allowed to preach (1 Tim. ii. 12), it is evident that their service was of a more private kind, either in instructing the young or, more probably, in instructing female converts who were not accessible to members of the other sex. The order of concresses evidently arose out of some necessity of this sort. 2. *They had differences*

of a sort calculated to mar their influence and to shake the faith of converts. The differences were less probably in the way of religious opinion than of methods of religious work. Perhaps a difference of temperament may have put them out of sympathy with each other, and a spirit of rivalry may have led to unseemly dissensions in the Church. 3. *There is an urgency in the apostolic appeal which displays an anxiety on their account.* He says, "I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche," as if he regarded them both as equally open to censure. He thus addresses his appeal to each individually. He counsels them to find in the Lord the true centre of their unity. Let them think as the Lord thinks, do as the Lord does, and submit to his supreme guidance in the sphere of their Christian labours. 4. *He appeals to his true yokefellow*—whoever he or she may have been—to use his influence to effect a reconciliation between the two ladies. "Yea, I ask thee to assist them, inasmuch as they laboured with me in the gospel." There is no more important, though delicate, service than to promote a better understanding between two Christian people whose paths have disagreeably crossed each other. 5. *The importance of the case is manifest from the leading place that the apostle assigns to the two ladies*, besides "Clement and other my fellow-workers, whose names are written in the book of life." They held a distinguished place beside these labourers. If Clement was the well-known author of the Epistle to the Corinthians, they are distinguished by association with his venerable name. If the apostle's other fellow-workers are unnamed, they are named in the book of life. This suggestive phrase implies that (1) salvation is an individual thing, for individual names have their record on high; (2) that their salvation is an event already fore-ordained; and (3) therefore absolutely certain.—T. C.

Ver. 4.—*Christian joy a duty.* "Rejoice in the Lord." This sentence is the keynote of the Epistle. The world holds that believers have no joys.

I. **BELIEVERS OUGHT TO REJOICE.** 1. *Because it is a commanded duty.* "Rejoice in the Lord." 2. *Because, if commanded, it is provided by the Holy Spirit, for it is part of the Spirit's fruit.* (Gal. v. 22.) 3. *Because joy is characteristic of the Christian.* The early Christians "ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts ii. 46). This joy is not inconsistent with sorrow. The apostle himself was "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing" (2 Cor. vi. 10). "Rejoice with trembling."

II. **THE NATURE OF THIS JOY.** "In the Lord." The world rejoices in the creature, but the believer rejoices in the Creator of all things. 1. *Because the Lord is.* 2. *Because he is the Portion of his people.* 3. *Because of all the manifestations of his power, wisdom, and grace.* 4. *Because the believer hopes for the glory to come.* (Rom. v. 2.)

III. **THE BELIEVER IS TO CHERISH AN ABIDING JOY.** "Rejoice in the Lord at all times." In dark days as well as bright days. A permanent habit of joy is reasonable, when we consider (1) that there is no change in the Lord, the Source of our joy; (2) that our relationship to him is unchangeable.

IV. **MARK THE EMPHATIC REPETITION OF THE COMMAND.** "And again I will say, Rejoice." This attests its importance. 1. *Joy is the spring of energy.* "A weary heart tires in a mile." A cheerful Christian is usually a very active one. "The joy of the Lord is his strength." 2. *It kills the taste for sinful pleasures.* It excludes from the heart everything it cannot harmonize with itself. 3. *It enables the believer to confront persecution.* The early Christians "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." 4. *It enhances the charm and influence of Christian life.*—T. C.

Ver. 5.—*The virtue of forbearance.* "Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."

I. **THE NATURE OF THIS VIRTUE.** 1. *It is the opposite of contention and self-aggrandizement, rigour and severity.* 2. *It is the spirit that enables a man to bear injuries with patience and not to demand all that is rightly his due, for the sake of peace.* The apostle corrected the litigious spirit of the Corinthians by asking them, "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" (1 Cor. vi. 7.)

II. **THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS VIRTUE.** 1. *It contributes greatly to the comfort of life and the peace of society.* There is always a tendency to friction in the relations of life where the spirit of forbearance does not govern them. 2. *It contributes to the use*

*fulness of Christian people and promotes the glory of God.* This true spirit of Christ will give a man great influence with his fellows and will redound to the credit of the gospel.

III. THE REASON TO ENFORCE THIS DUTY. "The Lord is at hand." Let us bear with others, seeing the time is near when we may expect the Lord to bear with us. All our rivalries and disputes ought to disappear in the light of the judgment morning.—T. C.

Vera. 6, 7.—*A cure for care.* The apostle forbids harassing anxiety and enjoins prayerfulness as the sure way to peace. "Be anxious for nothing." Mark—

I. THE WISE COUNSEL OF THE APOSTLE. 1. *This does not mean that we are not to be anxious about duty.* We ought to have a deep concern for every interest of God's kingdom. A certain measure of anxious thought is necessary to the efficient performance of every duty of life. 2. *It means that we are not to be anxious about the results of our work or consequences generally.* (1) Because God holds these in his own hands; (2) because our anxiety will not ward off the anticipated evil; (3) because the evil may turn out for good. 3. *Over-anxiety is sinful.* (1) It is the disregard of a Divine command; (2) it distrusts God's power and wisdom; (3) it doubts the reality of the promises (4) it deters from duty; (5) it spoils the temper and comfort of work.

II. THE REMEDY FOR OVER-ANXIETY. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." 1. *The range of prayer.* "In everything." This counsel is often neglected, for men carry their great misfortunes or their great anxieties to God, but keep their trivial vexations to themselves. A good man has paraphrased this passage thus: "Be careful for nothing; be prayerful for everything; be thankful for anything." 2. *The variety of prayer.* The word "prayer" here points to the frame of mind, the word "supplication" to the actual asking of blessing, the requests point to the various parts of the supplication, while the thanksgiving marks the subjective condition of acceptance. 3. *The effects of prayer.* (1) It tends to place everything in God's hand, with a feeling that he will do all things well. The burden is cast upon the Lord. (2) It leads the praying man to look for answers to prayer in the events of Divine providence. (3) It increases devout inquisitiveness to know the Divine will as recorded in the Word.

III. THE RESULT. "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." This beautiful text is often the subject of independent treatment, but we have no right to separate what God has joined together; and accordingly it is only when we are careful for nothing and prayerful in everything that we may expect to enter into Divine peace. 1. *The nature of the peace of God.* It is deep inward repose of spiritual life, and is called "the peace of God" because he communicates and sustains it, as the result of our reconciliation with him. (1) *It springs out of our justification.* (Rom. v. 1.) (2) *It arises in the soul as part of our spiritual-mindedness.* "For to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. viii. 6.) (3) *It is the abiding experience of the saints so long as they are practically consistent in their walk.* "Great peace have they that love thy Law" (Ps. cxxix. 165). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3). (4) *It is almost inexplicable.* "It passeth all understanding." (a) It passeth the understanding of wicked or worldly men; for their experience lies in a very different sphere. (b) It surpasses the understanding of godly men; for light often breaks in upon their darkness, in a way quite mysterious. Who can understand the peace of the dying? Does it not pass all understanding? 2. *The effects of this peace.* "It shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." This does not signify that the peace shall keep possession, but rather, as the word signifies, garrison or stand sentry before the heart or mind, so as to prevent the intrusion of disturbing or disquieting thoughts. It is Christ himself who plants the garrison there. (1) *In case of intellectual doubts, the peace will either prevent their arising at all or repel them when they arise.* (2) *In the case of the bitter remembrance of my past sins, this peace carries me back to the reconciliation effected by Christ on the cross.* (3) *In case of anxieties, fears, and earthly solicitudes, the peace of God carries a believer back to the point of his past deliverances;* and he says, "Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy

wings will I rejoice." (4) *It is a strong guard against sin.* The religiously peaceful are the morally strong. Duty is pleasant, obedience is sweet, because the spiritual mind is in harmony with God's mind. Sin is rejected because it threatens to undermine the peace. 3. *The abiding source of this peace.* "In Christ Jesus" (1) *He is our Peace.* (Eph. ii. 14.) Not in the mere sense of being our Peace-maker, as if he had retired after he had made it, but he is the continuous Source of our peace. (2) *He gives peace as his legacy to the Church.* (John xiv. 27.) He imparts that central calm that is at the heart of the endless agitations that shake our merely earthly life.—T. C.

Ver. 8.—*Subjects for Christian study.* The gospel does more than hold out a refuge to the guilty; it takes all who accept Christ under its supreme and exclusive direction. Therefore, in his parting words to his converts, the last counsel of the apostle is of a beautifully practical character: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

I. SUBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATION. There is a certain order in the series here exhibited. 1. *Things that concern us absolutely.* "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable." (1) Things true. That is, true as opposed to false; for lying is, according to the apostle, a breach of the social contract (Eph. iv. 25). True as opposed to insincerity; true in speech, true in conduct. Things true stand at the head of the series, because the truth is the ground of all God's commands, and the ground of our obedience. The love of truth is the intellectual part of piety. It raises the moral temper and tone of the world. As it is by the truth we are sanctified, it is natural that things true should be the subject of constant Christian thought. (2) Things venerable. A man is very much what he thinks; therefore make venerable themes the subjects of your deepest thought. Grave things strengthen and deepen Christian character and intensify Christian feeling. Character formed on such a basis will be dignified. "Acceptable to God and approved of men" (Rom. xiv. 18). 2. *Things that concern us relatively.* "Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure." (1) Things just or righteous. Justice maintains right relations between man and man, holds the balance fairly between conflicting interests, co-ordinates the rights of each with all. Love of justice is the moral part of piety, as the love of truth is the intellectual part of it. Justice is peculiar in this respect, that there are no degrees of it, as there are degrees of goodness or generosity; for a man less than just is unjust. A man, again, may do a hundred kindly acts, but if he fail in one act of justice the blemish is fatal to character. There is, therefore, great need that Christian people should be just in all their acts. Religion does not exempt them from the laws which bind men of the world. (2) Things pure. Not merely chastity, but purity in the widest sense. There must be pure thinking, pure reading, pure action. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Let the mind dwell on pure themes. 3. *Things that suggest moral approbation from the outside.* "Whatsoever things are lovely, . . . of good report." The four things already mentioned describe their character in themselves. These two mark the impression made upon the world. (1) Things lovely. They suggest the kindly graces of character. There is such a thing as being dignified, majestic, and venerable, but not lovely. A Christian ought not to be morose, unkind, or fault-finding. Nothing tends to injure the cause of religion more than an unlovely temper, an eye severe and unkind, a brow hard and stern. Yet the apostle gives only the fifth place to "things lovely," as if to indicate that personal kindness or good nature is not to supply the room of justice or purity. (2) Things of good report. Things such as all men agree in commanding—courtesy, urbanity, justice, temperance, purity, truth, respect to parents. Men of the world will not withhold their praise from men distinguished by these virtues. Christians ought to remember the words, "Let not your good be evil spoken of." They are to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without." 4. *Things to be included in a larger category.* "If there be any virtue, if there be any praise." This clause is thrown in as an after-thought, to cover possible omissions, for the subjects of Christian contemplation are endless. (1) Virtue. The apostle never uses this old heathen term except in this place, but he seems to say that Christian people are not to neglect the study of that which is best in heathen conception.

(2) Praise. He had often despised the praise of men, but he concedes here that some consideration ought to be given even to what is worthy of praise among men.

II. THE DUTY AND ADVANTAGE OF CONTEMPLATING THESE THINGS. “Think on these things” 1. *The mind takes the stamp of what it thinks on.* There is an assimilating process by which the graces or virtues we have specified are stamped deeply upon Christian character. It is with these graces as it is with Christ himself. He is the glass “in which we behold the glory of God, and so are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” 2. *There are blessed effects upon the world.* A life exemplifying the graces of holy living is the most likely to arrest the careless and the wicked. The living epistles of Christ are made to be known and read of all men.—T. C.

Vers. 9.—*The apostle himself an example to believers.* “Those things, which ye both learned, and received, and heard, and saw in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRECEPTS. “Learned and received.” The reference is to his oral teaching, which included all the principles out of which these graces or virtues take their origin and growth.

II. THE APOSTLE'S EXAMPLE. As set before them in what they heard of him when absent, and in what they saw of him when he was present. They witnessed his laborious usefulness, his patient submission to persecution, his spirituality and care for his own spiritual life, and, above all, his splendid decision of character.

III. THE EFFECT OF FOLLOWING THESE PRECEPTS AND THIS EXAMPLE. “The God of peace shall be with you.” The way of peace lies along the pathway of obedience. The blessing of the Lord is upon them who love him and keep his commandments.—T. C.

Vers. 10—13.—*The secret of contentment.* The apostle now turns to his personal relations with the Philippians, and commands them for their considerate and timely liberality in the times of his distress.

I. THE APOSTLE'S JOY IN THEIR LIBERALITY. “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that at length ye revived your interest in me; in which, indeed, ye did interest yourselves, but ye had no opportunity.” 1. *There never was a man who more keenly appreciated Christian kindness than the apostle.* Self-reliant and jealously independent as he was, his happiness was greatly increased by the thoughtful generosity of his converts. It was in no degree diminished by the fact that his friends had no opportunity of helping him, perhaps because he was far beyond their reach in the sweep of his missionary journeys. 2. *Their kindness inspired him with a holy joy.* Not because it was in answer to prayer for timely help, but because it typified the true grace of God in his converts. Their liberality was an evidence at once of their personal interest in him and of their Christian standing in the Lord.

II. THE APOSTLE'S CONTENTED SPIRIT. “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, I know also how to abound. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” 1. *What a checkered experience was that of the apostle!* He had experience of want and of fulness in his wanderings as an apostle. He was no stranger to hunger. 2. *What a happy spirit for such a life!* He was content with such things as he had. The poet says—

“Art thou poor?  
Yet hast thou golden slumbers, O sweet Content.”

There is no passage in any writer which depicts a more expansive, a more positively exalted attitude of mind than he describes in this passage as the virtue of content. It is that condition of mind in which nothing can foil the energy of the spirit. It is the quality which, having evoked generosity in others, flows forth in gratitude for that generosity; which, having failed to evoke generosity, manifests itself in submission to disappointment and in patient trust for the future germination of the seed sown.

III. THE TRUE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT. “I can do all things in him that infuses strength into me.” This language implies that there is a Divine spring of help in all

conditions. 1. Consider the extent of a Christian's ability. (1) He is able to undergo every trial. (2) To brave every sort of suffering. (3) To overcome every variety of temptation. (4) To perform every duty. 2. Consider the source of the Christian's strength. "In him." By virtue of our vital union with Christ we have access to the true Source of strength. Christ infuses strength into us: (1) By his teaching. (2) By his example of holy patience and forbearance. (3) By the moral influence of his death as a real sacrifice for sin. (4) By the abundant bestowal of his Holy Spirit. Thus the believer becomes "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APOSTLE'S STATEMENT. (1) It was at once a declaration of experiences and (2) an expression of gratitude.—T. C.

Vers. 14—18.—*The circumstances of their liberality.* The apostle guards against any appearance of slighting their gifts by specifying the grounds of his joy in them.

I. THEIR LIBERALITY WAS NOT MERELY ALMSGIVING, BUT AN ACT OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY. "Ye did well in communicating with my affliction." They were ready to share the burden of his troubles. There were no converts nearer to the heart of the apostle or more closely identified with his deepest trials.

II. THE APOSTLE'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THEIR GIFTS WAS EXCEPTIONAL IN ITS CHARACTER. While he refused to receive gifts from the Corinthians (2 Cor. xi. 9) and from the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 5; 2 Thess. iii. 8) because he would not compromise his independence in the case of Churches which were only too ready to question his motives, he conferred on the Philippians the exceptional privilege of ministering to his wants. Once when he left Macedonia, and twice when he was in Thessalonica, they sent, "to relieve his want."

III. THIS WILLINGNESS DID NOT IMPLY THAT HE COVETED THEIR GIFTS. "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that aboundingeth to your account." He does not seek to stimulate their generosity, but rather to increase that recompense which every fresh proof of their love would be sure to enhance.

IV. HIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR LATEST GIFTS BY EPAPHRODITUS. "I have all things and abound: I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." 1. *It was a thoughtful kindness to send him gifts while he was a prisoner at Rome.* The Christians at Rome seem to have been lax in this duty. As he could not gain a living for himself in prison, he was the more dependent on outside generosity. 2. *It was doubly pleasant to have the gifts from Philippi conveyed by one so faithful and so dear to the apostle as Epaphroditus.* 3. *The gifts in his eyes owed their chief value to their being acceptable in God's sight.*—T. C.

Ver. 19.—*The true source of supply in spiritual need.* The apostle seems to say, "You have supplied all my wants; my God shall supply all yours in turn." Consider—

I. THE AUTHOR OF SUPPLY. "My God shall supply all your need." 1. *The expression, "my God," seems to say that what the apostle had found him to be in all his wants, his converts would be sure to find him likewise.* "My God," (1) because he is mine and I am his; (2) because he has me wholly in charge and has all my interests committed to him. 2. *The expression implies, not merely God's ability and willingness to supply all our need, but his obligation to do so, in virtue of the covenant between him and his people.*

II. THE NEEDS OF THE CHRISTIAN. "All your need." 1. This does not signify all that the Christian wants; only what he needs. In our waywardness and our childishness we ask for many things which are not really needful to us, but rather hurtful. 2. *Our needs are many.* (1) In temporal things; (2) in spiritual things. We need faith and its increase, love and its enlargement, hope and its brighter kindling, grace in all its fulness and variety, perseverance in grace to the end.

III. THE RULE OR MEASURE OF SUPPLY. "According to his riches in glory." Not the riches of his glory, but according to his riches, which will find their full development in placing the Christian in glory. Thus there is an inexhaustible supply in God.

IV. THE MEDIUM OF SUPPLY. "In Christ Jesus." In virtue of our union with him

we receive of his fulness, grace for grace. That union is the guarantee of a full supply for all our needs.

V. THE DOXOLOGY APPROPRIATE TO SUCH A THOUGHT. "Now to God even our Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." This anticipatory doxology is suggested by the pregnant thought of this passage. The glory is due to him who supplies our need.—T. C.

Vers. 21, 22.—*Mutual salutations.* I. CHRISTIANITY IS THE RELIGION OF GOOD WILL TO MAN. It wishes well to all men, but especially to those of the household of faith. The apostle asks the Philippians to salute each individual saint as if he were to be the recipient of a separate blessing: "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus." The blessings we wish for our friends are only to be enjoyed in Christ Jesus.

II. THE SALUTATIONS INDICATE THE SOLIDARITY OF THE CHURCH. The Church at Rome is closely bound to the Church at Philippi. 1. *The salutation of the apostle's companions.* "The brethren which are with me salute you." That is, as distinguished from the saints at Rome. The brethren included, at least, Timothy, Luke, Epaphroditus, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Epaphras, Mark, Demas, Onesimus. 2. *The salutation of the saints, and especially those of Cæsar's household.* "All the saints salute you, but especially those of Cæsar's household." The saints of the great city of Rome, so far from despising the saints of the colonial town of Philippi, acknowledge a common brotherhood in their kindly greeting. The thought of the saints in Cæsar's household suggests many reflections as to the penetrative power of the gospel. It is a remarkable tribute to its power that there should be saints in the household of Nero Cæsar. Mark: (1) *The place of these saints.* "In Cæsar's household." Whether they were members of the Praetorian Guard or retainers in the emperor's family, they were (a) in the most important position in the world—at Rome, the seat of empire, with communications reaching to the ends of the earth; (b) they were tolerated in their religion, during the brief interval when Rome, with a glorious impartiality, opened its gates to all the faiths of the world, but in two years' time, indifference turned to hatred, and hatred to persecution; (c) they were in the most corrupt household in the world, in the last place where we should have expected to find saints. (2) *The character of their saintship.* (a) It was heroic saintship; (b) it showed independence; (c) it showed constancy. The catacombs of Rome convey the record of this saintship in the original purity of gospel life.—T. C.

Vers. 1—9.—*The life of joy and peace.* Celestial citizenship, "other-worldliness," as it has been called, should have a further issue than the expectation of the advent. It should have practical issues in a life of great peace and joy. It is, therefore, to such a life Paul calls his Philippian converts. Let us look at the interesting details.

I. CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR UNITY AND CO-OPERATION IN THE WORK OF THE LORD. (Vers. 1—3.) Nothing is so productive of unity as our assurance that we are citizens of the same heaven. Why should compatriots fall out in this distant land? Should we not bury our differences and march forward shoulder to shoulder? Euodias and Syntyche must be of the same mind in the Lord. The workers male and female at Philippi are cordially to co-operate. They ought to be a united band. As heaven overarches us all and unifies the population of the globe, so should the thought of our celestial citizenship make all one. For in heaven there shall be no divisions and vexations. The brotherhood shall never there be broken. For unbroken brotherhood, therefore, we should long and labour here.

II. CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR JOY IN THE LORD AT ALL TIMES. (Ver. 4.) The art of enjoying life is what Christianity alone can teach us. Man's effort at first was to rejoice apart from God; to eat and enjoy the fruit, no matter what charges God had given. And this idea still haunts mankind. Prodigals and legalists imagine that they can enjoy life most away from the heavenly Father (Luke xv. 11—32). But we learn a different lesson in the gospel. We learn that the Father's house is full of "music and dancing;" in other words, heaven is the home of joy—joy, too, that is everlasting. And we realize that in the Lord alone the sources of true and lasting joy are to be found. When we look to him and confide in him, then we come as citizens of heaven to rejoice in him ~~and~~ all times. In seasons of sorrow as well as in seasons of

mirth there may be an undertone of celestial joy. Man is called to joy, not to trouble. The art is in going straight to Jesus the infinite Fountain, and in avoiding the broken cisterns that lie our way.

**III. CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP BESPEAKS MODERATION.** (Ver. 5.) It ill befits a citizen of heaven to be ostentatious and venturesome to the utmost brink of Christian liberty. Display is not the outcome or issue of a consciousness of our citizenship above. Especially when we live with the abiding persuasion of the Lord's speedy advent, all want of moderation seems out of place. In proportion as we rejoice in the Lord shall we be distinguished by moderation in our life and carriage. If God gives abundance, it is that we may manifest the spirit of moderation and never be the least intoxicated by success. Ostentation must be left to the world.

**IV. CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR A LIFE WITHOUT CAREFULNESS.** (Vers. 6, 7.) Just as in heaven the saintly souls keep nothing back from God and so live an unclouded life before him, so ought celestial citizens to live the open life with God here and be correspondingly free from care. And here it may be observed that an old divine has quaintly put our duty as expressed in these verses thus, that we should "be careful for nothing; be prayerful for everything; be thankful for anything." The result of such confidence is peace. "God's peace which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds," or, as the Revised Version has it, "shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." Freed from anxious care, why should we not be peaceful?

**V. CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP CALLS UPON US TO LOOK OUT FOR AND THINK UPON THE TRUE, THE HONOURABLE, THE JUST, THE PURE, THE LOVELY, THE GRACIOUS, THE MANLY, AND THE PRAISEFUL.** (Ver. 8.) Now, it is truly wonderful how a joyful Christian spirit will discover upon his path, be it ever so lowly, such food for thought as is sketched for us here. It has been said with great beauty, "If we do but open our hearts at a single point, the spiritual water and blood will find an entrance, will purge our egotism and complete the sacrifice. In this confidence, 'as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' we shall go freely on our appointed way, knowing that it may become to us a discipline of God, and that there is no way so beaten but that things true and honest, and just and lovely, may be found in it." The joyful, heaven-centred soul discerns food for meditation where others cannot find it, and moves upward upon a path of increasing light towards "the perfect day."

**VI. THE GOD OF PEACE GRANTS FELLOWSHIP TO SUCH CITIZENS.** (Ver. 9.) If we honestly enter upon the joyful, peaceful life of heavenly citizenship, the felt presence of God as the God of peace shall be always with us. Over the peace he has made in our once tempest-tossed hearts he will rejoice with singing, and in his love and fellowship we shall be enabled to rest. The King of the celestial country can keep his citizens company all the time they are here on earth; they are at home with God all their happy days; he takes their burdens from them and soothes them in sorrow and makes them somewhat worthy of their heavenly hopes. With such well-filled minds and hearts may we journey onward towards the fatherland above!—R. M. E.

**Vers. 10—23.—*The art of Divine contentment.*** The Philippians, having sent by Epaphroditus certain love-tokens to the apostle, must have a receipt from the magnanimous receiver. Most likely they were not of much intrinsic value, but Paul's great heart rejoices over them and calls them "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing unto God." At the same time, he lets them know that he could have been content without these love-tokens, though he is delighted with them; for he has learned the lesson of the years, to be content with any state in which a loving Lord might be pleased to place him. And here we have to notice—

**I. CONTENTMENT IS AN ART.** (Ver. 11.) It must be "learned." We cannot acquire it at a bound. We must serve our apprenticeship to it as to any other art. It is not a science to be theoretically mastered, but an art to be practically obtained. We must go to the "school of art," we must set ourselves earnestly as scholars to learn the lesson, and we must "keep our hands in" by constant practice.

**II. THE CONTENTED SPIRIT MAKES LITTLE OF ITS WANTS.** (Vers. 11—13.) Paul had not sent any word to Philippi about his needs. He had become so superior to circumstances that abasement and abundance made no difference to him. Faith in Christ

made him independent. It is the humble spirit which trusts the omnipotent Saviour which proves to be really the independent spirit. It is humility and independence which always go together. When we control our desires, minimize our wants, we can reach independence more really than by acquiring vast estate. The rich are often discontented. Their desires outstrip all acquisition, and they are discontented in spite of their abundance.

III. THE CONTENTED SPIRIT MAKES MUCH OF ITS BOUNTIES. (Vers. 12—18.) With the independence Paul manifests magnanimity. See how he speaks of the attention of the Philippians. He makes it out that they have been always sending to him—that every time they had an opportunity they were sending him their love-tokens. "Once and again" they had sent to his necessity. Now, it requires a big contented spirit to take the kindness of others cordially. Emerson says, "You cannot give anything to a magnanimous person. After you have served him he at once puts you in debt by his magnanimity. The service a man renders his friend is trivial and selfish compared with the service he knows his friend stood in readiness to yield him, alike before he had begun to serve his friend and now also. Compared with that good-will I bear my friend, the benefit it is in my power to render him seems small. Besides, our action on each other, good as well as evil, is so incidental and at random that we can seldom hear the acknowledgments of any person who would thank us for a benefit without some shame and humiliation. We can rarely strike a direct stroke, but must be content with an oblique one; we seldom have the satisfaction of yielding a direct benefit which is directly received. But rectitude scatters favours on every side without knowing it, and receives with wonder the thanks of all people." In the same way, we find the magnanimous Paul making as much of the kindness of the Philippians as led them, we may be sure, to wonder at such mention being made of their gifts at all.

IV. THE CONTENTED SPIRIT LOOKS AT ALL IN A SPIRITUAL LIGHT. (Vers. 19—23.) Paul was glad of their gift, for it was spiritual "fruit." It was a benefit to them more than to him. Did they not realize that "it is better to give than to receive"? They had pleased God by their goodness to his servant. And he would supply all their need, according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. He would give them spiritual compensation. They would get a benefit in soul which was cheaply bought by what they had given.

He then sums up the joy-inspiring Epistle with salutations, among others, from those saints in Caesar's household. This shows what success Paul's mission had enjoyed at the capital, how even the entourage of the emperor had felt the spell of the aged prisoner. Paul had shown that he could live a heavenly, joyful, contented life, in spite of his imprisonment and possible martyrdom. The hero made heroes of others. The guardsmen who were chained to him cleaved to him in love. May such a celestial life be ours!—R. M. E.

Vers. 1—7.—*Various exhortations.* I. STEADFASTNESS. "Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved." As in the first chapter our performing our duties as citizens is followed by the exhortation to stand fast, so here our possession of the privileges of heavenly citizens is more formally made the ground of the same exhortation. We are to stand fast so as has been pointed out, *i.e.* as heavenly citizens. There might be a standing fast against becoming heavenly citizens. And even as heavenly citizens they were to stand fast in the Lord, *i.e.* within the limits and to the extent prescribed by Christ, and in the strength offered by Christ. But the duty of steadfastness is almost lost sight of in the wealth of epithets of endearment with which it is surrounded. The Philippians were his brethren beloved; he cherished the warmest feelings toward them. They were his longed for; he had in absence a great desire to see them. They were his joy; he had a great delight in their Christian excellences. They were his crown, or wreath of victory round the diadem; they were evidence that he had not run in vain. And, having stated the duty with all brevity, he falls back on the first epithet, as if he had difficulty in breaking away from affectionate expression. Let them not, then, grieve such love by neglecting to stand fast.

II. THE RECONCILIATION OF EUODIA AND SYNTYCHE. 1. *Direct appeal.* "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord." It is a

strange destiny by which the names of these women have been handed down from generation to generation in God's Book, in connection with a difference which existed between them. It is well that our differences are soon forgotten, as even our names will be after we are gone. And yet the record is kept of our differences, as of our names, in God's book of remembrance. It would be a surprise to these women to be thus referred to by name in the apostle's letter, read before the assembled congregation. And so it will be a surprise to us to hear many things in connection with our names read out before the assembled universe. The apostle appeals to each separately, as being both to blame, though not necessarily equally to blame. Their own conscience would tell them how much they were each to blame; and so our conscience, appealed to at the last day, will tell us how much we are each to blame. It would be humbling to these women to have public notice taken of their difference; and so we ought to be humbled now on account of our differences, that we may not be humbled by publicity hereafter. The difference between these women arose from their not being in the Lord in the matter concerned, *i.e.* not following Christ's leading, not cherishing Christ's spirit. And so it is when we are not true to Christ that differences arise between us. The way in which these women were to be of one mind was by returning to the leading and influence of Christ; and there is no other way in which a reconciliation can be satisfactorily effected.

2. *Assistance of the apostle's yokefellow at Philippi solicited.* “I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.” The true yokefellow not being named, we are to understand the one to whom it properly belonged to grant assistance in the work of reconciliation, *viz.* the minister of the Church at Philippi. Had Paul been present he would have undertaken the work; but, in his absence, it fell to him who was set over the Church and over these women in the Lord, and who was of like spirit with him, to undertake it. The ground on which the apostle was so anxious to have the reconciliation effected was that they were deserving women. And it was satisfactory that, when their names were to go down to all ages in connection with a difference, there was also something to be added which was to their credit. They had laboured in the gospel, and in honourable company. That is the testimony that is borne regarding them. The influence of women seems to have been a feature of the Macedonian Churches. At Thessalonica it is said, “Of the chief women not a few.” At Bercea, “Many of them believed: also of the Greek women of honourable rank not a few.” And in connection with the start of the Philippian Church, it is said, “We spake to the women that were gathered together.” “The extant Macedonian inscriptions,” says Lightfoot, “seem to assign to the sex a higher social influence than is common among the civilized nations of antiquity. In not a few instances a metronymic takes the place of the usual patronymic; and in other cases a prominence is given to women which can hardly be accidental. But whether I am right or not in the conjecture that the work of the gospel was in this respect aided by the social condition of Macedonia, the active zeal of the women in this country is a remarkable fact, without a parallel in the apostle's history elsewhere, and only to be compared with their prominence at an early date in the personal ministry of our Lord.” We can think of Euodia and Syntyche as of the number of those who assembled at the riverside. It may have been in connection with their work that they differed. The Greek word translated “laboured” suggests that, while they strove with each other in a way that was not to their honour, they at the same time strove, as in the games, in the sphere of the gospel. Of the honourable company in which they thus nobly strove, the first was Paul. The next is Clement, whose identity with Clement of Rome is very doubtful. Of the others, the names are not given, but the honourable thing is said regarding them that they, as well as Clement, were Paul's fellow-workers, and that their names are in the book of life. Not known now to men, they are known to God, written among the living in Jerusalem. Their names are in the register of the covenant people kept in the heavenly Jerusalem, and will yet be read out before the assembled universe as among those who have title to all covenant privileges.

III. THE DUTY OF REJOICING. “Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice.” The apostle takes up the parting address which was broken off at ch. iii. 1, strengthened here by the addition of “alway,” and repeated with emphasis in a form

which points to the maximum of deliberation, "Again I will say, Rejoice." All wish to rejoice, but mistakes are made even by Christians as to the object. According to the teaching here, we are to rejoice in the Lord. Or, as Christ says, bringing us back to the pure fountain of joy, "Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." We are not to rejoice in ourselves, or in any of God's creatures, as though they were the first cause, the primal source of joy. Nay, we are not even to rejoice primarily in works which God may do by us. When one is eminently successful in conversion-work, we say, perhaps not without a feeling of envy, "What a joy must fill that man's soul!" If we were the instrument of converting sinners like him, we think we could rejoice too. But it is to be noted that the most successful labourer in the vineyard is not before the humblest Christian in the deepest source of his joy. What we have all alike to rejoice in is this, that our names are written in heaven; in other words, that we ourselves are the children or people of God, that we have God as our Portion, that he regards us individually with judicial favour and fatherly love. There is thus a very humble, self-excluding element in our joy. The ground of rejoicing in the Lord, for us who were born in sin, is the atoning work of Christ. To atone for sin entailed great sorrow on our Substitute. From eternity having joys most exalted in himself, he endured pains which, considering their cause, were infernal. The pains of hell got hold upon him. Think of Gethsemane; think of Calvary. But he never veered a hairbreadth from the purpose of our salvation. He set his face like a flint, and so the work was done, and done for ever. And now, in Christ, God stands in a gracious relation to his people. He has entirely altered their relation to him, from being objects of his regard to being objects of his complacent regard. Double reason, then, have we for rejoicing in God. "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." Ours, then, should be a deep and a perennial joy. Even under depreciation of earthly comfort, there should be more gladness in our heart than men of the world have in the time that their corn and their wine and their oil abound. God, in Christ, is more to us than corn, or wine, or oil; ay, more than the dearest earthly friend, and One who will never fail us; and therefore we may alway rejoice.

**IV. DUTY OF FORBEARANCE.** 1. *Stated.* "Let your forbearance be known unto all men." Forbearance is reasonableness (to which the derivation points) on its gentle side. It is the opposite of rigorism. It is "considerateness for others, not urging one's own rights to the uttermost, but waiving a part, and thereby rectifying the injustice of justice. The archetype of this grace is God, who presses not the strictness of his Law against us, as we deserve, though having exacted fullest payment for us from our Divine Surety." It was a grace especially to be "known" unto their persecutors. It was a grace to be "known" unto the worst offenders. As inseparable from them, it was to be "known" unto all men; i.e. in all their dealings with men. 2. *Enforced.* "The Lord is at hand." Rigorism "would be taking into our own hands prematurely the prerogative of judging, which belongs to the Lord alone; and so provoking God to judge us by the strict letter of the Law." Let us think kindly of men, even of the worst of men, as those who are still under trial, and who, by our forbearance, may be won over to the Lord's side. And, as judgment lingereth not, let us fully embrace the opportunity.

**V. MEANS TO BE USED AGAINST ANXIETY.** 1. *The evil to be avoided.* "In nothing be anxious." "Nothing" has the emphasis. To not one thing is our anxiety to extend. Anxiety is harassing care, very different from the providential care of God. We cannot help having cares in the world—cares about getting a livelihood, cares about health, cares about higher matters, cares about those who are near and dear to us, and cares, beyond our immediate circle, for men generally and for the Church. But, though we cannot help having cares in this world, we are not to be harassed by cares, as though we had to bear them ourselves. 2. *Means to be used against the evil.* "But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Over against the "nothing" of anxiety is the "everything" by prayer. Every part of our life is to be connected with prayer. There is nothing too small to be connected with prayer. Specially on every occasion of care are we to pray. And, while we pray generally, we are to make our prayer turn upon our special need.

We are to supplicate to be relieved from care, or to be strengthened under care. And while we thus supplicate for relief or strengthening, we are to be thankful for our freedom from other cares, for the number of our mercies, for the special mercy that is mingled with our care. In our supplication we are to have special petitions which we are to make known unto God. For though known unto God are all our wants, yet it is good for the work of communion, for the exercise of faith and of other graces, that we should make our wants known in the proper quarter. If we have cares, what more natural than that we should go with them to him from whom they have come as their First Cause? That must be more satisfactory than going to an intermediate cause or burdening ourselves with them. We can feel assured of his thoroughly understanding our case, of his power to help as having inexhaustible resources at his command, and of his being invested, not with a mere earthly greatness such as might repulse us, but with a greatness which is fitted to be a home and a shelter to us. He will not cover himself with clouds, so that our prayer shall not pass through. He will not turn away our prayer nor his mercy from us. 3. *Blessed results of using the means.* "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." This is the peace of God, *i.e.* of which God is the source and origin. It is not the peace of unfallen beings, but the peace of those who have been sinners and are now reconciled, the sweet sense of sin forgiven, the blessed feeling that the condemnation which was resting upon us is now removed. More than that, it is, in its essence, a holy tranquillity, that comes from resting in God, such a tranquillity as fills the mind in God. It is a peace which passeth all understanding, which has a mysterious, unspeakable sweetness about it, so that he who has once felt what it is would never like to lose it. This peace is to guard our hearts and our thoughts, is to be stationed as a strong guard, so that no disturbing influence shall pass through to the centre of our being or into the workings of our mind. So effectually is anxiety to be excluded. Our wisdom, then, is to seek repose by prayer. "If your mind be overcharged or overwhelmed with trouble and anxiety, go into the presence of God. Spread your case before him. Though he knows the desires of your heart, yet he has declared he will be sought after; he will be inquired of to do it for you. Go, therefore, into the presence of that God who will at once tranquillize your spirit, give you what you wish or make you more happy without it, and who will be your everlasting Consolation, if you trust in him. He will breathe peace into your soul, and command tranquillity in the midst of the greatest storms."—R. F.

Vers. 8, 9.—*Categories of morality. Conclusion announced.* "Finally, brethren." This is his second attempt to conclude. In the usual form he intimates that all he has to say, in addition to what he has already said, he is now to state shortly. In other Epistles Paul gives a considerable place to ordinary morality, including the relative duties. He does not deem it necessary (there being no urgency) to write at length to the Philippians upon this subject. He only puts it into his conclusion, where brevity is a necessity. And there is not that plain mode of expression which is found elsewhere: 'Let him that stole steal no more.' But, as for advanced or skilled Christians, there is a certain transcendental mode of expression, with an added reference to apostolic interpretation.

I. CATEGORIES OF MORALITY FOR THOUGHT. The summarizing under "virtue and praise" points to morality, as does also their being presented for practice in the ninth verse. They are emphatically separated as categories by the repetition of "whatsoever things," while the summary is made emphatic by the repetition of the words, "if there be any." They seem to be arranged in pairs, according to the following division. 1. *Things in themselves.* 2. *Things in relation to law.* 3. *Things in relation to the estimation in which they are held.* 4. *Summary.* It will be most suitable to our homiletic purpose to name them separately. "Whatsoever things are true." There are things that are true *in themselves*—that would have been true if there had never been a Bible, that would have been true if there had never been the placing of man under law. There is an eternal standard by which things are to be judged. There are immutable principles which lie at the foundation of morality. The things that are necessarily true subsist in God, and as subsisting in God he is *immutable*—a rock on which we can absolutely depend. The things that are true are also to be in ourselves. That certainly means that we are to speak the truth. For veracity belongs to

the eternal order of things, while a lie, however glossed over, is an infringement of that order. But our whole life is to be founded in truth. If it is to be founded in the work of Christ, yet is it in the work of Christ, as wrought out in accordance with eternal principles, and in that work as giving, relatively to us, added sanction and lustre to those principles, as what must regulate our life. We are, therefore, under all temptation to have to do with falsehood, to hold close by the true as that alone which can give *stability* to our life. "Whatsoever things are honourable." There are things which are honourable *in themselves*. They are more than venerable from antiquity. They are to be honoured from their essential and eternal worth. As subsisting in God, they are the ground of his being infinitely to be honoured. The things that are honourable are also to be in ourselves. That certainly means that we are to be *honest*, as the word used to be in the translation. For there is disgrace necessarily attaching to a dishonest action. But more than that, it means that our whole life is to be based on what can be thoroughly respected—on what can bear looking into as in its nature and bearings honourable; on what is to be honoured, whether men honour it or not; on what we cannot respect ourselves if we do not honour. If we, amid all temptation to act basely, keep our mind open to the honourable, then we shall have a *dignity, gravity*, taken from that to which we look and with which we converse. "Whatsoever things are just." This brings in relation to *law*. The things that are just are in God in the position in which he is placed as Lawgiver and Administrator. He absolutely fills up what belongs to him in the position; he acts according to the eternally true and honourable, *i.e.* according to his own eternal excellence as moral Governor. He is just in placing us under law, in the nature which he has given us, in what he exacts of us, and in all his dealing with us as under law. He never can do wrong to any of his creatures. Though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne. And the things that are just are to be in us, as placed under law to God. We are to fill up the measure of duty that belongs to us in the position. Obedience, compliance with the Divine will in all matters, is what we owe to God. Justice requires that, as dependent creatures, we should humbly acknowledge and worship him. We are to do the duty of every relation in which we stand to our fellow-men. We are to be in subjection to the higher powers, and not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake. We are to honour all men, whatever their condition, because of the dignity of their nature. And far be it from us that we should do any of our fellow-men the injustice of defrauding them or of treating them uncharitably. We are to be characterized by universal, deep-reaching conscientiousness. "Whatsoever things are pure." There is not only justice, but *purity* in relation to law. The things that are pure are absolutely in God. He is so pure that even the stars are not pure in his sight. He rules in the interests of purity. He holds up before us a high conception of purity in his Statute-book. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times;" "The commandment of the Lord is pure." He looks upon purity wherever it is with complacency, and it has a place with him; but he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and evil shall not dwell with him. The things that are pure are also to be in ourselves. We are to be pure in the narrower sense. We are to be chaste in our thoughts, in our words, in our actions. More than that, we are to have chastity as a preservative and a defence to our whole nature. We are to be kept within the Law, by our great sensitiveness and strong attraction to snow-white purity, to heavenliness, and by our repelling the slightest suggestion of impurity, by our shrinking from the slightest touch of worldliness. We are to have God's own love for that which makes and keeps us pure, and his own abhorrence and loathing of sin as that which defiles. "Whatsoever things are lovely." This brings in relation to the estimation in which things are held. For the Greek word seems to point to things which are worthy of love. There are, indeed, things which are lovely according to the eternal standard of taste. As subsisting in God they are the ground of his being infinitely to be loved. We read of the beauty of the Lord our God. He is beautiful in his whole character, but especially in his love in Christ. God is love; and herein is love. In this he as it were surpasses himself. He magnifies his Word above all his Name. He is beautiful as he comes forward and does not spare his own Son, but delivers him up for us all. He is beautiful in his forbearance towards sinners and his exercising towards them the prerogative of pardon. His beauty is manifested in him

who, standing upon our earth, said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." And the things which are lovely are to be in us. It is true of virtue as a whole that it is lovely. Cicero says, "There is nothing more lovely than virtue, nothing which more allures to loving." But the things that are lovely are especially those that rise to a high standard. We must not be merely righteous; but we must be good. Even Lot is called righteous in Scripture; but there was one that towered high above him, having the things that are lovely. How beautiful to see Abraham exercising the grace of hospitality! How beautiful to see his generous treatment of Lot, his not standing on his rights with him, his forgiving his selfishness, his heaping on his head coals of kindness! How beautiful especially to see him going so far in his self-denial toward God as not to withhold from him his son, his only son! Did he not have the qualities of a noble, royal nature? "Whatsoever things are of good report." This is distinctly estimation. There are things which sound well in the ear. Of even God in connection with the redemption from Egypt it is said that he had gotten himself a name. It sounded well in the ears of the Israelites, and of the uncovenanted nations too. And so God has gotten him a name in connection with the great redemption from sin. It can be said of the name of Redeemer that it sounds well. And we are to have the things of good report in us too. Virtue, says an ancient philosopher, is the concurring voice of the good. The things that are well reported of are especially those that rise above the common standard—that show disinterestedness and devotion. If a thing is lovely in itself, it is an additional advantage that it is well spoken of, especially among the good. "If there be any virtue." This, showing a change of form, but still universality, seems to summarize the preceding, with the sole exception of the last. The derivation of "virtue" points to manliness or valour. But it is to be taken as inclusive of every form of moral excellence. We are to have the excellence that comes from the true, from the honourable, from the just, from the pure, from the lovely. But, lest that should not cover the whole ground of excellence, he adds, "If there be any virtue." "And if there be any praise." We are not to understand anything that is praiseworthy, but the actual bestowment of praise. It covers the things that are of good report; but points rather to the distinct embodiment of moral judgment regarding things in *eulogy*, such as Paul's praise of love in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and our Lord's praise of humility and other virtues in the beatitudes. "Think on these things." We come to the things which have been mentioned partly by intuition, but we must dwell upon them and converse with them, if we would have a clear apprehension of them and have skill in detecting their counterfeits. The thought of the psalmist is that the use of the understanding is necessary to the right keeping of God's Law. If we allow the intellect to slumber, do not examine into circumstances and carefully investigate the moral character of what we are doing, we may go far enough astray from the true, and honourable, and just, and pure. It is by constantly judging our conduct by these things that they come to have the shaping of our life. "To cover human life with beauty, to carve it into nobleness, requires thought as truly as to cover canvas with lovely forms or to make the hard and unwilling marble assume a shape of majesty and grace. Is there any nobler use of the intellect of man than this, to serve the conscience and the heart with faithful loyalty, to master the moral laws by which life should be ruled, and the motives which may assist the vacillating will in keeping them? Among common men, what restless, incessant thought there is about how they may extend their trade and increase their profits, come to live in a larger house and keep a better table, and how little thought about the eternal law of righteousness and their obligation to keep and honour it! Do Christian men believe that he who gave them their intellect meant them to think incessantly of the price of iron, the rate of wages, the condition of the money market, the furniture of their houses, the fruit in their gardens—never or only sluggishly about his own awful majesty, his glorious perfection, his ideas of what human life ought to be?

II. THESE CATEGORIES OF MORALITY ALSO FOR PRACTICE WITH THE HELP OF APOSTOLIC INTERPRETATION. 1. *Interpretation of his teaching.* "The things which ye both learned and received." The only difference between these verbs seems to be that in the former we are pointed more to the activity of the taught, in the latter more to the activity of the teacher. The fact that Paul holds up these high categories before the Philippians shows that they were in an advanced state. At the same time, it was not

long since they had come out of heathenism. And the apostle refers them to such simple rules as he had laid down for their conduct, of which there are examples in other Epistles. 2. *Interpretation of his example.* “And heard and saw in me.” They heard when he was absent and saw when he was present. It is well when both teaching and life go together. It was a great advantage to the Philippians that, when the rules of their life were completely changed for them, these were not only presented in their particularity, but were exemplified in their teacher of whom they heard, or, what was better, whom they saw among them. Thus could they be led on from the state of childhood to the state of maturity, in which they could be thought of as conversing with the high categories of morality. “These things do.” Calvin properly remarks, “Meditation precedes, practice follows.” Once we have carefully thought of our conduct in the light of the great categories, there is the carrying our thought into practice. If we have thought well beforehand, we have a great advantage; but it will never be but difficult, considering the treachery of our hearts, the strength of our temptations, to bring our daily practice up to our thought. It is difficult enough to do the things that are true, that are honourable, that are just, that are pure; how much more to do the things that are lovely, that are of good report!

III. PROMISE ATTACHED TO PRACTICE FOLLOWING ON THOUGHT OF THE CATEGORIES. “And the God of peace shall be with you.” There is a recurrence with a difference of form to the thought of ver. 7. There peace was to guard those who prayed. Here the God of peace is to be with those who practise the moralities. He has peace in his own mind, in his own balanced perfections; and he has peace in what he thinks of us. And, as we strive to carry out his holy purposes, he stands by us to banish our fears, to soothe our minds. “Great peace have they who love thy Law; and nothing shall offend them.” Let us bring the six great categories into our life, and we shall assuredly have the peace which God himself has in their absolute possession.—R. F.

Vers. 10—20.—*Paul thanks the Philippians for their contribution.* There is noticeable throughout mingled dignity and delicacy. He is careful on the one hand to maintain his independence, and on the other hand to show his sense of their kindness.

I. THE REVIVED THOUGHT SHOWN IN THEIR CONTRIBUTION. “But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity.” The occurrence was associated in his mind with joy. He verily thought that the Lord had put it into the hearts of the Philippians to send that contribution to him. His joy rose to a great height. What made him rejoice so greatly was that then at length (an indefinite period, which went back at least to the coming of Epaphroditus) their thought for him was putting forth new shoots as trees do in spring. This was a revival which by no means reflected on their past. It had been winter with them, and, while winter lasts, no one expects nature to revive. But as soon as the proper season came round the fresh shoots appeared.

II. STATEMENT REGARDING CONTENTMENT. 1. *Introduced.* “Not that I speak in respect of want.” He was not to be understood as thinking merely of want. He was in such a relation to a state of want that the mere escape from it could not make him jubilant. 2. *His state generally.* “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.” To be content is, literally, to be self-sufficient, independent. He was thus content relatively to his being in one state or another. He had learned to be content. “These words signify how contentedness may be attained, or how it is produced; it is not an endowment innate to us; it doth not arrive by chance into us; it is not to be purchased by any price; it springeth not up of itself, nor ariseth from the quality of any state; but it is a product of discipline—‘I have learned.’ It is an art which cannot be acquired without studious application of mind and industrious exercise; no art, indeed, requireth more hard study and pain toward the acquirement of it, there being so many obstacles in the way thereto; we have no great capacity, no towardly disposition to learn it; we must, in doing it, deny our carnal sense, we must settle our wild fancy and suppress fond conceits; we must bend our stiff and stubborn inclinations; we must repress and restrain wanton desires; we must allay and still tumultuous passions; we must cross our humour and curb our temper: which to do is a hard chapter to learn; much consideration, much practice, much contention and

diligence are required thereto. Here it is an art which we may observe few do much study, and of the students thereof few are great proficients; so that 'Quif fit, Mecænas?' Horace's question, 'How comes it to pass that nobody liveth content with the lot assigned by God?' wanted not sufficient ground. However, it is not like the quadrature of the circle, or the philosopher's stone, an art impossible to be learned, and which will baffle all study; there are examples which show it to be obtainable; there are rules and precepts by observing which we may arrive to it" (Barrow). The apostle for one had learned. The force of the language is, "I for my part, have learned." "With noble self-consciousness," is the remark of Meyer. He had been exceptionally placed for learning this lesson. There were few, if any, who could compare with him in the changes he had seen in providence, in the states through which he had been made to pass. And he had rightly improved his experiences. He had learned to be independent of his outward state, in looking to the sufficiency of his inward enjoyments in God's favour and love and the prospects of everlasting bliss. He had learned further to be independent by looking to his outward state, whatsoever it was for the time being, as appointed him by God, as therefore better than he could choose for himself, as the best possible for him in view of his discipline and usefulness. 3. *Contrasted states.* "I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want." He condescends and dwells on particular states with variety of expression. As the result of his learning, he knew how to be abased, i.e. by any adverse state, and not merely by want. And he knew also how to abound, which is more specific, being the opposite of being in want. The knowing is next amplified, being made to extend to everything and all things (distributively and collectively). It is further amplified in being made to refer to acquired knowledge which is hidden from the uninitiated. He had learned the secret. The two states are now plainly described as a being filled and a being hungry, an abounding (in the means of subsistence) and a being in want (of the means of subsistence). We do not know so much about Paul being in the former state, but about the latter state there are affecting notices. "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place" (1 Cor. iv. 11); "In hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. xi. 27). He knew how to maintain the right attitude to both states, and we are to understand the right attitude to be independence. He was so independent that he was "neither exalted by abundance nor crushed by want," as Pelagius properly remarks. There is a contentment (to use the narrower word) which extends even to a state of abundance. For in a state of abundance men are apt to make themselves poor by enlarging their desires. The apostle had "stayed affections," and that was the secret of his contentment in both states. 4. *Source of support generally.* "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." The apostle rises from the special to the general, and points triumphantly, but humbly, to what supported him, not only in want, but in every state. The Strengthener here is the same who is said to make us more than conquerors, viz. Christ. (1) *How Christ comes to have strength to give to his people.* We are not to conceive of this strength as that belonging to him by original right as the Son of God. If we had not fallen from our original condition that would have been the source of strength to us, as it is to unfallen angels. The creature naturally finds strength in the Creator, and we should have found unfailing strength in him by whom God made the heavens and the earth, by whom also he made us. But Christ, as the Saviour, had no blessing for his people until he had acquired it. All the strength that we need for our being raised out of sin into holiness had to be laboured for, struggled for, bled for. The work for which Christ was set apart needed strength for its accomplishment. And this he was constantly augmenting until, at the last, in the depths of suffering, in conflict with all the powers of darkness, under the eclipse of the Divine countenance, he struggled out into *perfect spiritual strength*. He became strong, not by ease, but by "resisting unto blood, striving against sin." His own strength was not the result of his atoning work; it was rather that which accomplished it. But that he should give strength to his people, that follows on his atoning work, and does not go before it. We are taught to think of it as part of the reward which the Father gave him for finishing his appointed work. Raised to the right hand of

God, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious; and one of these gifts is strength to support us in the doing of God's will. He has acquired for us that strength in which he himself overcame. That, then, is the hard-won manner in which Christ has become the Source of strength. He has risen out of the great glorious work of redemption to be strength to his people. He is our Strength, because our Redeemer. (2) *What the nature of the strength is which Christ gives to his people.* There is ascribed to the holy a kind of omniscience: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and *know all things.*" That does not mean that we know all things in the sense in which God knows them, but that we know them so far as our duties are concerned, and are delivered from all that would obscure our vision. There is, in the same way, ascribed to us here *a kind of omnipotence*: "I can do all things." That does not mean that we can

"Rift the hills or roll the waters,  
Flash the lightning, weigh the sun."

Such an omnipotence is not like us; it is only like One, and such glory he cannot give to another. Besides, it would not make us better beings that we possessed this power, while the possession of it would be accompanied with tremendous peril. It must mean that we can do all things such as are like us or can be expected of us. We have omnipotence within the range of our duties. We can feel out all round where our duties lie, and realize that we are perfectly equal to them. "'Impossible' is not a French word," said a warrior of that brave nation; with much more truth may we say that "impossible" is not a Christian word. We have strength equal to our believing on Christ at the first, even in the inability of our will. We have strength equal to the most difficult duty to which we can be called. We have strength equal to the most trying position in which God may see fit to place us, which is the special application in the context. (3) *How Christ strengthens his people.* He does not do it miraculously, as though we should retire at night in an ordinary state of mind, and rise in the morning miraculously strengthened in spirit. The Spirit may come as he does at first, without seeking; but he who would sit still and wait for a miracle shall never be strengthened. Where the Spirit is, *there* will be a seeking spirit. We are to seek strength in prayer, according to the direction, "Seek, and ye shall find." We are to seek it in the Word. Such a word as this before us, appropriated by faith, is fitted to strengthen us for duty and trial. But we are also to seek it in connection with providences. Prepared beforehand, we are, in the actual doing or bearing, to have a habit of reliance upon Christ. That is the secret of strength in working and in suffering. We are only promised strength according to our day, and not beyond the present day, in order that we may have a habit of reliance upon Christ for each day's strength. At the same time, it should be true that we are ever, in holy habit, acquiring strength against the future. The way to be prepared for the future is to live well in the present. The way to be prepared for the more important duties of life is to do well the humble everyday duties. The way to be prepared for the great emergencies of life and especially for the last emergency is to bear well our lesser trials and annoyances.

**III. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR KINDNESS.** 1. *Kindness to him at Rome.* "Howbeit ye did well, that ye had fellowship with my affliction." Having so carefully guarded himself, he feels that he must now guard against any appearance of slighting their kindness. Having already excluded the idea of mere pecuniary relief, in his acknowledgment he looks to the moral excellence which they had displayed in their contribution. They had done well in that they had shown sympathy with him, not in his poverty (for he does not admit the existence of that), but in his affliction, i.e. in the sufferings generally to which he was subjected for the gospel in Rome. They had fellowship with him in the gospel. Having fellowship with him in greater matters, they had also fellowship with him in lesser matters. Their heart was open to all that the Christian preacher, to whom they as well as others had been so much indebted, might need in his prison in Rome. And that was the aspect of the contribution which made it peculiarly acceptable to the afflicted apostle. 2. *Early kindness.* (1) *When he was going forth from Macedonia.* "And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church had

fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but *ye only*." He had dwelt upon his own independence; he must now dwell upon their kindness. They, the Philippians, whom he mentions affectionately by name, knew as well as he that their kindness had not been of late growth. It had dated from the beginning of the gospel. For "he places himself in their situation, dates from (so to speak) *their Christian era*." It had dated from the time when he was going forth from Macedonia. Then they alone of the Churches had fellowship with him in the matter of giving and receiving. We are here supplied with a general name for finance, from the two sides of the ledger—credit and debit. In the Philippian ledger there was an account opened with Paul, in which there were only entries under the head of giving; nevertheless (to keep purely to finance, and not to complicate the thought by bringing in spiritual benefit received by the Philippians), it was *categorically* an account of giving and receiving. In our ledger (for business ideas ought to be carried into our whole income and expenditure) there should never be wanting a missionary account, an account opened with those who are in need of the gospel of Christ, or are our suffering fellow-Christians. (2) *When he was still in Thessalonica*, "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need." Before the going forth from Macedonia, while he was still labouring in Thessalonica (within the bounds of Macedonia), they had sent once and again unto his need. The exceptional character of this proceeding is to be explained, on the one hand by the intensity of their affection for the apostle, and on the other hand by his consciousness that he was so well understood by them that, without misinterpretation, he could accept of their gifts.

IV. UNSELFISHNESS OF THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT. 1. *He did not seek gifts.* "Not that I seek for the gift: but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account." By enlarging on their liberality he might be thought to be coveting their gifts. To guard himself he would have them understand that he did not seek for the gift, *i.e.* gifts of that kind. But he sought for the fruit corresponding to the gifts. Every time that they gave they were sowing; and the fruit would grow up for them in the next world. Every time that they gave there was an entry made in their name and to their account in the ledger of God, increasing the amount which God, as Debtor, would yet make good to them. 2. *He did not need their gifts.* "But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." There is a climax. He had all things he needed; he had more than he needed; he was filled to abundance beyond what he needed. It was the contribution of the Philippians sent by Epaphroditus that had put him in this position. The contribution was pleasing to him; but what was *he* to be thought of in the matter? It was rather pleasing to *God*. Given to God in him, the servant, it was pleasing to God; nay, it was peculiarly pleasing. Every morning and evening incense was burned in the Jewish temple. Every morning and evening an animal was slain. That symbolized the offering and sacrifice of Christ. The apostle makes bold to say that the contribution of the Philippians, savouring so much of Christ, was "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." Let us take encouragement from such an example. "But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

V. PROMISE. "And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." He makes the promise, not in his own name, but in the name of *his* God. The Philippians had supplied Paul's need; Paul's God, in turn, would, for him, supply their need. He would supply the whole extent of their need, temporal and spiritual. He would do this according to his riches. A rich God, he would, with no stintedness, supply their need. The mark up to which he would supply it, and which would best manifest his wealth, would be their glorification. And all this, as he is always careful to note, was only to be realized within Christ as the ever-blessed sphere. Let us, then, fulfil the condition of the promise. In Old Testament form, condition and promise thus run: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

VI. Doxology. "Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever.

Amen." The thought of the rich God glorifying his people, coincident with the close of the Epistle, calls forth an ascription of glory. It is an ascription of glory to him as our God and Father, the God of whom the brightest feature is his fatherhood, and to whom we are brought into the closest relation by adoption. The glory would be ascribed to him for the ages and ages that would roll on after his people were glorified.

—R. F.

Vers. 21-23.—*Salutation and benediction.* 1. *Salutation.* 1. *Paul.* "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus." He salutes the Philippians individually. With a knowledge of many of them, he was interested in every one of them as contributing to the strength of the cause of Christ at Philippi. Besides this general salutation by letter, to be read before the assembled congregation, there would be special salutations, to be delivered privately by Epaphroditus. 2. *Personal companions.* "The brethren which are with me salute you." These companions are not mentioned by name. Timothy was the only available companion for Philippi. Some might be told off for other work. Others, although they showed selfishness, were not debarred from sending fraternal greetings. 3. *Christians resident in Rome.* "All the saints salute you." Although not acquainted with the Philippian Christians, they belonged to the same Christian brotherhood, were interested in the common cause, looked forward to the common home; and therefore they too sent their greetings. 4. *Of Roman Christians one class singled out.* "Especially they that are of Cæsar's household." "Nero (the Caesar here referred to) was a prince that as far surpassed others in infamy as Augustus did in royalty; a man who, if every soul beside himself in his household had been a saint, concentrated inhumanity and pollution enough in his person to have darkened all their virtue by the blackness of his unnatural crimes; a man that expended more ingenuity in contriving new modes of dishonouring humanity than most Christians have in serving it, and who earned the reputation of introducing into history as facts crimes so enormous and combinations of wickedness so revolting that but for him they would have been held too fabulous for the wildest fancy; a man that hunted up and down his vast domains to find some fresh species of murder, with exquisite and aggravated accompaniments to season it to his monstrous appetite, with the same eagerness that gluttons search out a fresh delicacy for a sated palate; a man that tried three different ways of butchering his own mother, and at last despatched her by a vulgar execution, in a peccant rage at being baffled so often; and who added the tyrant's caprice to the incendiary's, by undertaking at once to throw off the suspicion of his own agency in the diabolic conflagration of his capital, and to comfort his bloodthirsty temper by imputing the fire to the innocent Christians; who tortured his Christian subjects by unheard-of torments, dressing them in the skins of wild animals to provoke dogs to tear them to pieces, or wrapping their bodies in clothing smeared with pitch and then setting them on fire to light up the Roman night with their burning; a man, in short, that wrought so awful an impression of his attributes of superhuman atrocity on the minds of the believers of that age that a common rumour went abroad among them, after his horrible death, that he would return again alive to vex the world anew, and to be the antichrist of prophecy." In the household of Nero, including the highest 'unctionaries and lowest menials, were found saints. Their saintliness shone out all the more against the neighbouring blackness. And, with such blackness in their neighbourhood, there were sure to be seen burning around them fires of persecution. To be saints, then, in Cæsar's household required extraordinary courage and modesty, independence and constancy. "This saintliness is possible and is much wanted also wherever an adverse influence frowns on Christian purity or hinders Christian fidelity. For that bad influence may proceed from things not held in much suspicion—from a false social standard, from a set of surrounding associations hostile to holiness, from a dominant worldliness in a nation, or a city, or a college, or a literal household. Our Nero is self-love. The senses are the Cæsars of all ages. The reigning temper of the world is the imperishable persecutor and tyrant of the faithful soul. And so in every home and street, seminary and dwelling, there are chances for the reappearing of saints in Cæsar's household. Wherever a fearless man deems any bribe to do wrong an insult to his clean heart; wherever an incorruptible merchant refuses to conform to popular deceptions; wherever a righteous mechanic refuses to let down his performance to the

standard of superficiality; wherever an honest statesman stands above his party the moment his party cast away their principles; wherever a self-commanding woman dares to be a rebel against extravagance and insincerity; wherever a disciple of Christ is not ashamed to own and praise that holy Lord, by whom only he has forgiveness, though unbelieving associates taunt and ridicule;—there we behold saints of Cæsar's household."

II. BENEDICTION. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." The blessing invoked is grace, or unmerited favour. It is invoked, as belonging to him who, from his saving work, has the right to dispense it to his people. It is invoked on their spirit; for from the spirit as the centre must blessing go forth upon the whole nature.—R. F.

Vers. 1—6.—*Genuine Churchism.* "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." These words suggest to us certain ideas concerning *genuine Churchism*. Churchism, of course, implies a Church or Churches, i.e. community or communities of men. Here in England we have what is called *the Church*, which its ministers seemed delighted to call "*our Church*." Here also we have Churches which sectarian leaders somewhat arrogantly call "*our Churches*." Such Churches are too frequently assemblages of men characterized often by ignorance, exclusiveness, and intolerance. Now, neither in "*our Church*" nor "*our Churches*" do we always find genuine Churchism. But the text suggests certain things essential to genuine Churchism. It suggests—

I. How the members should be esteemed by their **TRUE PASTOR**. They should have the deep tender love and strongest and devoutest wishes of the pastor. "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." What an accumulation of strong epithets of affection are here! "Longed for;" yearned after. "My joy;" that is, the source of my joy; his chief interest was in them. "And crown;" by this is meant that he gloried in them, he prided himself in them. Then follows his ardent desires for their highest good. That they should "stand fast in the Lord," that they should be "of the same mind in the Lord," that they should help one another, etc. An affection of this kind implies the existence of two things. 1. *The existence in the pastor of a loving nature.* There are men who claim to be pastors of conventional Churches, not always blest with the most amiable natures; they are irascible, splenetic, etc., belonging to the generation elsewhere called the "children of wrath"—that is, their nature is more or less malign. You have only to hear the querulous tones of their voice and the ideas they express in their discourses to feel this. Their ideas are more like yelping curs scratching the earth than singing birds soaring into sunshine. They irritate their audience. 2. *The existence of a lovable character in their disciples.* The audience must have a loving nature; for if the pastor, however lovable himself, is amongst people of a morally unlovable character, how can he feel affectionately towards them? Genuine Churchism, then, implies a spiritually loving pastor and a morally lovable charge.

II. How the members should act in relation to **THEMSELVES**. Three things are indicated here. 1. *Moral firmness.* "Stand fast in the Lord." Moral firmness implies not only deeply rooted convictions, but a strongly settled love. Moral firmness is as opposed to obstinacy as to vacillation. It is a state of mind settled in its chief faiths and loves; it is "rooted and grounded in the faith." Where there is not moral firmness in the members of Churches there is no genuine Churchism. Genuine Churchism implies moral manhood of the highest type. 2. *Spiritual unity.* "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." These names in all likelihood represent women. Paul had many women belonging to his charge, and who co-operated with him in his work. In the long list of greetings

to the Church at Rome (Rom. xvi.) we have the names Priscilla, Phoebe, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, etc. It is not improbable that the two women mentioned here, Euodias and Syntyche, had fallen out, as is not very uncommon with the sex. The apostle's request is that they should be reunited, that they should be harmonious in sentiment, affection, and aim. Unity is essential to genuine Churchism; all must be one. 3. *Religious happiness.* "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Be happy in your religion. Happiness is an essential element in genuine religion. "I am come that ye might have life [happiness], and that ye might have it more abundantly." Christly men are filled with all "joy and peace in believing." Happiness is not only a *privilege* of the disciples of Christ, but a duty. It would seem that it is as wrong for the disciple of Christ to be unhappy as for him to break any of the ten commandments; for the command to rejoice is founded on the same authority as "Thou shalt not steal." A community that is sad and gloomy is destitute of genuine Churchism.

III. How the members should act in relation to **EACH OTHER**. 1. *They should exercise mutual helpfulness.* "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also." Who the "true yokefellow" was, whether Luke, or Lydia, or Epaphroditus, no one knows. It matters not. It was some one who was well known to be a co-worker with Paul, and he asks, on behalf of the women who laboured with him and others, for co-operation. Genuine Churchism implies mutual co-operation: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ." 2. *They should exercise social forbearance.* "Let your moderation [forbearance] be known unto all men." In most social circles there is much to try men's patience one with another. All are more or less imperfect; hence the need of forbearance, magnanimous self-control. Pray ever for our enemies; do good to them that spitefully use us.

IV. How the members are connected with **THE EMPIRE OF CHRIST**. "Whose names are in the book of life." (For the "book of life," see Dan. xii. 1; Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8; xvii. 8; xx. 12; xxi. 27.) From that book the name may be blotted out now (Rev. iii. 5; Exod. xxxii. 33) till the end fixes it for ever. There is a peculiar beauty in the allusion here. The apostle does not mention his fellow-labourers by name; but it matters not—the names are written before God, in the book of life. If they continue in his service those names shall shine out hereafter when the great names of the earth fade into nothingness. The names of all the citizens in a city have a registration; so metaphorically the names of all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem are duly enrolled. God registers the names in this book. He omits none who are entitled to it, makes no mistake in the record. The "book of life." Ah, what names are there! How illustrious, how *multitudinous*, how *increasing!* Genuine Churchism implies the registration of names in this "book."

V. How the members should act in relation to the **GREAT GOD**. "Be careful for nothing [in nothing be anxious]; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." 1. *All-confiding.* "Be careful for nothing." "Take no anxious thought for the morrow." Unbounded confidence in the paternal government that is over all. 2. *Ever prayerful.* "In everything by prayer." Prayer is not words, it is a life; not a service, it is a spirit. "Pray without ceasing." An abiding, practical realization of dependence on God is prayer, and this should be constant as life—the very breath of the soul. 3. *Always thankful.* "With thanksgiving." Being the recipients of mercies, unmerited, priceless, and ever increasing every minute, the spirit of thanksgiving should throb with every beating pulse.

**CONCLUSION.** Brothers, have you genuine Churchism? Talk not to me about your Churches. You must have genuine Churchism in order to be identified with the "Church of the Firstborn written in heaven."—D. T.

Vers. 7, 8.—*Divine peace.* "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." These words

direct attention to the highest good in the universe—peace; highest because it implies the existence and development of every conceivable moral virtue. These words suggest three remarks concerning Divine peace.

I. ITS NATURE IS OF DIFFICULT INTERPRETATION. “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” “That is, which surpasses all that men had conceived or imagined. The expression is one that denotes that the peace imparted is of the highest possible kind. The Apostle Paul frequently used terms which had somewhat of a hyperbolical cast, and the language here is that which one would use who designed to speak of that which was of the highest order.” Elsewhere Paul says, concerning the love of Christ, “it surpasseth knowledge;” that is, the knowledge of the understanding. You cannot put it into propositions. 1. Who can interpret peace as it exists in the mind of *God*? We may have negative conceptions of it, exclude from it that which cannot possibly belong to it and which is opposite to its nature. It is not *stagnation*. Not the peace of the lake that has no ripple. He is essentially active. It is not *insensibility*. Not the quiescence of the rock which feels not the greatest violence of storms. He is feeling, the infinite Sensorium of the universe. But what is it? It transcends all intellectual understanding. We cannot measure the measureless, we cannot fathom the fathomless. 2. Who can interpret Divine peace as it exists in the mind of the *Christly*? The peace of God comes from God; it is the gift of Christ. “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” In truth the highest states of mind, such as love, joy, peace, cannot be explained. These are matters of consciousness, not logic. You can no more put the divinest and deepest emotions of the heart into a proposition than you could put the ocean into a nutshell. They are things that “cannot be uttered.”

II. ITS EXISTENCE IN MAN IS A TRANSCENDENT GOOD. “Shall keep [guard] your hearts and minds [your thoughts] through [in] Christ Jesus.” It keeps the heart and mind, it garrisons the soul from every distressing element. What are the disturbing elements of the soul? The three chief may be mentioned. 1. There is *fear*. Foreboding fears are agitating elements. Under the influence of fear all the powers of the soul often tremble and shake like the leaves of a forest in a storm. But “perfect love casteth out fear,” and peace is the fruit of love. 2. There is *remorse*. Sense of guilt fills the soul with those feelings of self-loathing and self-denunciation which lash into fury. But in the case of Christly men this sense of guilt is gone. Being made right, or justified, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 3. There are *conflicting tendencies*. In every soul there are instinctive tendencies towards God and the true. In every unregenerate soul there are tendencies towards the devil and the false. These are ever in battle on the arena of un-Christly minds. Hence the wicked are like the troubled sea. He who is Christly is delivered from this conflict. The corrupt tendencies are exorcised, and all the corrupt passions and forces of the soul are brought into one grand channel, and will flow on translucently and harmoniously with ever-increasing volume to the great ocean—God.

III. IT CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY THE PRACTICE OF GOODNESS. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest [honourable], whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.” Whatever minute definition we may give of these terms, they all stand for the elements of moral goodness; and to these elements we are bidden to give a practical regard. “If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” The practice of the *morality of Christ* is the ladder by which alone we can climb through all that is dark and tumultuous in the atmosphere of the soul into the pure heavens of peace. It is the “doer” of the Word that is blessed, not the hearer. There are some, alas! who recommend other means to this glorious end, but they are utterly worthless. Some recommend ritualistic observances and sacerdotal services. Some recommend faith in an event that transpired on Calvary eighteen centuries ago. They say you have only to believe on this and peace will come at once. A philosophic absurdity and a monstrous delusion! Some recommend a mechanical religiousness. They say, “Go to church regularly, join in the liturgy, listen to sermons, partake of the communion, and all will be right.” Ah me! The peace which such things give is like that peace in nature which cradles the thunder-storm. I tell you peace is only reached by the practice of that morality proclaimed in that

grand sermon on the mount and embodied in the life of its matchless Preacher, and this requires faith in him.

Though my means may be small and name quite obscure,  
Live only by labour and dwell 'mid the poor,  
I'm resolved upon this, and I'll follow it through,  
To love and to practise the "things that are true."  
The things that are showy are things in request,  
The empty and thoughtless regard them as best.  
I've pondered the matter, and I will pursue,  
Despite of all customs, the "things that are true."  
I'm resolv'd upon this, and I'll follow it through,  
To love and to practise the "things that are true."

The things most imposing are things for the proud;  
The pomp and the glitter enamour the crowd;  
Pretences and shams I'm resolved to eschew,  
And walk in the light of the "things that are true."  
Though things most in vogue are the things to ensure  
Most gold for the pocket, most fame for the hour;  
The vain and the greedy, for them they may do,  
To me all is worthless but "things that are true."  
I'm resolved, etc.

The "things that are true" are the things that will last  
All seemings will vanish as dreams that are past;  
Like clouds that are swept from the face of the sky,  
All falsehoods of life they shall melt by-and-by.  
The things of a party Heav'n knows how I hate!  
The blight of the Church and the curse of the state;  
The minions of cliqueship, what mischief they do!  
Avant to all canting! All hail to the true!  
I'm resolved, etc.

D. T.

Ver. 9.—*The transmission of the knowledge of Christ.* “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” This verse is supposed by some to close the letter. The remaining verses are considered to be the postscript in which the apostle gracefully acknowledges the generous contributions he had received from them through the hands of Epaphroditus. The text directs attention to the transmission of the knowledge of Christ. Observe—

I. This knowledge of Christ is to be transmitted **FROM MAN TO MAN**. “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received,” etc. It is suggested that the transmission of this knowledge includes two things. 1. *Teaching on the part of the minister.* Paul had received the gospel (1 Cor. xv. 3; Gal. i. 12), and received it as a message, received it to communicate. This he did—did to the Philippians as well as to others. He did it in two ways. (1) *By words.* “And heard.” After his commission Paul used all his oratoric force for this purpose. He spoke to men rationally, devoutly, intelligently, earnestly, and with invincible persistence. The story of Christ is to be handed down from man to man by human lips. The pen can no more do the work of the tongue in this respect than the moon can do the work of the sun. Under the influence of the former the landscape will wither and the rivers will freeze. (2) *By example.* “And seen in me.” Paul embodied the gospel. His life confirmed the doctrine that his lips declared. In him, as in his Master, the “word became flesh.” Here, then, is the Divine way of transmitting from generation to generation the story of Christ. Men have tried other ways and have signally failed; hence the wretched moral condition of the world to-day. This way is, to a great extent, practically ignored. 2. *Learning on the part of the hearer.* “Ye have both learned, and received, and heard.” A man may tell the story of Christ with the utmost accuracy and fulness. The spirit of the story he may breathe in his life and embody in his conduct, but it is only vitally transmitted so far as it is learnt by the auditors. We live in an age when people, through a vitiated moral taste, theological prejudices, and sectarian

proclivities, turn away their ear from the true teachers of their time. They resort to places where they can be tickled, not taught, flattered, not corrected.

II. This knowledge of Christ is to be transmitted IN ORDER TO BE PRACTISED. "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." A gospel sermon should never be regarded as a lecture on philosophy, literature, or art—a mere subject for speculative thought or a subject of discussion. The gospel is a law, it comes from the highest authority and with a binding force. What is said is to be done, not merely approved, criticised, thought on, or sighed about, but done. The ideas communicated are to be translated into actions, and such actions will ever be Christly in spirit and tendency. But into what actions are the conventional sermons of England translated? Turn to the columns of our daily journals and read of the mercantile swindlings, the courtly depravities, idlenesses, and sports, the political intrigues, senatorial slanders and quarrellings, the barbaric executions, the bloody wars, and other nameless iniquities sanctioned and enacted by the hearers of what are called gospel sermons. Ah me! What boots preaching?

III. The practice of this knowledge of Christ ENSURES THE SUBLIMEST GOOD. "The God of peace shall be with you." In ver. 7 we read of having the "peace of God," here of having the "God of peace." To have his peace is something glorious; but to have *himself* is something transcendently greater. "The God of peace." Elsewhere he is called the "God of salvation," the "God of consolation," the "God of hope," etc.; but this title seems to transcend all others. 1. He is at peace with *himself*. A moral intelligence to possess peace must be absolutely free from the following things—*malice, remorse, forebodings*. The mightiest revolutions through all the millenniums and the hostilities of all the hells of the universe awake no ripple upon the boundless sea of his ever-flowing love. 2. He is at peace with the *universe*. He has no unkind feeling to any sentient being; he contends with no one; he is at peace with all. He contend, forsooth! Does the immovable rock contend with the waves that break at its feet? Does the sun contend with the fleeting clouds? Now, they who translate the gospel into their life shall have the "God of peace" ever with them—with them as the sunny heavens are with the earth.—D. T.

Vers. 10—17.—*Man in model aspects.* "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." The apostle now turns his attention to a new subject, and the verses that follow to the close of the chapter seem to be a kind of postscript, acknowledging in a very graceful manner the various offerings which he had received from the Philippians by the hands of Epaphroditus. The passage before us may be regarded as presenting *man in certain model aspects*.

I. Here is a man represented as an OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." 1. He received their beneficence with *religious gratitude*. "I rejoiced in the Lord," etc. "There is," says Dr. Barry, "in these words an expression of some hitherto disappointed expectation, not wholly unlike the stronger expression of wounded feeling in 2 Tim. iv. 9, 10, 16. At Caesarea St. Paul would have been necessarily cut off from the European Churches; at Rome, the metropolis of universal concourse, he may have expected some earlier communication. But fearing to wound the Philippians by even the semblance of reproof, in their case undeserved, he adds at once, 'in which ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.' Epaphroditus would seem to have arrived early, almost as soon as St. Paul's arrival at Rome gave them the opportunity which they previously lacked." The contributions which came from the

Philippians to him he *traced to the Lord*. He saw the hand and felt the love of God in their gifts. There is not a man on earth who is not in some measure the object of human beneficence. We are all receiving from others, every day in our life, some kind of good—physical, intellectual, social, or spiritual. All this good we should devoutly ascribe to the Father of lights, from whom cometh “every good and perfect gift.” Whether those of our fellow-men, who confer on us good, do it *with* their will or *against* their will, selfishly or disinterestedly, it matters not so far as our obligation to Heaven is concerned. From him all the good of all kinds and through all channels proceeds. 2. He received their beneficence with *hearty appreciation*. “Notwithstanding [howbeit] ye have well done, that ye did communicate [had fellowship] with my affliction.” “Ye have well done.” Your beneficence was dictated from a generous sympathy with my affliction, and it was timely withal. True beneficence is a blessed virtue. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” His appreciation seems to have been deepened by the fact that their beneficence preceded that of other Churches: “Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated [had fellowship] with me as concerning [in the matter of] giving and receiving, but ye only.” The time referred to is the period of his leaving Macedonia and Athens for Corinth (Acts xvii. 14). They rendered him help, not only after he had left Macedonia, but before that time, when he had just passed from Philippi to Thessalonica. “At Thessalonica, as at Corinth—both very rich and luxurious communities—he refused maintenance and lived merely by the labour of his own hands (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8). But it appears from this passage that even then he received, once and again (that is, occasionally, once or twice), some aid from Philippi to supply his need, that is (as in all right exercise of liberality), to supplement, and not to supersede his own resources.” In this also he acts in a model way. There are those ingrates in society who receive help from others as a matter of course, attach little or no value to the good which they are constantly receiving. Ay, and moreover, there are those, too, who, instead of becoming bound to the benefactor as friends through gratitude for the favours, not unfrequently become enemies. Ah me! this worst of human vices is, perhaps, the most common. “As there are no laws against ingratitude,” says Seneca, “so it is utterly impossible to contrive any that in all circumstances shall reach it. If it were actionable, there would not be courts enough in the whole world to try the causes in. There can be no setting a day for the requiting of benefits, as for the payment of money; nor any estimate upon the benefits themselves; but the whole matter rests in the conscience of both parties; and then there are so many degrees of it, that the same rule will never serve all.” 3. He received their beneficence with *entire unselfishness*. “Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound [increaseth] to your account.” He means to say, I do not “desire a gift” for my own sake as much as for yours. I value the gift as an expression and evidence of your faith in Christ. An old writer says, “It is not with any design to draw more from you, but to encourage you to such an exercise of beneficence as will meet with a glorious reward hereafter.” True men always value a gift, not simply because of its intrinsic value, or even because it will serve their temporal interest, but because of the priceless sentiments of the heart, love, disinterestedness, and friendship, which it represents. We are all objects of beneficence. Let us act as Paul did in this character, accept all human favours with religious gratitude, with hearty appreciation, and with entire unselfishness.

II. Here is a man represented as a SUBJECT OF PROVIDENTIAL VICISSITUDES. “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith [therein] to be content.” “Whatever state.” How constantly changing are our states! Life is truth a checkered scene. Every hour we pass from one condition or mood to another. We change in mind, body, and circumstances. We alternate between friendship and bereavement, prosperity and adversity, sunshine and storms. Now, the aspect in which Paul is seen in passing through these changes is that of *contentment*, and in this respect he is a model to us all. His contentment does not mean *insensibility*, a kind of Stoicism; does not mean *indifference* to the condition of others, or a *satisfied complacency* either with his own moral condition or that of the world. It is a *cordial acquiescence in the arrangements of Heaven*. “Not my will, but thine, be done.” This state of mind is not innate, it is attained. Paul “learnt” it. This is moral scholarship of the highest kind.

"Some murmur when their sky is clear  
 And wholly bright to view,  
 If one small speck of dark appear  
 In their great heaven of blue.  
 And some with thankful love are filled,  
 If but one streak of light,  
 One ray of God's great mercy, gild  
 The darkness of their night."  
 (French.)

III. *Hero* is a man represented as a *GENUINE REFORMER*. "I can do all things through Christ [in him] which strengtheneth me." Paul was a genuine reformer. The reformation he sought was not in corrupt legislation, in outward institutions—social, political, or ecclesiastical—in theological systems, or in external behaviour. Such reformations are of little worth. He wrought. 1. In the *realms of motive*, the springs of action, to change the moral heart of the world. Every man on earth should act in this character and become a moral reformer. All should study and imitate Paul in this aspect. How did he act as a reformer? 2. *In conscious dependence on Christ*. "I can do all things through Christ." "All things" pertaining to this work as a reformer, not by my own talents, skill, or industry, not in my own strength, but in "Christ which strengtheneth me." Indeed, in Christ's strength what cannot a man do? He can work miracles as the apostles did, he can turn the moral world upside down, he can create men "anew in Christ Jesus," he can sound a trumpet whose blast shall penetrate the ears of slumbering souls and awake the teeming millions that are sleeping in the dust of worldliness and depravity. "Through Christ which strengtheneth me." Strengthens me by turning me away from things that are temporal to things that are spiritual, rooting my faith in eternal realities, filling and firing me with the love which he had for human souls and for the everlasting Father.

CONCLUSION. Study well these model aspects of a man who, as an *object of Christian beneficence*, is always religiously grateful, heartily appreciative of the favours he receives, and entirely unselfish; as a *subject of providential vicissitudes*, magnanimously contented in every condition and mood of life; and, as a *genuine reformer*, does his work, not in his own strength, but in the power of Christ.—D. T.

Vers. 2, 3.—*The healing of dissensions*. A dissension between two women, probably persons of prominence in the Church. Women occupy an important position in the Church at Philippi (Acts xvi. 13—18). This fact may account somewhat for its orthodoxy, its fervent devotion, and its special temptation to want of unity. This particular dissension is regarded by St. Paul to be of sufficient importance to demand a notice in this Epistle, and to call for his personal interposition. 1. *The only method of healing dissension*. Persons alienated from one another must be brought to be of one mind in the Lord. No reconciliation is abiding except it be in him who is the Peace-maker. 2. *To heal dissension is a work worthy of the highest ministry of the Church*. St. Paul calls to his aid their chief pastor, Clement, who was afterwards Bishop of Rome, and others whose names are in the book of life. No error in the Church is worse than the error of uncharitableness and envy. 3. To remove such dissensions is truly to *help* (ver. 3) those who are the victims of them. Note that even they who laboured with St. Paul were not free from human infirmities. They who could stand by him in his work now need all his entreaties and endeavours to bring them into reconciliation. A warning to all Church workers.—V. W. H.

Vers. 4, 5.—*Rejoicing always*. I. **THE POSSIBILITY OF IT.** The command to rejoice always appears to be one which it is impossible that we should obey. This impossibility vanishes when we remember that we are to rejoice "in the Lord." Note the frequency of this expression in this Epistle. St. Paul profoundly realizes that the Christian soul is living in a sphere not recognizable by the outward senses, but which is ever present to the eye of faith. If we are living in the Lord we can always rejoice, because in him all things work together for good, and even our sorrows he turns into joy.

II. **THE METHOD OF IT.** By letting our forbearance be known unto all men. He

who is living in the Lord is always rejoicing, not with the joy which triumphs over the sorrows of others, but with the self-restrained joy which recognizes that, being yet in travail, we must yet have sorrow mingled with our joy. This sense of self-restraint is the truest preventive of dissension and dispute.

III. THE REASON FOR IT. "The Lord is at hand." He is ever ready to appear visibly in our midst, and for this appearing we are constantly to watch. How can we be doing so unless we are rejoicing in him, and rejoicing in him with gentle forbearance towards our fellow-Christians? He is, indeed, always at hand, even if he yet appear not in visible form; for where two or three are gathered together in his Name he is in the midst of them. Is not this a reason for joy and for forbearance?—V. W. H.

Vers. 6, 7.—*God's peace.* I. WHAT IT IS. God's own peace; that which he himself possesses. It is the peace which our Lord had and which he promised to his disciples: "My peace I give unto you." It is, therefore, no mere superficial freedom from external troubles, but a deep-seated harmony with God the Source of all peace. Thus it transcends human understanding and human expression.

II. WHAT PREVENTS OUR POSSESSING IT? Over-anxiety and worry. These are a kind of practical atheism, since they prevent us from leaving all things to him who is supreme over all circumstances.

III. HOW TO OBTAIN IT. By *prayer*, which rests upon him for all things; by *supplication*, which brings our own special causes for anxiety into his presence; by *thanksgiving*, which recognizes that his will must be full of blessing. By thus turning our cares into prayers we throw them upon him who gives us in return his peace.

IV. WHAT IT DOES FOR US. It keeps our hearts and minds, preserving them from undue anxiety, and making them realize the strength of the peace which Christ bestows. How do these words come home with sublime force at the end of our Communion Service! Having received him who is our Peace (Eph. ii. 14), we have entered into and taken possession of the peace of God which passeth all understanding.—V. W. H.

Vers. 8, 9.—*Meditation and action.* Having insisted on the duties of prayer and thanksgiving and the reward which accompanies them, St. Paul proceeds to point out the need of meditation on all that is of God, and of practically living out the God-like life upon earth. To such also is attached a special reward.

I. THE NEED OF MEDITATION. This is universal. All persons meditate on that which is to them of absorbing interest. By meditation the stock of our ideas is increased and a mental atmosphere is formed in which we live and move. Every great work and every great life has been produced by much meditation.

II. THE BEST SUBJECTS FOR MEDITATION. "Whatever things are true," etc. We need not limit these to the subject-matter of the Christian revelation, although undoubtedly each of these forms of goodness will find its highest expression in that. But since all good things are of God, we may find him reflected in every act of virtue, in every prompting of love, in every aspiration after a higher life, in whatever way these may be manifested. The terms selected include all that is noble towards God, all that is purifying to ourselves, and all that commends itself to the better instincts of men. Meditating on such an exhaustive catalogue of high ideas, how can we become anything else than filled with all that is true and Divine?

III. TRUE MEDITATION WILL PRODUCE ACTION. If it does not do this it enervates the will and dissipates the motive forces of the character. A truth acted upon provides us with an unanswerable evidence that it is a truth. It becomes worked into our nature and forms part of ourselves.

IV. TRUE ACTION IS LEARNED FROM EXAMPLE RATHER THAN FROM PRECEPT. "That which ye have . . . seen in me, do." Action is in life and not in theory. Note how the same truth is to be found in the Beatitudes. They begin with a description of abstract blessedness, such as is to be found in poverty of spirit; they end by translating this idea of blessedness into a living reality in the case of the disciples who were being taught. "Blessed are they" turns into "Blessed are ye," and their blessedness is to be found in such an active life of righteousness as is to involve persecution for Christ's sake.

**V. THE REWARD OF TRUE ACTION PROCEEDING OUT OF PROFOUND MEDITATION.** “The God of peace shall be with you.” The *peace of God* is the reward of prayer and trustfulness; this is an inward gift bringing God into the soul. But true action secures the presence of the *God of peace*, externally defending and guiding, as well as internally teaching and blessing.—V. W. H.

**Ver. 11.—Contentment.** To be contented with one's lot is a thing to be desired; to be contented with one's self is a thing to be dreaded. Our lot is that which God has been pleased to choose for us. Our self is that character or disposition which is being daily built up by our co-operation with God's grace.

**I. ST. PAUL'S DISCONTENT WITH HIMSELF.** (See ch. iii. 12—14.) It is his sense of need which aroused the desire for, and therefore secured the possession of, spiritual growth. To be contented with one's own spiritual state is to prevent the possibility of spiritual progress. All progress springs out of a sense of insufficiency. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven.”

**II. ST. PAUL'S CONTENT WITH HIS LOT.** So far as worldly advantages are concerned it was not an enviable one. But he had received sufficient of his Master's Spirit to know that man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. This contrast between Divine discontent and Divine content is paralleled by the “Thou shalt not covet” of the Decalogue and the “Covet earnestly the best gifts” of St. Paul.—V. W. H.

**Vers. 12, 13.—The difficulties of prosperity.** 1. Contentment needs to be cultivated, not only when we possess little, but likewise when we possess much. It may be thought that to be contented with plenty is an easy task. But this is not so. It is often easier to know how to be abased than to know how to abound. We may be in greater danger when our prayers are answered than when the answer is withheld. 2. St. Paul, having learned many things, can teach us many things. Not only does he know theoretically how difficult it is to abound, but he knows it experimentally, and experimentally he has overcome the difficulty. He has been *initiated* in the experience of both need and abundance, and has known how to bear either lot with safety. 3. This he had been able to do, not through any Stoical superiority to the things of this life, nor yet through any force of natural character, but in the power in which his whole life was now being lived, the strength given by union with Jesus Christ.—V. W. H.

**Vers. 14—19.—Almsgiving a part of Christian life and worship.** I. **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOSE WHO GIVE AND THOSE WHO RECEIVE ALMS IS ONE OF COMMUNION.** (Ver. 15.) It is a mistake to suppose that the benefit of almsgiving is all on the side of the recipients. They who possess, possess in order that they may show their brotherhood with those who possess not. To receive is just as much an act of brotherhood as to give. Never regard the bestowing of alms as an act of patronage, or the receiving of them as an act of homage.

**II. THE BENEFIT OF ALMSGIVING TO THE ALMSGIVER.** It is *fruit* (ver. 17), which abounds to his account. Fruit is the production of life.

**III. ALMSGIVING IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.** A sacrifice well-pleasing to him (ver. 18). He sees in every act of self-denial a reflection of the sacrifice of his dearly beloved Son in whom he is well pleased.

**IV. ALMSGIVING A PART OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.** Worship is the offering of ourselves and our substance to God. We can only do this through receiving of his grace. We give him back in offerings what he gives us in bounty. He returns our offerings multiplied with his blessing and full of his grace (ver. 19). There is a Divine circulation of grace as there is a natural circulation of the blood. So long as we are true to Jesus, who is the very heart of God, so long does he pour forth his grace into us the living members of his body. We return that grace to him in the shape of our poor prayers and deeds of service, and we are again quickened by him from the boundless riches of his grace.—V. W. H.

**Ver. 1.—Steadfastness.** I. **THE DUTY.** 1. It is *important*. Christian faithfulness

does not consist in a few occasional heroic acts done in the excitement of temporary enthusiasm. It is a constant faithful living; it is holding the citadel throughout life against the assaults of temptation. Though great deeds have been done and a considerable time well spent, all is vain if we give up at the last and make shipwreck at the end of the voyage. 2. It is *difficult*. It is easier to be the faithful martyr of a day than the faithful servant of a lifetime. To stand fast when we are weary, to hold on through a long cheerless night of adversity, to have patience with the fretting of small trials, and to endure to the end, are the hard tasks.

II. THE CONDITION. We are to "stand fast in the Lord." Steadfastness in our own condition, opinion, and habit, is stagnation. We may be in a state when anything but steadfastness is necessary, when to be upset is to be saved. There are men who need to be made to doubt. Christ was a most unsettling preacher, and true Christian teaching must aim at disturbing those who are holding on in a wrong way. Let us not confound a right steadfastness with obstinate self-will. The first essential is that we are "in the Lord," and the one steadfastness commanded is abiding in him.

III. THE METHOD. "*Wherefore . . . so stand fast*," etc. These words carry us back to the preceding thoughts. There we have a description of the Christian's heavenly citizenship, and his hope of the second advent of Christ. A persistent hope is a security for steadfastness, an anchor of the soul (Heb. vi. 19). Just in proportion as we live in heaven, with thoughts, affections, motives, and efforts centred in Christ and his kingdom, shall we be able to hold out on earth firmly against the storms of trouble and temptation.

IV. THE MOTIVE. The motive which inspires St. Paul to urge the duty of steadfastness upon the Philippians is his personal affection for them. The expression of this must have been felt by them as a strong incentive to a true response. The apostle seems to have regarded his Macedonian converts at Philippi and Thessalonica as the choicest of his friends. They were his brethren, beloved, longed for in absence, still a source of joy to the imprisoned apostle as he thought of them, and regarded as a crown of victory and proof of the glorious success of his labours for the day of the Lord. We can wish nothing better for those we love than their Christian fidelity. Ministers have a strong hold upon their people when they can urge personal affection and joyous recognition of good done as a motive for further progress. The love and honour of those who have laboured and suffered for the Church are great motives to inspire faithful steadfastness in all Christians.—W. F. A.

Ver. 4.—*Christian joy*. No doubt the apostle used a common expression of parting salutation, similar to our "farewell," when he wrote the word which we translate "rejoice." But it is certain that he was not one to employ conventional language as an empty form. Old familiar words, often repeated quite thoughtlessly, were taken by him in their full original signification. So when Christ said, "Peace be with you," he uttered a familiar phrase of parting; but he breathed into it a deep meaning, and gave peace with the words. Christ's salutation was a benediction; St. Paul's salutation was at least an utterance of a heartfelt desire for the joy of his friends.

L WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO REJOICE. Christianity grows out of a gospel. It was heralded by angel-songs of gladness. The funeral dirge is not the suitable expression of our worship. Hosanna shouts and hallelujahs more become its glad character. We are encouraged to rejoice on many grounds. 1. *For our own sakes*. If there is no virtue in melancholy, it is foolish to refuse the gladness offered by God. 2. *For the sake of our work*. Joy is invigorating. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Needless melancholy is sinful when it paralyzes our energies. 3. *For the sake of others*. Our joy will be sunshine to others if it be a true, generous, Christian gladness. Our gloom will make others miserable. Moreover, by manifesting Christian joy we invite others to share in the benefits of the gospel. 4. *For Christ's sake*. It pleases him and honours him.

II. OUR JOY SHOULD SPRING FROM CHRIST. We are to "rejoice in the Lord." Other innocent joys are permitted and consecrated by Christ; for was he not a helpful Guest at the marriage feast? and did he not scandalize some gloomy hypocrites by taking a very different course from his ascetic forerunner? Indeed, many earthly joys are safe to the Christian which are perilous to others, because the Christian enters them with

Divine safeguards. "All things are yours" is said to Christians, partly because "to the pure all things are pure." But a peculiarly Christian joy is derived directly from Christ. 1. The joy of his *love*, receiving and returning it. Love is the source of the greatest joy. 2. The joy of his *service*, delighting to do his will. 3. The joy of his *blessing*. The heavenly citizenship and its inheritance are ours in Christ.

III. OUR JOY IN CHRIST SHOULD BE CONTINUOUS. The difficulty is to rejoice alway. It requires much faith and nearness to Christ. It is only possible to those who live in the unseen and eternal. But if, believing in our heavenly citizenship, we set our affections above, with our heart and our treasure in heaven, and with the heaven of Christ's presence in our soul here, there will spring up a joy in the midst of earthly trouble. It is remarkable that this Epistle to the Philippians, written under the most adverse earthly circumstances, by the worn and aged apostle in prison, is the fullest of gladness. The secret is the richness of the inner life of St. Paul, as this was made bright by his close fellowship with Christ.—W. F. A.

Ver. 6.—*The cure for anxiety.* I. THE DISEASE. We must, of course, be careful for many things, in the sense of taking thought about them or taking pains in working on them. Christianity does not favour indolent improvidence; for it teaches, "If a man will not work neither let him eat." Nor does it encourage reckless carelessness; for it everywhere instils a thoughtful, conscientious sense of responsibility. What it does discourage is anxiety. 1. This is *painful*. How painful most of us know only too well. The wear and fret of care sometimes make the advice to rejoice alway read like a mockery. 2. This is *injurious*. Men rarely die of hard work, but often of vexing anxiety. It is not toil, but trouble, that turns the hair grey before its time. 3. This *hinders spiritual energy*. The "cares of this world" choke the good seed as much as its pleasures and riches. When absorbed in worldly anxiety, men have no energy, heart, nor time for spiritual concerns. In the petty cares of a day they drown the grand claims of eternity.

II. HUMAN REMEDIES. 1. *Reason.* Care is foolish and useless.

"Care is no cure, but rather corrosive,  
For things that are not to be remedied."

Often it is groundless, a shadow of our own imagination, and of no real trouble. Thus Burns says—

"But human bodies are sic fools,  
For a' their colleges and schools,  
That when nae real ills perplex them,  
They make enow themsel's to vex them."

But anxiety is too strong for reason. It persists against reason. 2. *Philosophic complacency in the best of all possible worlds.* We cannot think that "whatever is is best." Philosophers may say so in their calm seclusion; toilers and sufferers will never believe it in the rough experience of real life (Christianity does not require this optimism, or it would not encourage prayer for changes). 3. *Stoical indifferences.* Here and there this may be possible; but it is not natural, and it is only got with the loss of much human tenderness. 4. *Cynical carelessness.* This may come with despair. It is not the cure of anxiety, but its fatal victory over a ruined life.

III. THE DIVINE CURE. Christ taught us to conquer earthly anxiety in two ways, by trusting in our heavenly Father (Matt. vi. 32), and by transferring our care to more worthy objects, by which means it becomes itself transformed into a noble concern for the kingdom of God (Matt. vi. 33). St. Paul follows on the same lines. 1. *Prayer* is the remedy for care. We are distinctly invited to bring our anxieties to God. We are to be anxious about nothing, by making supplication about everything. Thus, as the area of prayer advances, that of care recedes. The conventional limitation of prayer is the secret of much unconquered anxiety. 2. *Thanksgiving* perfects the remedy. This is a ground of encouragement in prayer for future help and a direct relief from pressing anxiety. Care has a bad memory. Grateful recollections of the past will greatly allay anxieties about the future.—W. F. A.

Ver. 7.—*The peace that is better than intellectual satisfaction.* I. GOD ANSWERS THE PRAYER OF ANXIETY WITH A GIFT OF PEACE. The promise of peace follows close upon the exhortation to convert our anxieties into prayers. The result of such conduct is not the immediate removal of the source of care; the old trouble may still be with us, and the dreaded danger may not yet be averted; but we have an inward peace and acquiescence in the assurance that all must be well in our Father's hands. Thus the prayer is answered, though not exactly as we expected. 1. This peace is *given by God*. It is not the product of our own reasonings, nor of altered circumstances, but of Divine grace. 2. It is directly dependent on *communion with God*; for it is not so much a blessing bestowed in response to prayer as the natural consequence of approaching God in prayer. As we turn from the fretting cares of life to talk with God, we enter a new serene atmosphere above the tumults of earth, and the peace of it steals into our souls. 3. It is a peace *like that of God himself*. Given by God, growing out of communion with God, it has the character of God. It is a solid, deep, pure, true, lasting peace, quite different from any peace the world can give (John xiv. 27).

II. THIS PEACE IS BETTER THAN ANY INTELLECTUAL SATISFACTION. We are impatient for an explanation of the mysteries of providence. We would know why God has dealt with us so differently from what we had expected. We would have the veil of the future uplifted that our anxious hearts might be set at rest. But it is not possible. We are left to grope among many dark secrets while we learn to walk by faith. Nevertheless, if we have not the understanding, the peace is better. If we cannot know all, we can live trustfully with an inward quiet. Better a calm in midnight darkness than a storm in the glare of noon. For our training it is well not to know many things that God has mercifully hidden from our imperfect comprehension. If we can trust God in the darkness and be at peace in our own souls, we have the highest blessing.

III. THIS DIVINE PEACE PREVENTS OUR MINDS FROM WANDERING FROM CHRIST. It is represented as a sentinel on the watch, guarding our hearts and thoughts, and keeping them in Christ. The cares of this world tempt us from Christ with vexing doubts and distracting claims. In peace of heart our thoughts return to him. No understanding of providence and its mysteries would thus settle the soul on the true foundation of its rest. That would not guard our hearts and thoughts because it is not the ideas of our minds but the spirit of our lives, the tone and temper and character of them, that dissuades our affections and thoughts from wandering from Christ. This, therefore, is the great commendation of the Divine peace which is given in response to the prayer of anxiety. It does not remove the trouble that causes the anxiety, but it prevents that trouble from driving us from Christ, and so secures to us the supreme blessedness of abiding in him.—W. F. A.

Ver. 8.—*The contemplation of goodness.* I. OUR MINDS SHOULD BE OCCUPIED WITH THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOOD THINGS. 1. It is not enough that our deeds are pure, our thoughts must be pure also, (1) because the inner life is the true life, and (2) because our ideas will ultimately colour our actions. 2. *Good thoughts spring from the study of good things.* We cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled. But the consideration of worthy characters and actions will insensibly fill our minds with a kindred spirit. This fact should govern our choice of literature, friends, scenes, and occupations. It is particularly important to study objective goodness outside ourselves. This is a cure for dreamy subjectivity, for self-conceit, and for narrow notions.

II. THE GOOD CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN OF THE WORLD SHOULD BE GENEROUSLY ADMITTED. It is remarkable that the list of good things here drawn out by St. Paul consists chiefly of pagan virtues. He appears to be calling upon Christians to consider the goodness that is to be found outside the pale of the Church. 1. These good characteristics *exist*. The world is not wholly depraved. It was not even so in the dark days of the Roman empire. One who had a keen sympathy with goodness was able then to detect the genuine indications of light amidst the gloom. The life of Cato and the writings of Seneca, for example, contain much that commands our profound admiration. “There is a soul of goodness in things evil.” 2. These good characteristics should be *ungrudgingly recognized* (1) in justice to men; (2) for the glory of God, who is the source of all goodness in the world as well as in the Church, pagan as well

as Christian; (3) for our own sakes. A narrow censorious spirit is most unchristian. A follower of the innocent Christ should be a lover of all things good.

III. CHRISTIANS MAY GREATLY PROFIT BY THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE GOODNESS OF MEN OF THE WORLD. It might be thought that, if this is a lower form of goodness, it would be useless to study it. But: 1. The consideration of it will widen our sympathies. It will help us better to appreciate and love our brother man. Approaching them through their good points, we shall the better influence them (e.g. see Acts xvii. 22). Compare Clement and Origen in their recognition of what was good in paganism, with Tertullian and his denunciation of heathen religion and philosophy as diabolical, and with Arnobius and his railing against human nature itself. Surely the Alexandrian apologists were wisest as well as most charitable. 2. The contemplation of these good things will reveal virtues not sufficiently studied by Christians. The Church has not the monopoly of the virtues. If she excels in the higher graces men who do not own her name may sometimes shame her with their excellence in other respects. Christians may learn much from Plato and Epictetus and from Goethe and Carlyle.

IV. DETAILS OF GOODNESS MAY BE USEFULLY CONSIDERED. St. Paul makes a list of good things. He was in the habit of drawing out such lists. We must begin with the inward spirit of holiness in love to God and man, but we must develop our character by attention to details. 1. This excites our attention. Our imagination flags at generalities. Objective details please it best. 2. This prevents our goodness from evaporating in vague sentiment. 3. This gives breadth and variety to our character. Good things are numerous and of varied types. We must beware of a narrow morality. "Whatsoever things are good," etc., are worthy of study, in order that every possible attainment of character may be reached in every possible direction.—W. F. A.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The secret of contentment.* I. CONTENTMENT IS A RARE AND PRECIOUS CHRISTIAN GRACE. It must be distinguished from spiritual self-satisfaction, which is sinful and fatal, and is concerned with our own inner condition, while true contentment has regard to our external circumstances. It must also be distinguished from the recklessness of folly and from the apathy of despair. It is a quiet restfulness in the midst of all kinds of changing events. 1. It is rare and difficult of attainment, because (1) outside events are frequently untoward; (2) our own hearts are unhealthily restless; and (3) we live too much in dependence on this world and its fortunes. 2. Contentment is most desirable. For without it the most propitious circumstances can minister little pleasure, and with it the hardest privations can produce little distress. The important question in regard to our happiness is not—What things do we possess? but—What kind of thoughts and feelings do we experience? 3. Contentment is requisite in every condition of life. It is not only the virtue of the poor and the solace of the disappointed. Rich and prosperous people are too often also discontented people. It is harder for some to know how to abound than to know how to suffer want. Wealth brings the thirst for more wealth. Pleasure palls. Prosperity wearies. It is a grand attainment to be able to pass up and down the whole gamut of social change and to behave one's self with equanimity and contentment in every stage up from abasement to abundance and then down again from fulness to need.

II. THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT IS TO BE LEARNED FROM CHRIST. There is a secret Some have not yet found it out. But it exists and it is well worth seeking. To be fully understood and enjoyed it must be learned as a long, difficult, painful lesson. St. Paul had learnt it, and his example should win fresh pupils to study the same great lesson. 1. Christ gives us strength to bear varying fortunes. St. Paul could speak of his contentment because he could also say, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." If we know and feel nothing beyond this, there is a certain satisfaction to be got from the mere sense of new power given to bear that which before seemed to be unbearable. 2. Christ enables us to live in faith. Thus believing that even now all things are ordered wisely and kindly by our heavenly Father, that they are working together for good not yet seen, working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, we learn to bear the present mystery of trial in hope of the future revelation of blessedness. 3. Christ leads us to live in the spiritual. This is the real secret. External circumstances are constantly changing. At best they will not satisfy the soul's deep hunger. While we live in them we are necessarily often disappointed and

discontented. In the inner world of spiritual things we must find our best experience, and when this opens up to the higher world of Divine and heavenly things we have a source of unsailing peace. Resting in God we shall be content in every variety of earthly affairs.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 13.—Christian omnipotence.** The language of faith resembles in form the language of boastful presumption. But the two are essentially dissimilar. So long as our ground of confidence is not in ourselves, but in Christ, it is no mark of humility, but rather a sign of unbelief and ingratitude, for one to make little of it. There is a legitimate boasting in Christ which is quite different from the boasting of the braggart in his own resources. “My soul will make her boast in the Lord”—this the humblest may say.

**I. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN IS A STRONG SOUL.** He is not simply pardoned the failures of past weakness; he is prepared to be more successful in future trials. For those trials he is not merely protected by Divine armour; he is also girded by Divine strength. God does not simply hide his child in the cleft of a rock while the storm passes; he also inspires him with might wherewith to face and brave and conquer the storm even out in the open. He who protects the feeble fledglings in their warm nest also braces the strong branches of the oak to wrestle with the gale. Moreover, if strength is possible to the Christian, weakness is culpable. No one can plead his feebleness as an excuse for failing when he might have been strong in the energy of God.

**II. CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN STRENGTH.** We are made strong in Christ, not in ourselves. By himself the Christian is as weak as any one else. It is union with Christ that supplies Christ's strength made perfect in our weakness. 1. Christ strengthens *with an inspiration of Divine energy*. The language of the apostle points to a real supply of strength, not a mere sense of courage, etc. There is a positive outflow of God's might into a soul that is united to Christ. 2. Christ strengthens *by his union with us*. We must be in him and he in us. Then his life-power flows through us. 3. Christ strengthens *through our faith*. We are able to receive Christ's energy just in proportion as we trust him, as they who were cured by him had blessings according to their faith. The energy is not in our faith, but in Christ. Still, faith is the channel of communication. Faith can move mountains, not by reason of its own inherent virtue, but because it invokes the omnipotence of God, as the engineer starts the train when he turns on the steam.

**III. THERE ARE GREAT CLAIMS ON CHRISTIAN STRENGTH.** It is not allowed to rust in idleness. St. Paul writes of “all things,” as though there were many things to be done in the power of Christ. 1. *Troubles, temptations, and changing circumstances* of life must be borne with contentment. It is in regard to this requirement that the apostle more immediately records this assurance of sufficiency of strength. 2. *Duties* have to be fulfilled. Christ gives strength for work as well as strength for endurance. The Christian must not only stand firmly like a rock; he must put forth active power like a Samson. The calls for strength are many and various, flesh and heart fail before them; but “they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,” so that in Christ the heaviest burden may be borne and the hardest task accomplished and the weakest soul win the victory over the most powerful foe, with a strength which is practically omnipotent, because it is derived from an almighty source.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 19.—A full supply.** The Philippians had “sent once and again unto” St. Paul's need (ver. 16). In return the apostle assures them that the recompense which is beyond his power will be made for him by his God, who will supply all their need. We are most enriched when we most sacrifice ourselves (Prov. xi. 24). What we give to the work of Christ we shall receive back with far more than the worth of our offerings.

**I. WE ALL HAVE GREAT NEEDS THAT ONLY GOD CAN FULFIL.** “Every need of yours.” What a vast field this expression covers! 1. *Earthly need.* Few but are pressed by each need in some direction, and often to an extent that no human aid can satisfy. But we must observe that what God will supply is the need, not the desire; the two cover very different ground. God will not give what we wish, but what is requisite for us. Moreover, we cannot distinguish between the real need and our idea of what we

need. It is the former only that God will supply. 2. *Spiritual need.* This is far larger and more important than all material wants. We need forgiveness, purification, strength, knowledge—great and glorious graces that no man can give.

II. **God WILL FULFIL EVERY NEED OF HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS.** 1. He *will fulfil* the need. The fulfilment will not be as we expect it; perhaps because the need is not exactly what we imagine it to be. As God only knows the real wants of our lives, he only can rightly supply them. But not one true need will he ultimately leave unsatisfied. There is a royal abundance in the treasury of Divine grace and an unstinting generosity in the gifts from it. 2. This assurance is only for those who are *faithful*. St. Paul gives it to the Philippians after they have given abundant evidence of their devotion. It is not every one who can rightly be promised that his every need shall be fulfilled, nor to the unspiritual will the Divine supply of the soul's true needs seem to be such, as they will be blind to these wants and at the same time much concerned with fancied needs of no real importance which God will certainly not supply.

III. **THE SOURCE OF THE DIVINE SUPPLY IS IN CHRIST JESUS.** 1. The *riches* with which to supply our poverty are found in Christ. His unsearchable riches (Eph. iii. 8) consist in the grace that he brings to us in his advent and the grace that he secures for us by his death and resurrection. As we receive the highest blessings for Christ's sake they may be regarded as riches that are stored up in Christ. 2. The method of supplying our need is through *sharing in the glory* of Christ. The riches are in glory. They are the fruits of the triumph of Christ. Fighting under our Captain's banner, we share his triumph, enter into the same glory with him, and so enjoy his wealth of blessings.—W. F. A.

## HOMILETICAL INDEX

TO

### THE EPISTLE OF

# ST. PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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