





Division

Section









*THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT*

THE CAPTIVITY AND THE  
PASTORAL EPISTLES









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WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
COMMENTARY—	
Colossians . . . . .	32
Philemon . . . . .	87
Ephesians . . . . .	103
Philippians . . . . .	165
1 Timothy . . . . .	201
2 Timothy . . . . .	236
Titus . . . . .	257
INDEX . . . . .	273

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## NOTE

To give a satisfying interpretation of seven epistles in a book of this size appears to the present writer almost out of the question, and he can only hope to shed rays of light here and there. To save some space a good many improved readings have been introduced in heavy type—mostly from the R.V.—without reference to those which have been displaced. There is an immense literature on Paul and his teaching. After reading what English, American, French, German, and Dutch scholars have said about him, the writer has endeavoured to do his own thinking. His opinion on the composition of the Pastoral Epistles is not generally held by scholars in Great Britain, nor does it accord with the common tradition in the Church, but it has been forced upon him by the internal evidence of the epistles themselves.

# THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT

## THE CAPTIVITY AND THE PASTORAL EPISTLES



### INTRODUCTION.

#### PAUL IN ROME.

As the apostle of the Gentiles Paul made it his aim to capture the great cities of the Roman Empire for Christ. Having the instincts of a born strategist, he always worked with a definite policy, a carefully thought out plan of action. He attacked the citadels of paganism one after the other. He laid the foundation of Christ's kingdom in the chief seats of commerce, learning, and art. He evidently believed that the rest of the Empire could be conquered in detail, as the thoughts awakened at the centres of intellectual activity must sooner or later pass to the remotest towns and villages. Early in his career he began to hear the call of Rome, and it was a voice which he could not silence. Time after time he was on the point of starting for the mother-city, and time after time he was prevented. His purpose was often

## 2 Westminster New Testament

thwarted, but never for a moment abandoned. Rome lay ever on the far horizon of his mind. His desire to see it at length became overmastering. Even when he was journeying East his thoughts were flying West. Jerusalem, the goal of his youthful dreams, was now but a stage on the winding road to Rome. He saw the city in his dreams, he prayed that he might reach it, he was consumed by the desire to preach in it. His passionate yearning was far deeper than the mere patriotic sentiment of a Roman citizen. It was justified by his sure sense of the supreme strategic importance of the metropolis, the gathering-place of all nations. He probably realised that his own greatest work must be accomplished there. At any rate he knew that the decisive blow to paganism had to be struck at the world's great centre. Till he came to Rome he could never fully appreciate the strength of the dominion of the Cæsars, nor measure against it all the power of Christ. For the world-city he had a world-gospel. Once there, he would pour new life-blood into the throbbing heart of civilisation, to circulate through every vein of all the Empire.

At length his heart's desire was realised. "And so we came to Rome . . . we entered Rome," says his companion and historian, thankful for this crowning mercy, conscious of chronicling an epoch-making event. It is true that Paul did not come to Rome, as he had hoped, with full freedom of action. He was sent thither as "an ambassador in bonds," and he probably remained a prisoner till the day of his death. Yet his ministry in Rome was supremely effective. He could scarcely have

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 3

accomplished more had he enjoyed perfect liberty. By his courage in adversity, by his magnetic power over other preachers, by his reception of inquirers in his hired house, by his influence among the Prætorian Guard, and by his repeated defences before his imperial judges, he made a profound impression upon Christian and pagan Rome. And by the letters which he dictated in his Roman prison he left a memorial more enduring than brass, a pattern of Christian faith to shape the life of the Church in all ages.

### THE EPISTLES OF THE CAPTIVITY.

If we may provisionally accept the ordinary division of the Pauline letters into four groups, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians will form the third group, and the order in which they are here given probably represents their true chronological sequence. Between Romans, the last of the second group, and Colossians, the first of the third, there must be an interval of several years, and when we pass from the one to the other, we at once feel that we begin to breathe a new atmosphere and move amid a different set of conditions. The old battle-cries of justification by faith alone and liberty from the law, which ring through all the epistles of the second period, are scarcely heard in those of the third. In the interval the cause of spiritual liberty has triumphed. Judaism has received its death-blow. It has been settled once for all that the Mosaic yoke is not to be imposed upon Gentile Christians. Paul himself has done far more than any other apostle to bring about this result. He has best understood the

## 4 Westminster New Testament

genius of Christianity. He has taken the great thoughts of Christ and made them current coin in the Roman Empire. And he has at the same time established his own position as the supreme inspired teacher of the perfect religion. From this period onward he no longer requires to maintain his apostolic authority; he is calmly conscious of the unique place which he has won in the whole Christian Church.

With many differences of detail there is a marked similarity of style in the four Epistles of the Roman Imprisonment. They are less fiery and impetuous than those of the earlier groups. They breathe a more tranquil spirit. Their logic is not so remorseless. They are more tender and meditative. They are pervaded by a more cheerful optimism, a more serene and joyful confidence. If the epistles of the first and second groups resemble the flush of dawn and the fervour of midday, those of the third group suggest the mellow loveliness of afternoon, and those of the fourth the peace of evening. The change in style reflects the change in the writer's outward conditions. Paul the restless traveller and missionary is forced at last to sit still. For four or five years he seems to be doomed to a life of tedious inaction. And Paul the prisoner already begins to feel that he is Paul the aged. But how wise was the providence which gave the man of enterprise a season of quiet reflection! There were two long pauses in Paul's strenuous life as a Christian, the one at the beginning, the other at the end of his career, and the world owes more than it knows to the Arabian desert and the Roman prison.

Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians were



## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 5

evidently written from the same place about the same time. There are many links of connection between them. Tychicus is the bearer of both Colossians and Ephesians (Col. iv. 7, 8; Eph. vi. 21, 22), and Onesimus, the subject of Philemon, is the companion of Tychicus (Col. iv. 9). Greetings are sent in Colossians and Philemon to the same group of friends (Col. iv. 10, 12, 14; Philem. 23, 24). In Philem. 2 a message is sent to Archippus, and in Col. iv. 17 we learn that he held an official position in the church of Colossæ. To some scholars—such as Meyer, Haupt, Sabatier—it seemed probable that these epistles were written in Paul's Cæsarean prison, but this theory has now few advocates. The following facts are against it. Onesimus, the fugitive slave, would be much more likely to seek refuge among the teeming millions of Rome than in a little Syrian town; and he would find it less difficult to gain access to Paul in a Roman hired house than in a Cæsarean gaol. In Rome it would be far easier for the apostle to send letters to distant churches and to receive messengers from other lands. Only in Rome was it natural for him to expect a speedy settlement of his case. If he wrote from Cæsarea, before his departure for Rome, it is strange that he should speak of going to Colossæ, and not say a word about the long-expected voyage to Italy which must have filled all his thoughts.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

This letter was written by Paul to a church which he had not founded and which he had never been able to visit. But he was profoundly inter-

## 6 Westminster New Testament

ested in Colossæ because its church sprang into being as the result of the labours of his convert and delegate, Epaphras. Colossæ was one of three sister cities in the upper valley of the Lycus, an affluent of the Mæander, in the heart of the Roman province of Asia. It lay on the south side of the river, under the shadow of Mount Cadmus (7000 feet high) with its eternal snow. Ten miles farther down the stream was Laodicea, which was faced by Hierapolis, picturesquely perched on an elevation at the other side of the valley, six miles distant. Laodicea and Colossæ were on the great road from Ephesus to the Euphrates, the most important route of commerce and intercourse in the eastern part of the Empire. Xenophon in his story of the Ten Thousand speaks of "the populous, prosperous, and beautiful city" of Colossæ. But as the other two cities grew, Colossæ began to wane, and Strabo, about the time of Christ, speaks of it as "a small city" (*polisima*). Nevertheless it continued to be one of the most important meeting-places of East and West. While its permanent population was Phrygian, with an admixture of Greeks and Jews, it was constantly visited by travellers of all nationalities, who kept it for ever simmering with new ideas.

These three cities of the Lycus valley were Epaphras' mission-field, and his labours seem to have been speedily crowned with success. Three churches were planted, and rapidly grew. But it was that kind of rapidity which makes wise men shake their heads. It was too feverish to be healthy. Some of those who eagerly expressed their faith in Christ, and took His Church by storm, brought with them many of the cherished ideas of the

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 7

time, partly Jewish and partly pagan, which they not only saw no reason to discard, but which they were prepared to defend as an important, indeed an essential, part of God's message to men. They made Christianity too popular by making it too easy. They proved that the old faith could live with the new; that a man might become a Christian without shedding any of his principles or prejudices. The result was that the gospel was soon in imminent danger of being submerged by a rising tide of non-Christian beliefs and practices. Epaphras at length became alarmed, and went all the way to Rome to consult his chief. While it was in his power to give a glowing account of the success of his mission, he was at the same time obliged to speak of the serious dangers that threatened the life of all the young communities which he had planted in that perfervid atmosphere of Eastern speculation.

The beginning of the Christian era is the age of the eclectic. In consequence of the decay of national and popular religions, all the possible permutations and combinations of beliefs new and old are being tried. The Lycus valley, a hotbed of theosophy, gnosticism, and mysticism, is the natural scene of one of the most striking of these experiments. The new teachers at Colossæ carefully refrain from saying anything directly opposed to the gospel of Epaphras (*i.e.* of Paul). They merely call it imperfect, and profess to be able to supplement it. They know the way to lead the Christian beginner onward and upward to perfection. They can initiate him into the mysteries of the higher life. They can put into his hand the key of philosophy. They teach him that as the

## 8 Westminster New Testament

flesh is the seat of sin, it must be mortified ; strict dietary rules must be observed ; the festivals of the Mosaic law are to be kept ; and in general life is to be regulated in accordance with the best human traditions, from whatever quarter they are borrowed. As the Pauline idea of God is so one-sided, failing to explain the original relation between the supreme God and sinful matter, and so to lay the foundation for a scheme of reconciliation, it must be balanced by a doctrine of the mediation of angels, æons, or elemental spirits. The gospel which Epaphras has preached must be supplemented by the splendid visions of the mystic and the meritorious practices of the ascetic. Redemption is not the function of Christ alone ; the labour is divided among the whole host of God's angelic ministers, before whom men must bow in trembling adoration.

Just as much of our Lord's teaching was elicited by the errors of His disciples, so is much of Paul's by the errors of the churches. The doctrine of Colossians is Christianity reconceived and restated in contact with the philosophy of one of the centres of Greek culture. To the Gnostic doctrine of æons or angels the writer opposes the grandest and fullest conception of the Person of Christ that is to be found in the Bible. Three normative conceptions he presses upon the minds of his readers—the uniqueness of Christ's personality, the completeness of His work, the finality and perfection of His revelation. The Colossians seek a true idea of God—in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead ; of creation—Christ is the original of all created being, including the angelic orders ; of history—all things are from Christ and unto

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 9

Christ; of redemption—believers are buried with Christ and rise with Him to newness of life; of atonement—Christ has by the blood of His cross won the sinner's peace. They seek a philosophy—in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom hidden; a higher life—it is hid with Christ in God. They seek initiation into all mysteries—Christ is the open Secret of the universe. They desire to attain perfection—man is complete in Christ.

Some scholars have found in the new theology of the Colossian Church a full-blown Gnosticism. This was the theory of the founders of the Tübingen school, who sought to bring the epistle down to the middle of the second century. But there are now few critics who do not accept the Pauline authorship of the letter. Some writers—among them Hort, Murray, and Peake—try to explain all the Colossian errors as of purely Jewish origin. But it was strange indeed if a predominantly Gentile church, surrounded by an atmosphere of mystic theosophy, never came under the spell of any ideas save those of Jewish birth. Most scholars find in the epistle a blend of Jewish and semi-Gnostic ideas and practices. It is a mistake to suppose that the power of the Gnostics began in the second century. "The Gnosticism with which Colossians is at strife," says Jülicher, "is even older than Christianity itself. The false teachers could have made their appearance within the Christian Church in the year 60 A.D. just as easily as in 120."

### THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

Among the writings of Paul this little letter is unique as a message to a dear and intimate friend on

a purely private matter. The apostle must have dictated many such letters in the course of his long life, and how much we should give for a volume containing the Private Correspondence of St. Paul! The Pastoral Epistles are also addressed to individuals, but they are—at least in their present form—for the most part official, dealing with the affairs of the Church at large. But Philemon is quite uneccelesiastical. It is a tenderly human document, so charming in style, so courteous in tone, so gracious and genial in spirit, so instinct with the noblest sentiments of brotherhood, that it is universally regarded as one of the purest gems of early Christian literature.

Brief as it is, Philemon is suggestive of the mighty social revolution which Christianity was just beginning to effect throughout the Roman Empire. It wafts to us the breath of a new life; it speaks with the voice of a dawning era; it flashes light upon new and undreamed-of horizons of thought and action. It enables us partly to reconstruct a thrilling tale of the wonderful days of the first contact and conflict between the Christian faith and the old-world paganism. Farrar in his historical romance, *Darkness and Dawn*, and Abbott in his *Onesimus*, have let their imagination play round the attractive theme.

Philemon was a gentleman of Colossæ whose mind had been awakened by the preaching of Paul (ver. 19). Probably his conversion occurred during the apostle's great mission in Ephesus, when "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord." After the decisive change we find him so earnest in Christian service that Paul joyfully thinks of him as a fellow-labourer (ver. 1). He converts his pagan

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 11

house into a Christian home. He transforms the largest room of it into a church, which his warm invitations and welcomes soon fill with worshippers. He devotes his wealth to hospitality and charity. He delights to prepare a prophet's chamber for any messenger of Christ. Many a saint has cause to bless him for his overflowing goodness.

Onesimus was one of Philemon's slaves. He wronged his master—apparently he robbed him—and fled to Rome in the hope of escaping detection. There he came in contact with Paul, whose name had been familiar to him in his Colossian home, whom he may even have seen and heard during the Ephesian mission. Whether he met the apostle by chance, or sought him out when his ill-gotten goods were squandered and his poverty brought him to himself, we are not told. But that meeting was evidently the turning-point of his life. What Paul told him of the love of Christ and the forgiveness of sins made him a new man, and from that time he began to minister to the apostle with the fond devotion of a spiritual son. Paul on his side became so attached to his convert that he found it extremely difficult to part with him. He felt that to take away Onesimus would be like tearing out his own heart. But there was a question of conscience involved in the matter. Paul saw that not only in justice to Philemon but in kindness to Onesimus he must make the sacrifice which was so hard. Repentance must be followed by reparation. Onesimus understood, and consented to return to his master. But Paul did not send him back empty-handed. He gave him this charming note of recommendation, which brings us face to face with the apostle not as a theologian, a controversialist, a

missionary, but as a warm-hearted Christian gentleman opening his inmost heart to a loved and trusted friend.

The letter reveals the power of Christianity to equalise all social conditions and unify all types of character. Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus represent the Jew, the Greek, and the Barbarian. The proud Pharisee, the cultured pagan, and the Phrygian slave come each under the spell of the Nazarene; their differences are conjured away, and they kiss each other as brothers. Those who are one in Christ cannot but love one another. They glory in the sense of new relationships; they are all members of God's family of love; they use the sweet language of brotherhood in its pristine freshness. Paul thinks of Philemon as "our beloved" (ver. 1), and twice addresses him as "brother" (vers. 7, 20). Onesimus is his "child" (ver. 10), or his "brother beloved" (ver. 16). Paul knows that Philemon will receive Onesimus back as "a brother beloved" (ver. 16). Twice he speaks of Philemon's already proved "love" (vers. 5, 7), and now he makes his special appeal to him in the great name of "love" (ver. 9). "For love's sake" is the keynote of the epistle. *Amor omnia vincit.*

Some readers of the epistle cannot help wondering that Paul sent a fugitive slave back to his master, and never advised him, nor any of the servile class to which he belonged, to claim their liberty. The early Church, however, was greatly wise in its attitude toward the social and political problems of the time. Paul has none of the spirit of a revolutionary. He never criticises or satirises the social institutions of the Empire. He is always eager to show that Christianity is consistent with



good citizenship. At a time when every second person living is a bond-servant he counsels patient submission. He bids the slaves of heathen masters remain as they are. He does not even ask Philemon, a Christian master, to set his slave free. As Lightfoot finely says, "the word emancipation seems to tremble on his lips, but it is never uttered." Had submission not been preached by the apostles and enforced by their example, the new religion must have ended in a splash of blood. But Christianity never set class against class. Its blessings were for men of all ranks and conditions. Its reforms were not violently imposed from without. It worked from within. It quietly prepared the way for immense social changes by changing men's lives. It gave bondmen spiritual liberty, which is sooner or later followed by every other kind of liberty. It sent Onesimus back to his master "no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a brother beloved" (ver. 16). Godet is therefore justified after all in calling this epistle "the first petition in favour of the abolition of slavery."

### THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

It is practically certain that this epistle was not written to the Ephesians alone. Three things have convinced all scholars that there must have been other readers. (1) The letter has no local colour and no personal greetings. Paul spent three most strenuous years in Ephesus, he founded the church of that city, he left behind him many converts and intimate friends, and it is inconceivable that he should have written them without recalling any fond memories or sending any affectionate saluta-

tions. The writer of the epistle warms to his theme, but not to his readers. He gives no expression to his inner feelings; he never breaks through his official reserve. Ephesians is the most detached and Catholic epistle he ever wrote. How he *would* have addressed the Ephesians had he been writing to them alone, is sufficiently indicated by his heart-to-heart utterance to the Ephesian elders in Acts xx. A message intended exclusively for Ephesus would have been at least as exuberantly personal as the letters to the Corinthians and Philippians. (2) There are passages in which the apostle writes as to readers who are unknown to him. He speaks of "having heard" of their faith (i. 15); he presumes that they "have heard" of his stewardship (iii. 2); and he hopes that they have "heard Christ" (iv. 21). He could never have written thus to the Ephesians. (3) The words "at Ephesus" in i. 1 are omitted by many ancient authorities. The oldest and best MSS, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, both read "to the saints who are, and to the faithful." Origen in the third century, Basil in the fourth, and Jerome in the fifth, all testify that this was the prevailing reading. Marcion, writing in the second century, had before him a MS. which read "to the saints who are at Laodicea." Now we find that when Paul writes his letter to the Colossians, he bids them "likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. iv. 16). He does not call it "the epistle to the Laodiceans," as if he had written a letter expressly for them. It is a letter which is to come to the Colossians *via* Laodicea, and it is a very plausible conjecture that "the epistle from Laodicea" is no other than the so-called "epistle to the Ephesians." With these

three sets of facts in view, nearly all scholars now lean to the hypothesis, first suggested by Beza and afterwards popularised by Ussher, that this is a Circular Letter (or Encyclical) addressed to a group of churches in Proconsular Asia. Probably the original letter contained a blank space in the opening verse: "to the saints which are . . . and to the faithful." Either a copy was sent to each church with its name inserted, or else (as Hort prefers to think) the original went the round of the churches, and a fresh name was filled in by the bearer and reader (probably Tychicus) in each place which he visited.

There are numerous affinities between Ephesians and Colossians. The themes, the language, and the structure of the two epistles are to a great extent the same. There are 155 verses in Ephesians, and 78 of them contain phrases to which parallels can be found in Colossians. "The riches of His glory," "the fulness," "the old man," "circumcision not made with hands," are specimens. Both epistles dwell on the glory of Christ's Person and His mystic union with the Church. Both enforce, often in identical terms, the practical duties of the Christian life. Some scholars think that the epistles must be the work of two different writers, the second of whom borrowed largely, in somewhat slavish fashion, from the first. But there is a much simpler and more natural hypothesis. The many coincidences in the two letters are most easily and satisfactorily accounted for on the assumption that Ephesians was composed and dictated while the apostle's mind was still saturated with the ideas and expressions of the letter to the Colossians.

“Conceived at the same time, in the same spirit, they seem to us like twin sisters, that suffer from separation, each of them complete only when the other is beside her” (Sabatier).

Still there are important differences between the two epistles which must not be overlooked. Colossians is polemic, Ephesians eirenic; Colossians concise, Ephesians diffuse; Colossians local, Ephesians Catholic; Colossians personal, Ephesians abstract; Colossians logical, Ephesians meditative. In Colossians the stress is laid on Christ's relation to the cosmos, in Ephesians on His relation to the Church. In Colossians Christ is the Fulness of God, in Ephesians the Church is the Fulness of Christ and of God. The idea of “the Heavens,” which is so prominent and recurrent in Ephesians, is absent from Colossians. There are striking passages in Ephesians—those on predestination, the work of the Holy Spirit, the contrast between light and darkness, the mystery of Christian marriage, the panoply of God—which have no parallels in the earlier and shorter letter. Ephesians has many O.T. allusions, Colossians scarcely any.

Ephesians is *par excellence* the epistle of the Church. It was written in Rome, and we cannot fail to note the influence of Roman ideas on the mind of Paul. He was proud of his Roman citizenship, and it is not at all improbable “that he conceived the great idea of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, and that he thought of the various districts and countries to which he had preached as parts of the grand unity” (Ramsay). His creative genius laid down the lines on which Church history was to move. The Rome of the Cæsars fired his imagination and made

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 17

his thinking imperial; it gave him a mould from which he drew the idea of a universal spiritual empire; it enabled him to visualise Christ's conception of the kingdom of God on earth. As an apostle he had long been engaged in empire-building; he had been capturing and claiming province after province for Christ; he had been gathering into a grand unity all that was best and noblest in the Roman world. And now he depicts in glowing colours the ideal Church which has gradually been taking definite shape in his mind. Ephesians is the pæan of the Church; it has been called "a creed rising into an impassioned psalm." It welds all local churches into one holy catholic Church; it bids us contemplate a world-wide spiritual kingdom, a new humanity in Christ Jesus. And its style is in perfect harmony with the grandeur of its themes. Luther calls it the noblest epistle of the New Testament, Coleridge thinks it is "one of the divinest compositions of man."

### THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

In 42 B.C. the plain of Philippi was the scene of one of the decisive battles of the world. There the old Roman Republic made its last stand. Brutus and Cassius fell, and imperialism triumphed. Philippi was thereafter a sacred name to Augustus. He raised the city to the dignity and privilege of a colony, half filling it with Roman veterans, so that it became a miniature Rome. About a century later, in 50 (Turner) or 52 (Harnack) A.D., it was visited by the first ambassadors of Christ. Outside the city gates at a quiet prayer-meeting, and within the prison walls after a crashing earthquake,

Paul won his first European converts, and amid experiences of joy and pain, trial and triumph, the Philippian Church was founded (Acts xvi.).

No church ever gave Paul the same unalloyed satisfaction. In no part of the Empire were there converts whom he found such comfort in revisiting, or to whom he had such delight in writing. The Philippians had evidently noble qualities before they became Christians. The Macedonian natives and the Roman colonists were alike fine types of manhood. They preserved the simpler manners of an earlier time. They were truthful and honest, sane and serious. They understood the sacredness of a promise. It was not for nothing that many of them had taken the oath of allegiance (the *sacramentum*) to Cæsar. They brought their instincts of loyalty into the Church. Their Christianity was a new allegiance and devotion. It did more than enlighten their understandings, it laid hold of their hearts. They were not very easily impressed, but when they were once moved and won they were absolutely faithful. Galatia was foolish and fickle, Corinth factious and giddy, Colossæ fanciful and dreamy, but Philippi stood fast like a Roman phalanx. From first to last the Christians of that church seem never to have given Paul an anxious thought. No wonder he calls them his "joy and crown."

Paul showed his confidence in the Philippians by accepting at their hands favours which he received from no other church. His rule was to refuse gifts of money for himself, though he spent not a little time in collecting alms for others, especially for the poor saints in Jerusalem. He knew how likely the acceptance of gifts was to be

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 19

misunderstood. He could not run the risk of appearing to be mercenary. But he made an exception in the case of the Philippians. He felt that they were too noble to think evil. For them it was blessed to give, and he would not deny them the pleasure. Once and again he gratefully accepted their ungrudging gifts. They made themselves a name for liberality (2 Cor. viii. 1-4). They proved how well poverty and generosity may go hand in hand. To Thessalonica and to Corinth their messengers had already come with their bounty (Phil. iv. 16; 2 Cor. xi. 9). But their latest offering was especially grateful to the apostle, for it came when his need was the sorest. He was a captive, he was growing old, and his hands, once so cunning, could now do nothing to support him. Epaphroditus made a journey of 700 miles, over land and sea, to bring the gift of the Philippians. In his lonely prison Paul was deeply moved, and ere long he poured all his feelings of gratitude into the most affectionate letter he ever wrote.

The place and time of the writing of Philippians can be determined by internal evidence. The writer is a prisoner who is expecting a speedy termination of his case. His appeal to Cæsar is about to be finally disposed of. He has probably—this is Mommsen's view—already appeared once before his judges. He knows that the second hearing will be decisive. His long years of wearing suspense will soon be over. The issue may be life or it may be death; at any rate it will be an end. This situation clearly implies that the epistle was written at Rome, not at Cæsarea, and towards the close rather than near the beginning of the Roman captivity. It also warrants the infer-

ence that Philippians was chronologically later than Colossians and Ephesians, which were not written under the same sense of imminent crisis, and which foreboded no fatal issue. The arguments adduced by Bleek, Lightfoot, and Hort for the priority of Philippians are now almost abandoned. It is true there is a greater likeness between Romans and Philippians than between Romans and the twin letters of Colossians and Ephesians. But this is only what we should expect, for Philippi was a miniature Rome, while Colossæ and Ephesus were Asiatic to the core. It is also true that Philippians bears no marks of the stress or strain under which Colossians and Ephesians were written. But Paul was an author who wrote with his eye on the matter in hand. He had a great mind's power of detachment and concentration. He must have instinctively felt that it would be equally irrelevant and perplexing to trouble the simple, practical Philippians with the heresies of the subtle Gnostics and morbid ascetics of the Orient. If ever the subject crossed his mind at all during the composition of the later epistle, he had good reasons for deliberately avoiding it.

Philippians has been designated the most epistolary of all the epistles. That means that it is a real letter of hearty fellowship and friendship. One might call it a love-letter. The writer does not feel like an apostle, and does not call himself one. He and Timothy are just what his readers are—bond-servants of Christ Jesus. He cannot keep up his official dignity among brethren who have always loved him with such a whole-hearted devotion. He sends them a letter which is quite untrammelled by any idea of method. He expresses



## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 21

himself not as a theological teacher, but as a familiar friend. Jowett says that Paul's epistles read like good conversation, and here the remark is especially true. Pacing up and down his Roman prison, dictating to his amanuensis, Paul speaks as if he were face to face with his beloved converts, talking to them as a father or an elder brother. Epaphroditus listens and his heart glows, for he knows what a priceless treasure he will have to carry back to Philippi.

Philippians is distinctively the epistle of Christian joy. As Bengel says, "*Summa epistolæ, Gaudeo, gaudete.*" Now and again the tone becomes somewhat pensive, and there are passages of unstudied pathos which the Philippians can scarcely have read with dry eyes. But the dominant note always rings out again strong and clear. Nor is this joy a mere passing emotion — "joy whose hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu." It is a happiness whose source is perennial and inexhaustible; a joy in the Lord, which is joy for ever.

The letter flows on to the end in an almost continuous stream of praise. In Philippi there has been no denial of the faith, no perversion of the gospel, no incursion of deadly error. No notes of anger, pain, and alarm are therefore heard in this letter. No church, however, is perfect, and Paul, acknowledging his own imperfection (iii. 12), keeps the highest ideal before himself and his brethren. If there are some little frictions and jealousies at Philippi, the Spirit of Christ will surely restore the rivals—two ladies are named—to harmony and love. And if there is in this church some of the old Roman and Mace-

donian hauteur, some of the not unnatural pride of conquering races, Paul knows an infallible corrective. Vain-glory is humbled and abashed in the presence of Christ Jesus, the Highest who stooped to be crucified. Thus incidentally is introduced the magnificent passage on the Person of Christ, containing the fullest statement to be found in the Bible of His humiliation and consequent exaltation (ii. 5-11). It is not a paragraph in a theological treatise, it is part of a touching and earnest plea for lowliness of mind.

The Pauline authorship of Philippians is now scarcely questioned. Renan, Pfeiderer, and the other radical critics accept it as genuine. Von Manen stands almost alone in his doubts. He thinks that all is confused so long as one regards this epistle as an actual letter written in all simplicity and sent by Paul, the prisoner in Rome, to his old friends in Philippi. It is really a letter of edifying composition. The "Philippians" are early Christians of the good old time, to which a new generation may with benefit have their attention directed. The real author, who made a conscious effort to reproduce the Pauline manner, lived in Syria or Asia Minor about the year 125 A.D. On this theory he must have been an astonishing literary artist, with a depth of insight and a delicacy of feeling almost without a parallel. One is sorry he has hid his name. But the theory is quite unnecessary. Not a single idea can be shown to be unpauline; and the sincerity of the letter is not the art which carefully conceals art, but the simplicity of nature.

## THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

When we pass from the epistles of the third Pauline group to those of the fourth, we are at once conscious of a startling change. We breathe another air, we look on new scenes, we hear the unmistakable voices of a different life. Before we refer to the question of the authorship of these epistles, let us note certain common characteristics which quickly arrest our attention.

(1) The language and style of the Pastorals are noteworthy. There is a new vocabulary. About one-fifth of the words—176 out of 896—are found nowhere else in the N.T. Latinisms are especially remarkable. The syntax is also new. Paul's familiar dialectical particles, "so then" and "therefore," are absent. This indicates a want of logical connection and organic unity in the thoughts of the writer. The letters consist of a series of detached passages on a great variety of subjects. They have not the mystic inwardness, the spiritual depth, the intellectual force and grip of the earlier letters. They contain no new doctrines, no fresh ethical principles. They are conservative and imitative rather than original. They lack the fire and energy of creative work.

(2) These epistles contain an earnest but an unreasoned defence of Pauline doctrine. Their Christianity is the religion of orthodox piety. Their essential requirement is soundness in the faith. They say much of the sin of "departing from the faith," "erring from the faith." And here faith, instead of being the moral energy which lays hold of the living Christ, is crystallising into a creed. The emphasis always falls either on

“sound doctrine” (which occurs eight times) and “teaching” (fourteen times), or on “piety” (eleven times). The Christian’s duty is to be grave (six times) and sober (ten times), to avoid the things that are unsettling, and give heed to those that tend to godly edifying. He shuns all foolish speculations as unprofitable and vain. And the method of meeting opponents and objectors is new. Instead of receiving a full and convincing answer, they are branded as heretics.

(3) Some of the most characteristic Pauline doctrines are conspicuously absent. The Pastorals say nothing of the sonship of believers, of reconciliation to God, of the vital union of Christians with Christ. Paul’s monogram, IN CHRIST, is entirely wanting. The brooding sense of a mystic presence, an indwelling power, is foreign to the writer’s habit of mind. Spiritual gifts, which constituted the life and strength of the earlier Church, are reduced in the Pastorals to a single gift (*charism*), which is imparted, not to all believers but only to the preacher, and that by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. This mode of spiritual communication would have been inconceivable at Corinth, first because there was no presbytery, and second because the divine fire fell on all believers alike without any human mediation. While the earlier epistles emphasised the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the Pastorals lay greater stress on painstaking “good works” (fourteen times), and give a new prominence to the ideas of merit and reward.

(4) The spirit of the Pastorals is ecclesiastical rather than missionary. The burning question of the day is the salvation of the churches rather

than the winning of souls. The problem of foreign conquest gives precedence to that of home defence. A solid bulwark must be erected to stem the invasion of false doctrine. The Church calls for sober, grave, godly men who can be trusted to stand in the old paths and maintain the old traditions. Every community must have its company of "overseers" who will act as a vigilance committee. The flock of God needs anxious shepherding in these perilous times of worldliness, apostasy, and false doctrine. Something of the old feeling of confidence is gone, and a spirit of alarm has come into the air. But it is hoped that if the Church is duly officered and disciplined, she will still be strong enough to cope with all her adversaries. Accordingly the whole Christian life is brought under the control of ecclesiastical law. Organisation takes the place of inspiration. The authority of the Church is substituted for the omnipotence of the Spirit. The age of the prophet is past, that of the bishop and deacon is come.

(5) The author of the Pastorals advocates a statelier church service. He limits the office of preaching and teaching, which in the dawning era of Christianity was open to all, to the clergy, not only for the maintenance of sound doctrine, but for the more solemn and dignified worship of God. He is a lover of beautiful forms. He preserves some lovely fragments of early Church hymns and creeds, and a number of admirable aphorisms—faithful sayings—which he and other preachers were in the habit of using. He prescribes prayers, evidently of the nature of a liturgy, for kings and all men, and he requires earnest attention to reading, that is, the litur-

gical reading of the Old Testament and probably of portions of the New. His religious symbolism trembles on the verge of realism. He calls the font the laver of regeneration, and his language suggests that the imposition of hands is a means of conveying grace.

(6) It is on the side of practical piety that the writer of the Pastorals shows to greatest advantage. His epistles form a manual of Christian duty. He is no deep thinker or subtle dialectician; he hates controversy; he is impatient of theosophic discussion. He is not endowed on the speculative or mystic sides. But in the sphere of ethics he is wise and sane. One of his favourite words is "healthy," and at times we do him some injustice by translating it "sound." He is healthy-minded. He is as far removed from asceticism on the one hand as from antinomian licence on the other. To him it is morbid not to marry, not to eat flesh, not to drink wine. He has no patience with the vagaries of the celibate, the vegetarian, the ascetic abstainer. His Christianity is the consecration of the natural. He loves the domestic virtues, the tranquil life, the civic order. He utterly rejects the prevailing idea that matter is corrupt and the body evil. He sees the essential goodness of everything created by God. He is of the Church of those who believe that

"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

These are the main characteristics of the Pastoral Epistles, and the conclusion which the majority

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 27

of modern scholars, if not in Britain, at least on the Continent, feel constrained to draw from a mass of internal evidence is that the letters as a whole are Pauline, but not Paul's. They were probably written by one of his followers, an earnest continuer and promoter of his work, about the end of the first century or the beginning of the second, some forty years after Paul's death. Those who are familiar with the literature of that period are constantly reminded, as they read the Pastorals, of the Didache, of Clement of Rome, of Barnabas, of Polycarp. The Pastorals are, with all their limitations, morally and spiritually far richer than any of these writings, but the historical situation which they reflect is practically the same.

It is, however, exceedingly probable that the Pastorals are *based* on letters of the apostle to his comrades Timothy and Titus, and that some considerable portions of his own work have been preserved in them. 2 Timothy is the most personal, least official, of the three, and chaps. i. 9-11, ii. 1, 8-13, and iv., except verses 3, 4, have the true Pauline ring. In Titus the following passages seem to form the apostolic framework: i. 7-9, 10-16, iii. 1-7, 12-13. 1 Timothy is the least like Paul's own work. Whatever was the order of the original letters, it seems certain that the added portions of 2 Timothy are considerably older than those of Titus, which again are prior to those of 1 Timothy. The errors of 2 Timothy are less sharply defined than those of the other two epistles, and the institutions of Titus are less fully developed than those of 1 Timothy. It cannot be said that in 2 Timothy "faith" ever unquestionably signifies a creed that is received,

while in the other epistles this meaning is frequent. In 2 Timothy the word "Saviour" is used of Christ, in Titus of Christ and God, and in 1 Timothy of God alone. 2 Timothy in its present form is therefore nearest to, 1 Timothy farthest from, the apostolic tradition. But the additions to all the three (or more) original letters are most probably from the same hand. In style, diction, and contents they bear the unmistakable mark of unity. The same spirit pervades them all. The writer is not a Jew but a Greek. He speaks of Jewish fables as an outsider, and he does not quote the Old Testament in the Pauline manner. The Hebraic, not to speak of the Rabbinic, spirit is absent from his writings. His language is that of a Greek scholar. His style has an Athenian ease. His religious vocabulary is largely borrowed from the thinkers of Greece. Several of his ethical terms bear the hall-mark of Stoicism. His sympathies are wholly Gentile.

"We need not doubt that the disciple was aided by the same Divine Spirit who dwelt in the apostle himself" (Simcox). He writes in all good faith. Fragments of Paul's correspondence coming into his hands, he expands them in the light of the needs of his own time. He writes from what he conceives to be the apostolic standpoint. He tries to merge himself in the personality of Paul, as Plato did in that of Socrates. He has no literary ambition, no motive but an earnest desire to solve the difficult problems of the growing Gentile Church in accordance with the apostolic tradition. He gives his message the august sanction and support of his master's name. Such phenomena are not infrequent in Holy Scriptures,



and we need not impugn his literary ethics. If it was not quite possible for him to wear the mantle of the greatest of the apostles, we do not wonder. His epistles will always have much more than a historical value, for they contain some of the devotional treasures of the Bible.

### THE DEATH OF PAUL.

It was at one time almost an article of faith that Paul was successful in his appeal to Cæsar, that he was acquitted by his Roman judges, that he resumed his missionary activity in various parts of the Empire, east and west, and that he enjoyed his liberty till the last and worst period of Nero's rule, when he was again arrested and tried, and this time condemned to death. Scholars of the eminence of Harnack and Ramsay still adhere to this hypothesis. But it must be admitted on examination that the grounds on which the theory rests are but very slender. The famous passage in Clement of Rome which is always quoted is inconclusive. He says that "Paul, having taught the whole world righteousness, and having gone to the goal of the West, and having borne witness before the rulers, was thus released from this world and went to the Holy Place, having become the supreme example of patience." "The goal of the West" *may* be Spain, but as the two succeeding clauses of the sentence certainly refer to Rome, that interpretation is not so probable as the one which makes the metropolis itself the westernmost point of Paul's career. The Pastorals make no allusion to a tour in the Western Mediterranean. The earliest distinct reference

to a Spanish journey is found in the Muratorian Fragment, written in the end of the second century, and its words are probably no more than an inference that the hope expressed in Rom. xv. 24, 28 was realised. If there was an acquittal and release, Luke's silence on the point is all but inexplicable. It is clear that one of the objects for which he wrote the Acts was to prove by a long series of instances that Christianity was favourably received by the Roman authorities. The narrative of Paul's trial and acquittal in the earlier and better days of Nero's rule would have formed the crowning example of this favourable treatment, and the force of the argument would have been in no way diminished by a change of attitude in the Emperor's closing period of mad misrule. Sir W. Ramsay is driven by Luke's silence to the hypothesis that the historian intended to write a third book giving an account of the trial, release, and later missionary labours of the apostle, an intention which he was unable to carry out. But if there never was an acquittal, the conclusion of the Acts is perfectly natural. Clement's well-known words that the Neronian martyrs (of 64 A.D.) were "gathered unto Paul and Peter" imply that the latter had previously won the martyr's crown. The silence of all the writers of the first two centuries on Paul's release and after-work is equally hard to account for. The Apologists for Christianity, who were so earnest in their endeavour to prove their faith innocent and harmless, could have found no more convincing argument than the famous trial and triumphant acquittal of Paul by the highest Roman tribunal. But on this point not one of them has

## Captivity and Pastoral Epistles 31

a word to say. The Pastoral Epistles are really the only foundation for the theory of a release. In their present shape they certainly cannot be placed in the time covered by the Acts of the Apostles. But as historical criticism makes it probable that the greater part of these epistles is post-apostolic, and that the apostolic sections *can* be placed within the Lucan period, this argument loses all its force. The conclusion which we reach is that Paul remained a prisoner in Rome to the end of his life. The forces arrayed against him were too strong. His appeal did not succeed. He was condemned, not as a follower of Christ, but as "a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world." Nevertheless he died a martyr. He poured out his blood as a libation to God. In life he was the greatest of all Christians; in death he perfected his fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

Col. i. 1, 2.

**GREETING.**

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and  
2 Timotheus our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren  
in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and  
peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **an apostle.** Paul asserts his apostleship as a ground for intervening at a critical moment in the affairs of the church of Colosse. Having seen the risen Christ, and received his commission immediately from Him, he knows that he is on a par with the original apostles, the chosen witnesses of the Resurrection (see 1 Cor. ix. 1). He is an apostle **by the will of God.** This is the secret at once of his profound humility and his masterful authority. He can neither boast of his apostleship as if he had been raised by merit to that eminence, nor be slow to exercise his rights as if he doubted the reality of his call. The name of **Timothy**, so closely associated with that of Paul in two of the great Missionary Journeys,<sup>1</sup> would be well known in Asia Minor. Perhaps he acts as amanuensis.

2. **to the saints.** In the N.T. sense of the word, a sinner becomes a saint at the very moment of his conversion. His sainthood is determined by his relation to Christ as a believer. The apostle would have repudiated the title "Saint Paul" with a sensitive dread, unless he had been assured

that the humblest and obscurest believer would share the appellation with him. **faithful brethren** is another designation of all the followers of Christ. "Faithful" means first "full of faith," and then "worthy of trust." The one meaning naturally runs into the other; for faith, in the Pauline sense, is a moral energy which necessarily manifests itself in loyal and loving conduct. Faith and faithfulness are related as root and fruit. **in Christ** is Paul's monogram, expressing his abiding sense of the mystic, vital union of believers with the risen Christ. To understand it is to know his deepest secret, to reach the innermost core of his experimental religion. **in Christ . . . at Colosse.** Compare John's "I was in the isle . . . in the Spirit." The Christian has two environments: he dwells among men, and he lives, moves, and has his being in God. **Grace . . . peace.** The phrase links the Western to the Eastern salutation, as if wedding Hellenism to Hebraism. The light-hearted greetings of Jew and Greek simply meant "Be happy" and "Be peaceful." But in the Christian usage the words are evangelically enriched and deepened. "Grace" is the free and loving favour of God in its saving power, and "peace" the repose of a soul which He has saved from sin and brought into harmony with Himself.

Col. i. 3-8.

### THANKSGIVING FOR THE FAITH AND LOVE OF THE COLOSSIANS.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus  
4 Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your  
faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all

5 the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,  
 whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the  
 6 gospel ; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world ;  
 and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the  
 day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth :  
 7 as ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant,  
 8 who is for you a faithful minister of Christ ; who also  
 declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Paul sounds the clear note of praise. It is ever his way to appreciate before criticising. There is much in the condition of the Colossians for which he must heartily thank God—their faith and love, both strengthened by their hope of the speedy return of Christ ; their personal acceptance of the world-wide gospel ; their regard for the evangelist—Paul’s delegate—who has been labouring among them for years, and who has now come to Rome with a tale full of gratitude for their kindness.

3. **praying always.** The breath of prayer blows through all the letters of Paul, especially of prayer for others. Intercession is really a great part of his apostolic life, and it is one of the secrets of his evangelical power. “In every letter prayer stamps its solemn grandeur upon the page. If we except the Book of Psalms, which is expressly the universal liturgy of the Bible, nothing like it is observed in any other writer of holy scripture” (Pope).

4, 5. **faith . . . love . . . hope.** In 1 Cor. xiii. the three Christian graces are placed side by side for comparison. Here they are not only brought together but interlaced, and their union is strength. Faith worketh by love, and both faith and love are fortified by the hope which is laid up in the heavens—the hope of Christ’s

speedy return in power and glory. "Paul does not express the idea that the Christian is moved by the selfish hope of reward, but that the vision of the final issue is needed to keep Christian faith and love untroubled amid the confusions of the present" (Von Soden).

6. **you . . . all the world.** The gospel which Epaphras has preached is not provincial but cosmopolitan. The false teachers have brought into the Colossian Church ideas which are for the moment making a mighty stir. "They think the babble of their bourg the murmur of the world." But their loud talk is purely parochial, while the truth is catholic. The gospel is "in all the world, bearing fruit and increasing." To the limitations of a philosophical school Paul opposes the universalism of Christianity and the universality of its blessings. He uses for the first time the argument which was urged with such effect in after ages, and compressed into the famous words, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*" Paul feels, like Wesley, that his parish is the world. He gives utterance to the amazing self-consciousness of the early Church, which at a time when it numbered but a mere handful of members was already calmly reckoning on the conquest of mankind. Christ for the world, and the world for Christ! **the grace of God.** Paul throws his shield over Epaphras, and eulogises his work, because he knows him to be an enthusiastic preacher of grace. "The true gospel as taught by Epaphras was an offer of free grace; the false gospel was a code of rigorous prohibitions, a system of human devising" (Lightfoot).

7. **faithful minister . . . on our behalf.** This is the true reading (R.V.). Epaphras, himself

a Colossian (iv. 12), was probably one of Paul's converts and disciples in the great Ephesian mission. He was then commissioned to go to the Lycus valley as Paul's delegate, or vice-evangelist. The three communities which he founded were thus in a sense Paul's own churches. Hence we understand the apostle's eagerness to tell the Colossians how he loved and trusted his **fellow-servant** as Christ's faithful minister.

8. **your love.** This may mean either their love of Epaphras or their love of one another. **love in the Spirit** is love inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Higher than all natural, intellectual, social affinities, this is the purest, strongest, most enduring friendship.

#### Col. i. 9-14.

#### PRAYER FOR THEIR GROWTH IN SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not  
cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled  
with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual  
10 understanding ; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord  
unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and  
11 increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with  
all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience  
12 and longsuffering with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto  
the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of  
13 the inheritance of the saints in light : who hath delivered  
us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into  
14 the kingdom of his dear Son : in whom we have redemption  
through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins :

Just because the Colossians are already true Christians, Paul prays that they may receive the full



knowledge of God's will, a knowledge which shall manifest itself in a life pleasing to Christ, fruitful in service, and tending to a still further increase in knowledge; a life of Divine power sustaining a spirit of joyful endurance; a life of abiding thankfulness to the Father for the miracle of salvation.

9. **For this cause.** Because the Colossians have already so much faith, love, and hope, *therefore* the apostle wants them to reach forth to perfect knowledge and goodness. He does not allow them to rest satisfied. He stirs in them a divine discontent with their attainments, a coveting of the best gifts, a holy aspiration after an ever higher, and finally the highest, life. **we** means Paul and Timothy. Eager themselves for the prayers of others (iv. 3), they ungrudgingly give their time and strength to this mighty work of intercession. **knowledge . . . spiritual wisdom and understanding.** The word translated "knowledge" is a favourite one in the Roman epistles, meaning advanced, mature, full knowledge. There is an earthly knowledge which puffs up, a wisdom which God makes foolish (1 Cor. viii. 1, i. 20); but there is a heavenly knowledge, a **spiritual wisdom**—communicated by the Holy Spirit—which is the very torch of truth, lighting up the whole path of life. The best corrective of "knowledge (*gnosis*) falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi. 20) is the full-knowledge (*epignosis*) of Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden (Col. ii. 3). This knowledge is never theoretical, always practical; it is the knowledge of **God's will**, given to men not to gratify their intellectual curiosity, but to change their lives, control their actions, shape their eternal destinies.

10. **to walk worthily.** This the Colossians will do if they give **the Lord**—which in the Pauline epistles always means Christ—His rightful place, the highest place, in their affections (cf. Matt. x. 37). **unto all pleasing** means “so as to please Him in all things,” and that not only as a servant satisfies his master, but as a son pleases his father or a lover delights his bride. **bearing fruit.** Cf. John xii. 24, xv. 2, 5, 8, 16. **every good work,** bringing tangible and substantial benefits to somebody, is fruit, while devout sentiments, which end in themselves, are leaves without fruit. How impressive is the repetition of **all . . . all . . . every . . . all . . . all** (vers. 9–11)! How characteristic of Paul, who could never be content, and never wished any believer to be content, with anything less than the utmost and the best of everything in the kingdom of grace!

11. **strengthened . . . power . . . might of his glory.** This is the measure of the Christian's resources. Personally impotent, he has all the might of God's glory—His revealed presence—to aid him, and cannot fail. The energy of God, appropriated by faith, nerves him to endure not only without murmuring, but with positive **joy.** The Stoic, brave in the strength of self-reliance, suffers with a patience which is far removed from joy. He can only claim that “in the fell grasp of circumstance he has not winced or cried aloud.” But the Christian, upheld by a strength much greater than his own, goes through the same experience rejoicing. Arnold cannot rise higher than “sad patience, too near neighbour to despair”; Paul knows the secret of **patience with joy.**

12, 13. **made us meet to be partakers.**

Or, "qualified us," enabled us to fulfil all the conditions, gave us a clear title. **the inheritance . . . in light.** Salvation is not obtained by purchase or conquest, but is a gift, a heritage; we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. The inheritance is ours not merely because it is held in reserve for us **in the light** of eternal glory, but because we "possess our possessions," partially at least, as soon as we are **delivered out of the power of darkness.** The Christian life begins with an act of supernatural power, parallel to the **deliverance** of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. The Father intervenes to rescue His children, by nature miserably enslaved under a tyrannous evil power, here almost personified as the power of Darkness. At the same time we are **translated** so as to become colonists and citizens of a new **kingdom.** Paul usually conceives the kingdom of God as eschatological, but not here. As he makes the deliverance and the translation synchronise, he is evidently thinking of Christ's kingdom on earth. He describes it as **the kingdom of the Son of God's love,** a phrase which beautifully suggests the excellence of Christ's loving dominion over men, His reign of grace.

14. **redemption . . . forgiveness.** Redemption is, in the stricter sense, rescue by ransom; in the wider sense, deliverance of any kind. It is here synonymous with **the forgiveness of our sins.** Many immense benefits come to us in the wake of forgiveness, but the initial experience of pardon is so transcendently wonderful that the part may well be put for the whole. Omit "through His blood," taken over from Eph. i. 7.

Col. i. 15-23.

## THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST.

15 who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of  
16 every creature : for by him were all things created, that  
are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,  
whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities,  
or powers : all things were created by him, and for him :  
17 and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.  
18 And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the  
beginning, the firstborn from the dead ; that in all things  
19 he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father  
20 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 ; by him, I say, whether they be  
21 things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were  
sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked  
22 works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his  
flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable  
23 and unreprouable in his sight : if ye continue in the faith  
grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the  
hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was  
preached to every creature which is under heaven ; whereof  
I Paul am made a minister ;

With profound reverence Paul now approaches the central theme of the epistle, the Person of Christ, God's Image, born before all creation ; through whom and for whom all things were created ; in whom the universe holds together ; who is also the Head of the Church ; in whom the Divine fulness dwells ; and through whom God is reconciling all things to Himself. This is the supreme Christological passage in the apostle's writings. It represents Christ as the pre-mundane,

pre-existent Son of God, the First of all spiritual beings. It brings all heaven and earth to His feet, it humbles the highest angels before His face, it makes Him the Original and the Ideal of all existence, it presents Him as the Head of the new spiritual creation, it gives Him the pre-eminence in all things. But the point of most urgent practical importance is that in a sinful world He is the Reconciler of all things to God. Why should the Colossians, who have had thrilling experiences of His reconciling power, turn away to other, lower, angelic mediators? The sunshine of Christianity is better than the cold moonlight of Judaism and the flickering rushlights of theosophy.

15. **the image.** Christ both represents and manifests God, who is Himself hidden. Ethically and essentially He is at once the Revealer and the Revelation of the Eternal Spirit. The idea is that He is not merely like God—quite another word being used to express likeness—but that He *is* God manifest. Not only on earth in the days of His flesh, but in His timeless heavenly life was He, and is He, the Image of God—God's Representative acting in the sphere of things visible (cf. John i. 18; Heb. i. 3). **the firstborn.** Among the Jews the word was one of the titles of the Messiah. The Rabbis interpreted "first-born" in Ps. lxxxix. 27 as Messianic. In common speech the word signified, first, temporal priority, and then, in virtue of the rights of primogeniture, lordship. Both ideas are included when Christ is called the Firstborn. He is before, and He is Lord over, all creation. All that the wise thinkers of Israel, all that the mystic dreamers of Alexandria,

said of the "Wisdom" and the "Word" of God is realised in Christ (see Prov. viii. 22; Wisd. vii. 21, 26, viii. 1; and Philo *passim*). "Paul heaps the highest titles upon his Christ, because he is certain that he has in Him the final Revelation and the perfect Salvation" (Lueken). The central ideas of Colossians are overwhelmingly grand. "The intellectual daring of them is almost inconceivable; imagination fails to realise the pressure under which the mind must have been working when it rose to the height of such assertions" (Denney).

16. **by him created . . . created by him.** Read "in Him . . . through Him." Christ was the conditioning Cause and the mediating Agent of God's work. On all that we see around us—Nature and humanity alike—we may write "made through Christ." The Colossian Gnostics looked on the visible world as the device of some demiurge, and despised it; Paul knew its real Author, and revered His work. It awes him to think of Christ's cosmic significance. Christ is the Artist of Nature. He made the lilies which He loved. "Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen." **thrones . . . powers.** Gnostic names for æons or angels—supernatural beings who have emanated from the Godhead. From this verse Milton got his grandiose line, "Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers." The Colossians were giving themselves up to the study and worship of these dread beings. Paul seems to be impatient of the whole hierarchy. It matters little to him whether they are creatures of fact or of fancy. He puts down the mighty from their seats. Angels must not usurp the authority or dim the glory of their Lord. He must not be lost sight

of in the crowd of His creatures. He alone shall reign in human hearts. **through him and unto him.** Inserting also in him, from the first part of the verse, we learn that He is Centre and Lord of all things, past, present, and future.

“Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning;  
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.”

17. **he is before all things.** “He” is emphatic, and the verb is a timeless present. With this “HE IS,” compare Christ’s own “I AM” in John viii. 58. **in him all things consist.** Christ is the Centre of unity, the Principle of cohesion, in the universe. He makes it a cosmos, an ordered whole, and apart from Him it would fall back into chaos. But for Him the dread prayer would be answered, “Let Nature’s germens tumble all to ruin, even till destruction sicken.”

18. **the head of the body, the church.** From the thought of Christ’s dominion in the natural world Paul passes to that of His lordship in the spiritual realm. The Church is here the Church universal—the whole company of believers throughout the world. Christ is to them what the head is to the body, the principle of life, energy, and authority. He vitalises, inspires, governs them. He organises them in mystic union with Himself. He is **the beginning**, the original Source of all life and power; and He is **the first-born from the dead**, the first of many brethren who are liberated from the cold dominion of death. As He was the Firstborn of all aminated (ver. 15), so He is of all re-animated, beings. “Jesus and the Resurrection” formed the essential message

of the early Church. **in all things . . . the preeminence.** Summing up, the writer hails Christ as supreme in every realm. It is evident that nothing less than Godhead is ascribed to One who thus fills and rules all things.

19. **all fulness.** Better, "all the fulness" (R.V.). This is one of the grandest words in the N.T. It occurs again in ii. 9, and several times in Ephesians. It has here a definite theological meaning. It is the totality of Divine powers and attributes. Paul uses it as a word familiar to the Colossian Gnostics. They regarded the æons (or angels) who emanated from God as His Pleroma. Paul asserts, on the contrary, that the Fulness—the whole nature of God, with its wealth of wisdom, power, and love—has taken up its permanent abode in Christ.

20. **having made peace through the blood of his cross.** The new Colossian teachers offered peace through angelic mediators. Paul repudiates the offer, and boldly maintains that these very mediators, if they have any objective reality, need themselves to be reconciled, and that for them as for man the one element of atonement is the blood which Christ shed on His cross. **to reconcile all things to himself.** This is Paul's larger hope. Grammatically the words are simple, theologically they are difficult. They imply that Reconciliation in Christ is not limited to the Church, nor to humanity, nor yet to intelligent beings. It extends to **all things, whether on earth or in the heavens.** This is part of the Father's **good pleasure.** It is a glorious hope which impinges on the doctrines of human freedom and Divine judgment, but must not be allowed to emasculate



them. Paul leaves the apparent antinomy unresolved. "The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know" (Pascal).

21. **alienated and enemies.** Instead of being dear friends and loving children. Sin is more than ignorance and imperfection. In the last analysis it is conscious hostility to the will and character of God.

22. **the body of his flesh.** "Body" is here Christ's natural body, as distinguished from His spiritual body, the Church (ver. 18). **to present you holy.** God is ethically perfect, and gives Himself to the task of making His children perfect, that He may have their fellowship for ever. He is not the good-natured, easy-going God—the *bon Dieu* of the Frenchman—who cares only to see His children happy. He will have them **without blemish** before Him.

23. **if ye continue.** It is not enough to begin well. Every step forward requires a fresh volition. There is perpetual danger of going back. The perseverance of the saints is an endless succession of new beginnings. **grounded and stedfast.** The one word means that the Christian is built on a firm foundation, and the other that he is therefore immovable. **the gospel . . . was preached in all creation under heaven.** This is the language of glowing enthusiasm. The hyperbole startles the mind into the recognition of an astonishing fact—that Christianity is swiftly making way everywhere. **whereof I . . . a minister.** Paul again endorses the evangel preached by Epaphras. He sets his seal to it as God's message to all the world, whose catholicity is the guarantee of its truth.

Col. i. 24-29.

## JOY AND LABOUR IN THE MINISTRY.

24 who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for  
 25 his body's sake, which is the church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;  
 26 even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:  
 27 to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is  
 28 Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:  
 29 whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

The keynote of this paragraph is the reiterated phrase, "every man." Paul rejoices to suffer like Christ for the Church's sake, as a minister appointed to preach God's Mystery to every man, to warn every man, that he may present every man perfect. For this glorious end he labours and strives, with an energy imparted to him by the almighty Worker.

24. **I rejoice in my sufferings.** This is a feeling to which Paul gives frequent utterance. In his life of freedom he was "sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. vi. 10); and now, as a captive, he rejoices not only in the midst of his sufferings but because of them, as he recognises that they are the means of spiritual blessing to others whom he loves. **I fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ.** Nothing could be added to the atoning sacrifice which Christ offered once

for all. It was finished. But "the sufferings of the disciple are almost as necessary for the instruction of the Church as those of the Saviour for its redemption" (Monod). Perhaps they are called the afflictions of Christ because the sufferings of the members of His mystical body are the sufferings of the Head (cf. Isa. lxiii. 9). "What do you see now?" Margaret Wilson was mockingly asked when her companion was drowning before her eyes in the pitiless Solway. "What do I see," she answered, "but Christ wrestling there. Think ye that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us."

**25. the dispensation of God.** Or, "the stewardship." Paul feels that he is entrusted with the Divine Householder's goods, the riches of His grace, for distribution among His family. Every truth, every blessing, which he receives involves the duty of imparting it to the needy. To hoard the Divine bounty, not to give it out with a lavish hand, is to defraud both God and man. **to fulfil the word of God** means "fully to preach" it, as the verb is translated in Rom. xv. 19; to do justice to the message by telling it abroad in the fulness of its truth and grace; to publish it all everywhere.

**26. even the mystery.** This word occurs ten times in Colossians and Ephesians. In the common (demotic) speech of the time mystery meant any secret. But Paul seems to have borrowed it rather from the famous Greek mysteries, the doctrines and practices of which were only divulged to the initiated. In N.T. theology the word means a purpose of God, long **hidden** but in the fulness of the times **revealed**. Here it signifies His eternal

design to offer redemption to Jew and Gentile alike in Jesus Christ. The thought of being chosen to divulge this Divine secret to all the world makes Paul's heart glow. In describing it he uses some of the warmest words in his vocabulary—"the riches of the glory of this mystery." **manifested to his saints.** The Greek mysteries were jealously guarded from the vulgar crowd, and whispered only in the ears of the chosen few. The Christian mystery is proclaimed to all, but, since spiritual things are spiritually discerned, it remains a mystery still to all who have not been divinely illuminated.

27. **this mystery . . . Christ in you.** In the former verse the Mystery was a purpose, in this it is a Person. All God's gracious designs centre in Christ, and the risen Christ is immanent in every believer as his life-power. Luther used to say, "If any one were to knock at my breast, and ask, Who lives here? I should answer, Not Martin Luther, but the Lord Jesus Christ." (Cf. Gal. ii. 20 and Eph. iii. 17.) **the hope of glory.** To be in mystical union with Christ, proving the meaning of His own words, "Abide in Me, and I in you," is to have the calm assurance of ere long being for ever with Him and beholding His glory. The very sweetness of this relation is the proof that it is meant for immortality. "Glory" is here (as so often in John's writings) another name for heavenly blessedness.

28. **every man . . . every man . . . every man.** All the benefits of the gospel are intended for all men. This is Paul's reply to the Colossian superman. Christianity makes no superior persons. It has no esoteric doctrines, no occult mysteries to

add to its plain and public utterances. Its temple has no outer and inner courts; its veil of secrecy is rent in twain, and every man without exception may enter the Holy of Holies. The Reign of Christ creates among men not an intellectual oligarchy but a spiritual republic.

29. **I labour, striving.** Both words were used by Jesus—"all ye that labour," "strive to enter in." Labour is toil inducing weariness, and striving (literally, agonising) is a metaphor of the arena, where gladiators wrestled for their lives. So the minister of Christ toils and wrestles for the lives of others. *Cura curarum, cura animarum.* "Sometimes I grow weary in it, but never of it," said Whitefield. What keeps the energies of such men from flagging? Some power which **worketh in them mightily.**

" ' Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?  
 ' Bravely, . . . . . for I have lately been  
 Much cheered by thoughts of Christ, the living Bread.' "

### Col. ii. 1-7.

#### CONFLICT FOR CHURCHES UNVISITED.

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have  
 2 not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of  
 3 Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and  
 4 knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile  
 5 you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding

your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.  
 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so  
 7 walk ye in him : rooted and built up in him, and stablished  
 in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein  
 with thanksgiving.

The apostle's care is not limited to those communities the seeds of which he has himself planted and watered, but extends to others—such as those of Colossæ and Laodicea—which he has never seen. He earnestly desires that they may be confirmed in their faith, welded together in love, and advanced to the full knowledge of the Mystery of God—Christ. As all wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him, the churches need only to be rooted and grounded in their faith, enjoying its blessings to the full with thankful hearts.

1. **what a great conflict I have for you.** Paul is in his Roman prison, those to whom he writes are in their far-off Phrygian valley. But distance does not prevent him from making their cause his own. With profound sympathy, painful anxiety, fervent intercession, and earnest brain-work, he contends on their behalf. Like a strong protagonist he throws himself between them and their spiritual foes, in a battle which is not so much his as the Lord's. **them at Laodicea.** Ten miles down the Lycus valley from Colossæ. The Laodicean converts are exposed to the same dangers as their neighbours. Hierapolis, the last of the famous triad, is named later, and no doubt had similar perils (iv. 13).

2. **that their hearts may be comforted.** "Comforted" (*fortis*, strong) must here be understood in its original sense—strengthened, encouraged, fortified. What the Colossians needed was not con-

solation in sorrow, but confirmation in their Christian faith. They were not suffering for Christ's sake; the letter to them says not a word about persecution; but they were in spiritual danger, and the cause lay partly in their own weak hearts. Therefore, instead of being lulled to rest with gentle words, they needed to be aroused to fight a brave battle for the truth. This letter is not the soothing strain of a peace-pipe, but the stirring blast of a trumpet. **they being knit together in love.** Not wasting their energy in mutual jealousy and strife, but presenting a solid front to the foe. Divided they will fall, united they stand. Their tie of fellowship is not self-interest but holy **love**—the same golden chain that binds them to Christ. Such love—both His and theirs—is the bond of perfectness (iii. 14). **unto . . . the full assurance of understanding:** Paul does not fear the completest enlightenment; rather he covets it. "Let knowledge grow from more to more." But not the dry light of reason. The heart makes the theologian. The deep and strong emotion of Christian **love** is a splendid teacher, guiding us **unto** a sure and conscious insight into the things of God. Love purifies the affections, and "only as the heart is clean may larger vision yet be mine." **that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ.** Of the many possible renderings of this difficult passage, the R.V. has the best. Christ Himself is the Mystery of God, the Father's Secret, now divulged to all the world (cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16). God did not wish to remain for ever unknown and unknowable. He whispers the Secret of being; it is Christ. The Christian is no agnostic facing an inscrutable mystery, vainly

trying to answer the riddle of the sphinx. He is the true Gnostic—he knows.

3. **treasures . . . wisdom . . . knowledge hidden.** These were the familiar catchwords of the philosophical Christians of Asia. Ordinary Christianity might do well enough for good, simple people, but for enlightened minds there was a profounder knowledge, a riper wisdom, whose treasures were hidden from common eyes. Paul's reply, couched in the language of his opponents, is that in Christ alone are all the treasures of **wisdom and knowledge** hidden. Here the words have a Hellenic colour; one might almost render them "philosophy and science." Paul regards Christianity as the queen of the sciences, imparting a wisdom which cannot be received at any school or college of secular knowledge. Her lessons are learned at the feet of Christ, who is "made unto us wisdom" (1 Cor. i. 30), whose words make men "wise unto salvation." The mysteries of His gospel are hidden only from the wise and prudent, they are revealed unto babes.

4. **enticing words.** Rather, "persuasiveness of speech"; an excellent thing in itself, to be assiduously cultivated by all who have a noble cause to plead, but, like every other art, easily perverted to ignoble uses. The Colossians were the victims of orators who could prove that black was white.

5. **absent in the flesh . . . with you in the spirit.** In the spirit Paul is well-nigh ubiquitous. Love gives wings to his imagination, and in one moment he is here, there, everywhere. So vivid is his power of visualising distant things that they impress him as much as if he were an eager onlooker. He begins to pray for Colossæ, and, præsto! he is



there, **joying and beholding** the church's **order and stedfastness!** These last words are military terms, such as abound in the Roman letters. With soldiers all around him by day and night, Paul began to think in martial language. The church at Colossæ as a whole was like a company of strong Prætorians, drawn up in brave array, presenting a solid, impenetrable front. This is very high praise. It proves conclusively that the greater part of the Colossian Church was still firm in its allegiance to Christ. The danger of apostasy was real, but a timely warning would surely avert it.

6, 7. **ye received Christ Jesus the Lord.** The full name is deeply significant. Faith is the act of receiving (1) the promised Christ, (2) the historical Jesus, (3) the universal Lord. As Messiah, as Man, and as Master He is unique and supreme in this world. But more; His lordship is unlimited: He whose throne is the human heart is Lord of all worlds. **walk . . . rooted . . . builded up.** Paul was never greatly troubled by mixed metaphors. There are a good many of them in his letters. Imagery came naturally to him, but he wrote with his eye on spiritual facts rather than rhetorical figures. Here he wishes a Christian's faith to be at once practical as a man's daily walk, firm as the roots of a tree, and stately as the walls of a palace. **abounding in thanksgiving.** "Abounding" is one of Paul's favourite words, and it is strongly indicative of his temperament. He uses it some fifteen times, and he always seems to image the Christian life as a brimming river, full to overflowing. As he can say "I have all things and abound" (Phil. iv. 18), he feels it natural to abound most of all in gratitude.

Col. ii. 8-15.

## ALL FULNESS DWELLS IN CHRIST.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and  
 9 vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudi-  
 10 ments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him  
 11 dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye  
 12 are complete in him, which is the head of all principality  
 13 and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the  
 14 circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body  
 15 of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:  
 16 buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with  
 17 him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath  
 18 raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your  
 19 sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he  
 20 quickened together with him, having forgiven you all  
 21 trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances  
 22 that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took  
 23 it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having  
 24 spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them  
 25 openly, triumphing over them in it.

The Colossians must not allow themselves to be captivated by an empty philosophy and human traditions, which would substitute the elements of the world for the living Christ. In Him is all the fulness of God, and they live a full life in Him. They need no circumcision of the flesh, having in Him that of the Spirit. God has raised them with Christ from death to life, forgiven their sins for His sake, cancelled the hostile law on His cross, and triumphed over the principalities and powers.

8. **spoil you.** The R.V.'s "maketh spoil of you" is too stiff. "Capture you," "carry you away," "captive you," is the meaning of the

word. Don't let yourselves be caught! **through his philosophy.** This is the only time that Paul uses the word, and if he were a modern he would put it in inverted commas. He is using it ironically as the grand name chosen by the Colossian teachers for their specious system. He says nothing against true philosophy—"the love of wisdom." He treated the philosophers of Athens very courteously (Acts xvii. 18). Milton is justified in saying—

"But charming is Divine philosophy,  
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute."

How different was this crude Colossian "philosophy," half Judaic, half Gnostic, which Paul impatiently dismisses as **empty deceit!** Its advocates had convinced themselves that it was the panacea for human ills, and their eloquence made it seem plausible enough. It gave expression to certain ideas which were floating in the air at the time, and certain tendencies which reappear in human nature at all times. But as a gospel it was a hollow deception. There was nothing in it but wind. **after the tradition of men.** Cf. Mark. vii. 8. **the rudiments of the world.** Better, "elements." For the interpretation of the epistle this word is of the utmost importance. It does not mean elementary teaching, like the "rudiments" of Latin or the "elements" of Euclid. It means the personal elemental spirits — the angels — of stars, winds, clouds, heat, cold, and so forth. These spirits were supposed to animate and rule the whole material **world,** and to control human destinies. They are ranked as

“ thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers ” (cf. i. 16). They are greatly to be feared, devoutly to be worshipped, earnestly to be appeased. They act as mediators between the absolute God and sinful matter, and if they are friendly they can intercede for men. To know them is the higher “ knowledge.” Their cult supplements (*sotto voce* supplants) simple Christianity. This was the new teaching at Colossæ. Of course it was extremely old. Animism is probably the most ancient of all forms of religion. **and not after Christ.** Not according to, in harmony with, Christ. A most suggestive and satisfying phrase. Christ is the one rule and standard of faith and life. To be in perfect accord with His mind and will is all that the Colossian Christian, or any Christian, needs. Why seek communion with “ the beggarly elements,” when “ we have the mind of Christ ” ? The spirits of Nature can never help us as His Holy Spirit can.

9. **the fulness of the Godhead.** “ Fulness ” is the sum of the powers and attributes of Deity (see p. 44). In Greek there are two words for “ Godhead,” with only an *iota* of difference between them; the one expresses the quality, the other the essence, of Deity. It is the second that is used here. In Christ incarnate—now risen and glorified, but still clothed in human form—dwells the plenitude of true Deity. He not only has for us the value of God, He is God. The doctrine is difficult to believe, but once believed it is the master-key that turns every lock.

“ I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by the reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the earth and out of it.”

(BROWNING.)

10. **ye are complete in him.** "In Him (emphatic) ye are made full." All who are in vital union with Him receive of His fulness, and so are themselves made full. The brimming fountain fills every vessel that is brought to it. Divine love in Christ expands to an ocean fulness, where there is enough for everybody (cf. John i. 16). **who is the Head.** Christ has sovereign power over all those high elemental spirits of nature, by whatever sonorous names they may be called, such as **principalities and powers.** We are complete in Him, without them. Why invoke angelic mediators to eke out His supposed imperfections?

11. **circumcision.** There were two kinds, the one made by hands, the other without; the one a physical mark, the other a new creation, synonymous with conversion. The one left the natural man as he was, the other took him out of **the body of the flesh** into the realm of the Spirit. The one was of Moses, being prescribed by the lawgiver; the other (though often taught even in the O.T.) was distinctively **of Christ**, whose religion is always inward and spiritual. The Colossians—all who were genuine converts—had the inward reality, and needed no obsolete symbol, whatever the "enlightened" might say (cf. Gal. iii. 3).

12. **buried . . . raised.** The completeness of the spiritual change is here indicated in another way. So closely are we united to Christ, that we die with Him and rise again with Him (cf. Rom. vi. 3, 4). Such power has our faith in the working of God, who raised Christ from the dead, that we ourselves die unto sin and live unto

righteousness. This spiritual renewal was beautifully symbolised by baptism in its primitive form of immersion.

13. **you, being dead.** An appalling expression. Walking, talking, eating, drinking, but dead! It means destitute of the life which is life indeed, the life from, in, with, and for God. Like the body that is separate from the soul, so the soul that is separate from God is dead. The wages of sin is, here and now, death. Paul reminds the Colossians that they were also dead for another reason—through their alienation from the commonwealth of Israel, which is proved by **the uncircumcision of their flesh.** This was rather their misfortune than their fault. But now they have experienced the power of God, who animates the dead. He **quicken**ed them, raised them to life, at the time when He forgave all their trespasses, justification and regeneration being two aspects of one and the same spiritual crisis. There is perfect harmony between Paul's forensic and ethical conceptions of the Atonement. We note that, in order to identify himself with his readers alike in their sin and forgiveness, he suddenly changes his pronoun: "you did He quicken, having forgiven *us* all *our* trespasses" (R.V.).

14. **the bond.** There is an aspect in which the law is a bond that is against us, rigorously and remorselessly demanding its pound of flesh—our life. Unlike Shylock's bond, it is just. But in a tremendous figure Paul assures us that God in mercy took that bond—that legal warrant—and nailed it to the cross, the same nails that pierced the hands of His Son rending the accusing document to pieces and nullifying it. Or, in other

figures, the bond written in ordinances is **wiped out**, like writing from a tablet; **cleared out of the way**, like stumbling-blocks from a path. The whole verse is evidently dictated in a spirit of passionate gratitude. The writer knew both the bondage of the law and the freedom of the gospel—the haunting fears of Judaism, the perfect peace of Christianity.

15. **having despoiled the principalities and powers.** See ver. 8. The connection between these spiritual beings and the cancelled bond is this. The law was believed to have been given through angels, who are here called, as before, principalities and powers (cf. Gal. iii. 19). As soon as the bond was nailed to the cross and the law abrogated, the power of the angels of the law was gone. Through that cross God despoiled them, **making a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.** These dread ministers of the law have done their duty, and are now discharged. Their day is past, their sceptre is broken. Are the Colossians to worship them, or the Lord of all men and angels?

#### Col. ii. 16-23.

#### CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink,  
or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of  
17 the sabbath days : which are a shadow of things to come ;  
18 but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of  
your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of  
angels, intruding into those things which he hath not  
19 seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not hold-

## 60 Westminster New Testament

ing the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, 20 increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject 21 to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed 23 a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Being set free from the law, and raised to a new life in Christ, the Colossians must not submit to legal ordinances, which are but a shadow of the blessings which they have already received. They must not surrender their precious liberty at the behest of angel-worshippers who have lost their hold of Christ, the Head, from whom the body receives all its nourishment. Being liberated from the power of elemental spirits, let them see the futility of ascetic practices, which procure for men a reputation for wisdom, but give them no real power to subdue their bodily appetites. From the morally indifferent questions of food and ceremonial cleanness Paul earnestly seeks to turn the minds of the Colossians to the vital problems of moral conduct.

16. **Let no man judge you.** Christian liberty is very dear to Paul. He asserts it here as earnestly, though not quite so vehemently, as he did in Galatians. Many things once counted essential are now to him matters of indifference. "Thou shalt" is changed into "You may or may not, as you please." The Christian is free from the law. On hygienic or philanthropic grounds the



Colossian believer may still abstain from certain meats and drinks, and on religious grounds he may still observe certain sacred days. But he must do neither on legal grounds; he should both claim for himself and give to every other man freedom to follow the law of the Spirit of life. Spiritual tyranny is the worst kind of despotism.

17. **the shadow . . . the body.** The Old Testament adumbrates the New; "shadow and body" means shadow and substance. The Colossian teachers were like the dog in Æsop's fable, that snatched at the image and lost the bone. They did not **hold fast** Christ (ver. 19).

18. **Let no man rob you of your prize** (R.V.). The figure is athletic, taken from the racecourse (cf. Phil. iii. 14). **by a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.** These two phrases throw light on one another. The Colossian teachers were too humble to go into the immediate presence of God, where only the highest "principalities and powers" might venture nigh. They would not "rush in where angels feared to tread." They felt they needed a long succession of created spirits to mediate between them and the absolute, unapproachable Deity. Their lowliness of mind constrained them to bow down before His ministers and supplicate their aid. Paul calls this a **voluntary**, artificial, uncalled-for humility, not to speak of its idolatry. The one Mediator between God and man teaches that God is a perfectly approachable Father. This makes angelolatry superfluous. Children do not need a company of go-betweens to plead their cause; they climb their father's knee and speak for themselves. **dwelling in the**

things which he hath seen (R.V.). This is probably the true reading, the best MSS omitting the negative. The words are ironical. Some of the Colossian teachers were visionaries, spiritualists. They made a parade of the manifestations and communications which they received, apparently from angels, in dreams and trance-states. Paul does not believe in the things which they have seen. **vainly puffed up.** This shows the value of their humility. Their penetration of the secrets of the angel-world inflates their self-conceit. They despise the commonplace religion of the uninitiated Christian. They have the knowledge which puffeth up, not the love which buildeth up.

19. **not holding fast the Head.** The Head is Christ, who has twice already been so named in the epistle. To lose hold of the Head, from whatever cause, is a fatal schism. It means becoming a withered limb. From the Head the whole spiritual organism, the Church, receives a constant supply of life and power, and so **increases with the increase of God.** This is Paul's way of accounting for the growth of the Church. So long as she keeps herself in contact with her Divine Head, she cannot but grow. God giveth the increase. Gibbon's famous Five Causes of the progress of the early Church left out the final Cause.

20, 21. **if ye be dead.** Better, "if ye died." "If" assumes a fact. The Colossians have had a definite experience which the apostle calls "death." Conversion is the rending asunder of things that have been vitally united. As the natural separation of the soul from the body is death, so the moral

separation of the soul from the world and sin is death. In both cases a man may "take an unconscionable time in dying," but death itself occurs at a definite moment. **from the rudiments.** See p. 55. **as though living in the world.** Of course in a sense they, as Christians, *were* still living in the world, but not in the sense of being conformed to its tastes and habits. They were crucified to the world. Their true life was hid with Christ in God. **why do ye subject yourselves to ordinances?** It is extremely probable that Paul's early life had been plagued by "ordinances." "**Handle not, taste not, touch not**" (observe the climax) had been dinned into his ears till the parrot-words tormented him day and night. Now he is joyously free, and he calls on every believer to share his buoyancy of spirit. When Luther passed from the same miserable bondage to the same glorious liberty, he wrote his splendid treatise "Of the Freedom of a Christian Man." Faith does not bind us with prohibitions or prescriptions, it makes us the unfettered followers of Christ (cf. John viii. 36).

22. **all which things.** The things which are not to be handled, tasted, touched. Paul appeals to common sense. If we do taste and eat these meats, well, there is an end of them. They **perish with the using.** Why should we attach any moral value to them? (cf. Matt. xv. 11).

23. **Which things have a shew of wisdom.** These "creeds which deny and restrain" are based on a certain philosophy of life. If matter is essentially evil, and the body the seat of sin—which was the well-nigh universal assumption of those times—then reason demands that the natural instincts of

the vile body should be sternly repressed. This line of argument has given a show of wisdom to asceticism, which is here called "severity to the body," or, more literally, "unsparing treatment of the body." But the primary hypothesis is false. The body is *not* the seat of evil; it is *not* vile.

"Let us not always say,  
 'Spite of this flesh to-day,  
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'  
 As the bird wings and sings,  
 Let us cry, 'All good things  
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh  
 helps soul!'"

**will-worship.** Worship according to our own will. If God requires us to serve Him in one way, and we, with the best intentions and the deepest reverence, do it in another way, our devotion is will-worship. The other name for it is wilfulness. The Indian fakir and the Roman devotee try to please God by abjuring all pleasure. Who bade them do it? The spirit of genuine renunciation is expressed in the words, "I worship thee, sweet will of God." **humility.** See ver. 18. The last words of the chapter are difficult; the R.V. is probably right. Ascetic practices **are not in any value against the indulgence of the flesh.** Here "the flesh" has its technical Pauline meaning—the natural man, the unregenerate self. The monk who mortifies his body by wearing a hair-shirt may all the time be subtly pleasing himself, feeding his own vanity, and so indulging "the flesh." The self needs something more than repression; it needs the impartation of that Divine life which renews and transforms the whole manhood, body and soul alike.

Col. iii. 1-4.

## THE RISEN LIFE.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.  
2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the  
3 earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ  
4 in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Here controversy ends. Paul turns with delight from the exposure of the false to the exposition of the true. Let the Colossian Christians, eschewing the cold rigours of legalism and asceticism, understand that they belong to a much more congenial order of things. Risen with Christ, they have only to realise the Christ-life, which is already potentially theirs. It is now a hidden life, but it will one day be fully manifested, when all believers will participate in the glory of the returning Christ.

1. **If ye were raised.** The "if" is logical. It does not insinuate a doubt, but posits a fact. We might say "since." Christians *are* **dead** (ver. 3) and "raised together with Christ." Every fact in the Redeemer's career becomes a moral and spiritual experience in the life of the believer. **seek the things that are above.** It is natural for the re-born soul to aspire. Its cry is ever Excelsior! The things that are pure, holy, spiritual, heavenly, are its native air. It cannot be satisfied with an earthly environment. It must be in spirit **where Christ is.** Christianity is the elevation of our whole manhood into a Divine realm of thought and action. "Hitch your wagon to a

star," was Emerson's advice. "Attach yourself to the risen Christ," is Paul's.

2. **Set your mind on the things . . . above, not . . . on the earth.** Faith gives a man at once a wonderful detachment and a wonderful attachment of spirit. It alters all his tastes and desires, so that he is no longer fascinated by the world of illusion and change, but gives his heart to the eternal realities of the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. vi. 19-21).

3. **your life is hid with Christ in God.** "The world," says Bengel, "knows neither Christ nor Christians, and Christians do not even clearly know themselves." The Christian life is at once patent and latent. While we admire its flowers and fruits, we cannot see the hidden roots. The brimming river glides before our eyes, but among what far-off hills did it take its rise? Christian manhood and womanhood attract every beholder by their grace and strength, sweetness and purity. But what is seen is only an effect. The cause is to be sought not in the abysmal deeps of personality, but in the soul's mystic union with her risen and glorified Redeemer.

4. **Christ, who is our life.** In the previous verse our life is said to be hid *with* Christ, in this one it is said that He *is* the Life (cf. John i. 1). When He called Himself the Life (John xi. 25, xiv. 6), He implied more than that He is the Possessor and Bestower of life. He meant that the life which He imparts is Himself. He quickens us by giving us His own very being, making us partakers of His Divine nature. The Holy Spirit is the Life-Giver, Christ is the Life. Our knowledge of our own true life is at present as imperfect

as our knowledge of His resurrection life. But when He shall be manifested, returning to reign in power and splendour, then all who are one with Him shall be manifested with Him; they shall be seen in their true colours and come to their own, participating by grace in His glory.

Col. iii. 5-11.

### SINS TO BE DESTROYED.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ;  
fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil con-  
6 cupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for  
which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the  
7 children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked  
8 some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put  
off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy  
9 communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another,  
seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ;  
10 and have put on the new man, which is renewed in know-  
11 ledge after the image of him that created him: where  
there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircum-  
cision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is  
all, and in all.

The Colossians who are dead and risen with Christ are summoned to the Christian's true task, which is not speculative but practical. They have it in their power to put to death all the grosser sins of impurity and put away the subtler sins of malice. Holiness, both negative and positive, is a possibility to those who have once for all put off as an unclean garment the old self, and put on as a stainless robe the new self, which is the gift of the

Creator and His own likeness. The new creation raises men of every race and condition to the same spiritual status, Christ being the one Ideal of redeemed humanity, and bringing the same blessings to all.

5. **Mortify your members.** Better, "put to death," "slay," "kill" (cf. Matt. v. 29, 30). "I find it hard to be a Christian," said Browning, and it is harder morally than intellectually. For to be a Christian a man must wage a ceaseless warfare with the passions and desires of his lower nature. "Thoughts must be *slain* which disobey." "No matter how, if only sin *dies out* in me." **your members** must be slain, not as if they were the seat of sin—the will is that—but because they have been the tools and weapons of the old sinful self. This use they have **upon the earth**, as the scene of temptation. From the bodily members to their sinful activities the transition in the apostle's mind is swift and impatient, so that he makes things concrete and things abstract stand in a somewhat bizarre apposition. He is thinking of the nastiness of sin, and neglects the niceties of grammar. The black catalogue which follows would be quite different in the polite speech of men of the world. The vices enumerated are various forms of "love," which serious men brand with words of loathing. The perversions of that holy passion which is "a very flame of the Lord" are the most degrading of sins. "Slay them," says the indignant apostle, naming them as criminals to be given over to the executioner. To sins of impurity Paul significantly adds **covetousness**, the worship of gold. "How many respectable middle-aged gentlemen are now mainly devoted



to making money, whose youth was foul with sensual indulgence!" (Maclaren).

6. **the wrath of God.** His personal moral indignation; His love, pained and wounded, compelled to scourge and chastise. This is one of His essential attributes, wide as the poles asunder from that impotent good-nature which we so readily ascribe to Him. His power to make us holy, and so happy, lies in the very resentment which consumes our sins. "The love which draws us nearer Thee is hot with wrath to them." **the sons of disobedience** is a Hebrew idiom. The abstract principle of unbelief or disobedience is figured as giving birth to children and claiming them for its own (cf. Luke vii. 35).

7. **some time** is Old English for "at one time," "once." So in Shakespeare, "Our sometime sister, now our queen." **ye lived in these things.** "Lived" means more than "existed." All that "life" meant to them, all its zest and pleasure, was extracted by them from these gross sins. It is the opposite of "living" in and for God.

8. **also . . . all these.** Sins of temper are no more to be spared than sins of lust. The Christian must put them all away, without evasion, exception, or compromise. It is a poor excuse that we are naturally inclined to be hot-tempered, for it is the very task of grace to triumph over nature. Every rebellious spirit must be evicted from Mansoul, where Christ should reign alone. The R.V. changes **blasphemy** into "railing," as the Greek word (*blasphemia*) is not limited, like the English, to railing against God.

9, 10. **Lie not.** Veracity was never an Oriental

virtue. Hebrews and Greeks alike delighted in tales of clever and successful lying. But the Christian must be true, because he worships the God of truth. **the old man . . . the new man.** We should now say the old and new self. The Christian never loses his identity, yet he is perfectly conscious of being "a new creature." His old habits of thought and action have been discarded like a suit of old clothes. All things have become new (cf. Rom. xiii. 14). **renewed unto knowledge** is a most suggestive phrase. The Gnostic teachers at Colossæ were intellectuals, who believed that men could be *initiated* into the higher knowledge of God. Salvation was by illumination. But Christianity makes short work of intellectualism. It teaches that obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge, that man must be morally and spiritually *renewed* unto knowledge (cf. John vii. 17). **after the image** (cf. Gen. i. 26, 27). God has both made and re-made man in His own image (cf. 2 Cor. v. 17).

11. **there is neither Greek nor Jew.** Better, "there cannot be." Not merely the fact but the possibility of racial division is negated. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" expressed the old order, and this sentence expresses the new. It glows with the writer's own sense of wonder. It is addressed to Phrygians by one who used to be an ultra-Pharisee, full of haughty contempt for "lesser breeds without the law." His selfish exclusiveness is now transformed into a universal sympathy. National distinctions (Greek and Jew), ceremonial (circumcision and uncircumcision), educational (barbarian, Scythian), social (bondman, freeman), are all powerless to keep men

asunder when they are united to Christ Jesus, who is **all and in all**, filling the whole of life with His presence. Paul applies this principle with a splendid, reckless daring. The Scythians were the barbarians *par excellence* of his time. Josephus speaks of them as "differing little from wild beasts," and Herodotus calls them "cannibals." But Christianity saw in each of them, as it sees in the negro of our time, a man and a brother.

Col. iii. 12-17.

#### GRACES TO BE CULTIVATED.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,  
13 bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meek-  
14 ness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving  
15 one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even  
16 as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these  
17 things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.  
18 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which  
19 also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let  
20 the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;  
21 teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and  
22 hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your  
23 hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or  
24 deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks  
25 to God and the Father by him.

Goodness should be positive as well as negative. The Colossians are to clothe themselves with all the Christian graces, which will take the place of the heathen vices they have discarded. Just because they are chosen to salvation, they must not proudly keep themselves aloof from the unsaved, but ever appear among them adorned with

all fair charities, girt about with love. Their religion must be of the heart. Compassion in the heart, peace in the heart, music in the heart will commend it sweetly to others. Let Christ's example be their guide, Christ's word their wisdom, Christ's name their inspiration for all service.

12. **God's elect, holy and beloved.** Three epithets applicable to every Christian. He is chosen, consecrated, loved by God. The initial steps in his salvation were taken not by himself but by God, who called him in grace and marked him for His own; and now the sense of God's abiding love makes him passionately eager to do all His will. **bowels of mercies.** Or, "a heart of compassion." The Jews regarded the intestines as the seat of feeling, we regard the heart. Both ideas are, of course, psychologically wrong, but when such expressions are once popularised, they endure like the language itself.

13. **kindness . . . meekness . . . forbearing . . . forgiving.** These words reflect that new Christian spirit in the presence of one's enemies which completely changed human life in the old world. As Seeley has finely shown in his *Ecce Homo*, while the ancients regarded it as an amazing stretch of goodness for a man to waive his right of revenge, Christ has made forgivingness the normal attitude of all His followers towards His and their adversaries. **even as the Lord forgave you.** The term "even as" occurs very frequently in the New Testament. To study all the uses of it is an excellent way of drinking in the Spirit of our Lord and learning to walk in His steps. It contains a startling revelation of the possibilities of Christianity as Christ-likeness. "Forgive one

another" is made a new commandment by this mighty motive and this perfect pattern—"even as the Lord forgave you."

14. **above all these things.** "Better, "over," keeping the metaphor of clothing. **love, which is the bond of perfectness.** Weymouth here misses the point by translating "the perfect bond of union." The apostle is not speaking of Christian union, but of that love which is the bond of all the Christian graces, keeping them together and fostering their full and harmonious development.

15. **the peace of God.** The best MSS have "of Christ." This means more than the peace which Christ gives us; it is that very peace which reigned in His own heart because His will was in perfect accord with the Father's will (cf. John xiv. 27). "In His will is our peace," says Dante. **to which ye were called.** Hence we are to understand that we never quite fulfil our vocation, never fully realise the purpose of God, till the peace of Christ rules in our hearts.

16. **the word of Christ.** The gospel is so named here alone. The genitive may be objective or subjective—the word spoken about Christ, or the word spoken by Christ. Paul usually says "the word of God," but he varies the expression here because throughout this epistle he is engaged in vindicating the honour of Christ. The gospel is His gospel, indeed He *is* the gospel.  **dwell in you richly.** Paul loves the imagery of wealth. "Riches" occurs eight times in his Roman letters. He talks like a multi-millionaire who has "unsearchable riches" (cf. 1 Tim. vi. 17). "Yet how rich is my condition, God and Heaven are all mine own!" **teaching . . . with psalms and hymns**

**and spiritual songs.** The gospel was to be sweetly sung as well as earnestly preached. The worship of the early Church was much more spontaneous than it is in our modern assemblies; far more was left to the control of the ever-present Spirit; prophetic utterances and fervent outbursts of song were eagerly welcomed. The end and aim of music was never mere æsthetic pleasure, but always definite teaching and warning. It has a magical power to reach the hearts which have resisted the appeals of rhetoric and the arguments of reason. **psalms** of the O.T., **hymns** of the Christian Church, and generally all **songs** (literally odes) filled with the breath of the Holy Spirit, were used in the primitive Church. **singing with grace in your hearts.** The order of the Greek is "with grace singing in your hearts." It is the song, not the grace, that is said to be in the heart, though of course the grace must be there too. The music of the lips gives utterance to the music of the soul. "My cage confines me round, my heart's at liberty," sang Madame Guyon in her French prison.

17. **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.** All! Let the shepherd tend his flocks, the plough-boy cut his furrows, the mason well and truly lay his stones, in that great Name, and how all labour is hallowed and ennobled! "Thine is the forge, the mart, the loom!" **giving thanks.** Only two verses back we read "and be ye thankful." The reiteration indicates the primary importance of the act and the spirit of thanksgiving. If a man once realises that he is a debtor to the grace of God, how can he ever after help being thrilled with a sense of adoring gratitude?

## Col. iii. 18-iv. 1.

## RELATIVE DUTIES.

18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it  
19 is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not  
20 bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all  
21 things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers,  
provoke not your children to anger, lest they be dis-  
22 couraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters  
according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-  
23 pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and  
whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not  
24 unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the  
reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.  
25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which  
iv. 1 he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.  
Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and  
equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

The reciprocal duties of wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, are enforced as an essential part of their primary duty to Christ, who is here named seven times, six times as "the Lord" ("God" in ver. 22 should be "the Lord"), and once as the "Master in heaven."

18. **Wives, be in subjection.** It can scarcely now be denied that Paul here puts a piece of old cloth upon the new garment of Christianity. In some of his ideas of woman he remained a typical Oriental. Sometimes he qualified his teaching regarding her with a diffident "I think," but here he dogmatizes. Perhaps he enjoins the subjection of women, as he enjoined that of slaves, as a necessity for the times. At any rate his teaching in the one case needs to be revised as it has been in the other.

What the timeless Christian Spirit requires of husband and wife is not lordship and subjection, but mutual love and reverence, hallowed in both souls by faith in the Eternal Love. **in the Lord** (cf. vers. 20, 23). Every natural human relationship is transfigured in the light of the supreme relationship between Christ and His Church. The secular becomes sacred when the temporal is regarded *sub specie æternitatis*.

20. **Children, obey your parents.** To this rule there is but one exception—when it collides with the other principle, “We must obey God rather than men.” No Christian son or daughter ever sets aside the general rule without extreme reluctance and profound regret.

21. **children . . . discouraged.** A child has a very keen sense of justice, and if his father treats him harshly and unfairly, he is first **provoked** to bursts of anger, and then becomes profoundly **discouraged**. Having done his best and failed, what is the good of trying any more? He loses heart. Henceforth he will regard his father—though he will shrink from calling him a tyrant—with a wretched, paralysing fear instead of a happy, confident love. Stevenson says it is better to break a child’s neck than to break his spirit.

22—iv. 1. **Servants, obey.** The full force of this precept is felt in the translation, “**Slaves, obey.**” Paul does not sound the heart-stirring note, “Slaves, be free!” Such rash words would have rendered him liable to the charge of inciting to rebellion. He perforce accepts slavery—in the meantime. Instead of fomenting wild dreams of immediate emancipation, he seems to rivet the fetters of the poor slaves. As an apostle he com-



mands them to obey their masters in all things, working as faithfully when they are out of sight as when they are under supervision, and he grounds his stern injunction on the fear of **the Lord**, as if he knew that Christ Himself would be pleased with their meek submission. Well may the Christian slaves heave a sigh if this is all the comfort that the new religion can offer them in their misery! But let them look at the other side. If they work **heartily for the Lord, and not for men**, He will **recompense** them, a thing which it rarely enters the heart of an earthly master to do. He will give them an **inheritance**, though all human laws declared that a slave can never become an heir. With the Lord **there is no respect of persons**; slaves are in His eyes as real **persons** as their masters, and not, as they have been told so often that they have almost come to believe it, mere chattels, living tools, beasts of burden. Their masters are enjoined to give them what is **just and equal**, hence, *mirabile dictu!* they have rights, though all the sages have rejected the idea with scorn. And, finally, their masters have **also a Master in heaven**, and must one day give an account to Him, side by side with the lowest of their menial servants. Here are principles of spiritual equality which from the first mitigated, and at the last abolished, that terrible institution of slavery, which a Roman historian characterised as “the sum of all villainies.” And here are eternal laws of truth and justice which ought still to enlighten the minds and quicken the consciences of masters and servants, employers and employed, in lands which boast that they have seen the end of the long night of slavery.

Col. iv. 2-6.

## PRAYER—BEHAVIOUR AMONG NON-CHRISTIANS.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanks  
 3 giving; withal praying also for us, that God would open  
 unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ,  
 4 for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it mani-  
 5 fest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them  
 6 that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech  
 be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may  
 know how ye ought to answer every man.

Paul urges the Colossians to be steadfast in prayer, and begs them to give himself a place in their petitions. He enjoins them to be wise in their intercourse with those who are still strangers to Christ, seizing every opportunity of winning them, cultivating the gift of gracious speech that they may never be at a loss how to answer either bitter cavillers or earnest inquirers.

2. **Continue in prayer.** The R.V. strengthens the verb "continue" with the adverb "steadfastly." "*Persevere* in prayer" gives the exact sense. Whether prayer be a delight or an agony, men are to be unwearied in it. In this connection how impressive are our Lord's precepts, "Watch and pray"; "Men ought to pray always, and not to faint." His own supplications were attended with "strong crying and tears," and He spent long night-watches in them. "Cold mountains and the midnight air witnessed the fervour of Thy prayer." **with thanksgiving.** The spirit of prayer is of great moment. If God has already showered blessings upon us, can we ask Him for yet more

without having hearts burning with gratitude and lips jubilant with praise?

3. **praying for us also.** For Paul and Timothy, and perhaps other associates. "*Orate pro nobis, pray for us,*" is the constant and urgent request of all true ministers of Christ (cf. 1 Thess. v. 25; 2 Thess. iii. 1). They are greedy of prayer; they covet it as the truest kindness they can receive from their brethren; they know that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." **may open unto us a door.** May remove hindrances and grant favourable opportunities. With what earnestness do statesmen labour to keep an open door, with freedom of intercourse, for a nation's commerce! With a yet more passionate eagerness did the apostle and his companions desire an open door ("a great door and effectual," 1 Cor. xvi. 9) **for the word.** Even if it was for a time barred and bolted in their faces, they never despaired; **God** would, in answer to many prayers, fling it **open** unto them. As soon as ever they found the way clear, they were ready to enter in and tell **the mystery of Christ.** This is one of Paul's favourite words, occurring ten times in the Prison Epistles. Writers like Matthew Arnold have made earnest attempts to fathom the secret of Jesus, the Man of Nazareth, but they have missed the secret of Christ, the Son of God. All the power of the gospel lies in the presentment to the human mind of a Personality in which God and man meet.

"Thou seemest human and Divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood Thou."

4. **as I ought to speak.** The preacher's manner is almost as important as his matter. Paul

desired to "speak boldly," to "speak in the Spirit of God," to "speak the truth in love," to "speak not as pleasing men, but God who trieth our hearts." Richard Baxter wished to speak

". . . as though he ne'er might speak again,  
And as a dying man to dying men."

5. **them that are without.** Beyond the pale! The Church's true spirit is discerned in its attitude towards this numerous, and (especially in our own time) not diminishing class. We do not say, "*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*, No salvation outside the Church." It is no Church question at all. It is a question of one's vital relation to God. Paul feels, with an infinite compassion, that to be without Christ is to be without God and hope. "I find," wrote Dr. Chalmers, "that without a hold of Christ there is no hold of God at all." It is not God's will that any should be in the outer darkness of doubt. **redeeming the time.** "Making your market fully from the occasion" (Ramsay); eagerly seizing, and cheerfully paying the price for, every opportunity of serving God by persuading those who are without to come within the great Divine family circle.

6. **speech . . . with grace . . . with salt.** Here it is a pity to limit "grace" either to the Greek or the Hebrew meaning of the word. The Christian's speech should be with both human grace (courtesy, affability, sweet reasonableness) and Divine grace (God's own spirit of redeeming love). And his speech should be **seasoned with salt**, exciting, stimulating, pungent, not stale, insipid, tasteless. Attic salt was Attic wit. Christians should cultivate the gift of saline speech, else they

can scarcely be the salt of the earth. Those who live by the ocean are most likely to be impregnated with ozone. **how to answer every one.** Not with the clever intellectual retort, the rapier thrust which transfixes and silences the caviller, but with the convincing power of simple truth, which is often most unanswerable when most naïve (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 15).

Col. iv. 7-18.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION, SALUTATIONS,  
AND FAREWELL.**

7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant  
8 in the Lord : whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort  
9 your hearts ; with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto  
10 you all things which are done here. Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments :  
11 if he come unto you, receive him ;) and Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which  
12 have been a comfort unto me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and  
13 complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in  
14 Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved  
15 physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church  
16 which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans ; and that ye likewise read the epistle from

## 82 Westminster New Testament

17 Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the  
ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou  
18 fulfil it. The salutation by the hand of me Paul.  
Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Details of the apostle's life in Rome, interesting to all who love him for his work's sake, need not be committed to writing, as they can be described to the Colossians by the bearer of the letter. Some of Paul's comrades in Rome—three Jews and three Gentiles—desire to transmit their greetings to the brethren at Colossæ. Then the apostle dictates instructions as to the reading of this and another epistle, sends an exhortation to a leading Colossian worker, and ends the letter by penning an autograph salutation, a tender little appeal for sympathy, and a benediction.

7-9. **All my affairs . . . our estate . . . all things that are done here.** Paul has no private life. All his "affairs" and his "estate" are bound up with the progress of Christ's kingdom on earth. He belongs to the Church. He has no reserves. He wears his heart on his sleeve. He thinks it perfectly natural that others should wish to know all about him. He is not afraid of personal paragraphs. To talk of *his* affairs will not be foolish gossip, it will be profound spiritual conversation. **Tychicus . . . Onesimus.** These are Christian comrades, who are expecting to pass many days of happy fellowship in the long journey over sea and land from Rome to Colossæ. The one is a convert (probably) of Paul's Ephesian mission, the other (certainly) of his Roman captivity. The one is no longer a "Casual" (as "Tychicus" signifies), but a **faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord**, and the other now really "Profitable" (a true

“Onesimus”) as a **faithful and beloved brother.**

10. **Aristarchus.** “A Macedonian of Thessalonica” (Acts xxvii. 2), a Jew with a Gentile name, probably one of Paul’s earliest European converts. **Mark . . . receive him.** “Welcome him.” Paul could not have written so warmly of Mark some twelve years before, when the two men were companions for the first time. For after doing some good missionary work, **the cousin of Barnabas** became faint-hearted and went home to his mother. But that was not the last of him. He put his hand to the plough, and looked back, and yet he did not lose the kingdom. The Lord gave him time to atone for the sin of his youth, and so disciplined him that he became morally strong and brave, lived down his past, effaced all distrust from the apostle’s mind, and was ultimately recalled to be his companion and share the last dangers of his Roman captivity (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 11).

11. **Jesus.** It is strange to remember that many an obscure man once bore this name, which is now too sacred to give to any child. It is the Greek form of Joshua. With the double name “Jesus Justus” compare “John Marcus,” “Saul Paulus,” Jews of the Empire often having both a Jewish and a Roman name. **These only,** of all the Jewish Christians, were brave enough to cooperate with the apostle and to be **a comfort** to him in Rome. See Phil. ii. 20.

12. **Epaphras.** Paul at length comes to the name that is most familiar to all, and most dear to many of, the Colossian Christians, that of their spiritual father, their greatly perplexed pastor, who has gone to Rome to consult his chief about

the dangers which threaten the churches of the Lycus valley. The just and chivalrous words which Paul here writes regarding this **servant of Christ Jesus** are a faithful minister's reward. They bring before us a true Pastor, striving in all his prayers for his people, his one supreme and absorbing desire in life being to see them **stand perfect and full-assured in all the will of God**, their minds in complete harmony with the Mind whose gospel is the music of the world. Here Paul seems to quote Epaphras' very words, having been impressed by them as they knelt often in prayer together in the Roman prison.

14. **Luke, the beloved physician**, was the writer of the Third Gospel and the Acts. He was with Paul in many of his travels, a fact which he indicates in his narrative by the use of the pronoun "we." Paul **loved** him as a friend, and, being no Christian scientist, relied on his professional skill in days of sickness and suffering. **and Demas**. This is all that is here said about him. When the apostle's other comrades are all so honourably mentioned, and make their exit bearing their blushing honours thick upon them, is it right that he should be dismissed without one word of praise? There are moments when, to a sensitive spirit, a mere name is a name dishonoured. But Paul was no doubt just. Perhaps he already guessed that the honour which Demas loved was of another kind than a passing allusion in an apostolic letter. At any rate the curt reference is ominous, and ere long the true spirit of Demas will be revealed (see 2 Tim. iv. 10).

15. **Laodicea**. Ten miles down the valley from Colossæ, a city "rich and increased in goods"



(Rev. iii. 17). **Hierapolis**, or Sacred City, six miles north of Laodicea, on the other side of the valley. The three cities were Epaphras' diocese. He could preach at Colossæ on a Sunday morning, ride down to Laodicea for the afternoon, and over to Hierapolis in the evening. **Nymphas**. Some MSS read "Nympha" and "her house," but the masculine has the greater support. Nymphas was evidently a wealthy convert of Laodicea, the owner of a large house, which he threw open for divine service. Thus there was a **church in his house**, church meaning not the room, but the people who filled it. The only consecration which the *aula* (atrium) needed was the prayers and praises of God's people. "Where'er they seek Thee Thou art found, and every place is holy ground." For "his house" we should probably read **their house**. Having mentioned Nymphas, Paul at once thinks of the members of his family, and so glides into the plural relative.

16. **the letter from Laodicea**. Evidently a letter written by Paul to Laodicea. Reasons for believing that this was "the epistle to the Ephesians" are given in the Introduction (p. 14).

17. **Archippus**, called by Paul his "fellow-soldier" (Philem. 2), was probably the son of Philemon. He is enjoined to fulfil his ministry. It is most likely that he was taking care of the Colossian Church while Epaphras was visiting Rome. He had no easy post. He had daily to deal with clever Gnostics and dreamy Theosophists. He had to pilot his ship among many rocks and quicksands. He needed to "fulfil" his ministry in the old sense of the word, to fill it to the full with words of wisdom and deeds of love.

18. **my own hand.** See 2 Thess. iii. 17. **Remember my bonds.** As Paul lifts his hand to write his salutation, his chain rattles, and he asks the Colossians to remember his bonds. The quiet simplicity of the appeal, which he might have couched in tragic language, and its place just before the peaceful benediction, make it all the more heart-moving. **Grace be with you.** This is the shortest formula of blessing; the longest is found in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. In the Christian Church the apostolic benediction takes the place of the beautiful Aaronic blessing, Num. vi. 24.

Philem. 1-3.

### GREETING.

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother,  
unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,  
2 and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier,  
3 and to the church in thy house : Grace to you, and peace,  
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This letter is written by the apostle to a Christian brother in Colossæ, with (probably) his wife and son, and the community of believers who are in the habit of meeting for worship in his house.

1. **Paul, a prisoner.** The soft pathos of the opening words at once arrests our attention. "Paul an apostle" writes most of the letters, and sometimes he finds it necessary to be masterful, but "Paul a prisoner" writes this one, and he is a suppliant. He has no foes to confront, no heretics to refute, no backsliders to correct, no sleepers to awaken ; he has only a humble petition to send to a dear and true friend. Happily in his captivity he is not denied the use of paper and ink. "Few know the heart of a prisoner," sighed Rutherford ; "my silence is my greatest prison." But by putting a pen into the hand of such prisoners Christ let them break their silence and speak in words which endure for ever. **a prisoner of Jesus Christ.** Paul gets beyond all second causes to the first. It was no irony of fate, no cruel combination of circumstances,

neither Jewish malice nor Roman policy, but the will of his Master, that brought him to a Roman prison. **and Timothy.** He is intimately acquainted with Philemon's household, so that his name will strengthen the appeal which Paul is about to make. **Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker.** "Beloved" sometimes expresses the love of God for His Son, or for His Church, and often, as here, the love of a Christian for his brother. The classical words for "love," with their sensuous associations, could not give adequate expression to a love so spiritual, and the word happily selected for the purpose (*agapē*) is one of the master-terms of Christianity. Philemon was Paul's **fellow-worker** first, probably, during the long and fruitful mission in Ephesus, and then in Colossæ, though the apostle had never seen the latter city.

2. **our beloved Apphia.** "Apphia our sister" has much stronger MS. authority. This Christian lady was no doubt Philemon's wife, to whom Paul naturally appealed on behalf of Onesimus, for it rested on her as much as on her husband to give the penitent man a kind welcome home, to forget his guilty past, and to cheer him to face the future with a new hope. **Archippus** was probably their son, and it was essential that his warm sympathy should also be enlisted on behalf of the returning wanderer. Besides, we learn in Col. iv. 17 that Archippus had a ministry to fulfil, and it would probably fall to him to receive Onesimus into the fellowship of the believers who met as a church in his father's house. Paul honours him with the title of **fellow-soldier**, which will suggest to him the inspiring thought that they are both following the same Leader, wearing the same

armour, displaying the same banner, fighting the same battles, seeking the same glory. Paul's imprisonment in Rome and daily contact with the finest soldiers in the world gave him vivid and glowing ideas of gospel campaigning.

3. **Grace . . . peace** (cf. Col. i. 2). Here the name of the Son is linked with that of the Father, as in Phil. i. 2, and nothing could more clearly indicate the unique greatness of Christ.

#### Philem. 4-7.

#### THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my  
5 prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast  
6 toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the  
communication of thy faith may become effectual by the  
acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ  
7 Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love,  
because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee,  
brother.

Paul is writing to a brother for whose faith and love he has often ere now had occasion to thank God, for whose growth in spiritual knowledge he has often prayed, and of whose kindness to the saints it has been a joy and comfort to hear.

4. **I thank my God.** A frequent and fervent Pauline utterance (see Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. 4; Phil. i. 3). Every epistle except Galatians has a thanksgiving after the opening greeting. "My God" is more warm and intense than "God" or "our God." Luther was right when he said that all the comfort of the gospel lies in the personal pronouns. "My God" implies an act of glad appro-

priation, once made and a thousand times repeated. There is a world of difference between the cold, distant recognition of "the Deity" and the ecstatic heart-devotion expressed in the words, "I will praise Thee, O God, my God." **making mention of thee.** Another familiar Pauline phrase. The apostle's numerous friendships made him a man of many prayers. His intense sympathy had to find an outlet in fervent intercession. Philemon was only one of a multitude, most of them far away, whom he bore in spirit to the throne of grace.

5. **hearing of thy love.** Philemon's love would be eulogised to Paul by Epaphras, his minister, and even by Onesimus, his runaway slave. Philemon's beautiful name means "Lover," and he is well worthy of it. Those who knew him best always spoke first of his love, without forgetting, however, to link it (as here) to his faith. Evidently a rich man, he filled his days with thoughts of hospitality and deeds of kindness. Nothing pleased him more than a request to make ready a lodging—a prophet's chamber—for some weary Christian worker (ver. 22). On his tombstone might have been inscribed at last the words, "He refreshed many saints" (ver. 7). **faith toward the Lord Jesus.** The rush of the apostle's thoughts upsets the logical order of the sentence, so that he seems to be commending Philemon for "faith toward all the saints." But clearly what he means is love toward all the saints and faith toward the Lord Jesus. "Faith *toward* the Lord" is a rare but suggestive phrase (cf. 1 Thess. i. 8). There is a difference between faith in and faith toward God. The one is faith resting, the other faith aspiring. Believers calmly repose in, or on, the

Saviour possessed, and yet they wistfully look and eagerly press toward the Saviour not yet fully possessed. The Christ whom they have found makes them passionately long for "the Christ that is to be."

**6. that the communication of thy faith.** Better, the communicativeness, the **fellowship** of thy faith. Paul refers to Philemon's acts of kindness, his deeds of lavish generosity, prompted by faith. He always thinks of faith as an active moral principle. It proves its reality by its sympathy. It thrives by sending out feelers in all directions, by insinuating itself into the lives of others, by finding in every man a brother to succour and save. It has "a fellowship of hearts to keep and cultivate." **effectual in knowledge.** Full spiritual knowledge; a favourite word in these Prison Epistles (see Col. i. 9). The logical order of ideas is here to be carefully noted. Faith manifests and verifies itself by a fellowship of love, which in turn becomes **effectual** (has its result and reward) in a full knowledge, deep, vital, experimental, of **every good thing** (every spiritual blessing) which is ours or **in us**, wrought into the fabric of our renewed nature. Truth reveals her face, not to those who burn the midnight oil, but to those who daily love their brothers. Philemon was probably no scholar, but he believed, he loved, he knew. **unto Christ.** For His glory, which is to be sought in all our moral and spiritual strivings and attainments.

**7. I had much joy . . . in thy love.** A spiritual happiness intensified in the gloom of a prison-house. How often Paul makes it clear that the chief pleasure of his life, next to his joy in the

Lord, springs from his knowledge of the noble conduct, the beautiful morale, of his Christian converts and friends! They are now his "joy" and his "crown," and they prepare for him a perpetual delight and reward. To hear of Philemon's love to complete strangers far away is enough to thrill his heart and light up his countenance with a pure spiritual gladness. At such moments Christ's own joy is in him, and his joy is full. **refreshed by thee.** Better, "through thee." How suggestive the phrase is! All Philemon's kind deeds were rather done through him than by him. He was not only acting in the Spirit of Christ; he was the human medium of Christ's own Divine compassion.

"Let it be no more my working,  
Nor my wisdom, love, and power,  
But the grace of Jesus only,  
Passing through me hour by hour."

**brother.** The tender, caressing word is kept till the close of the sentence. It has the natural emphasis of a last word, on which the voice dies away. Brotherhood was still too new a thing in the world to have had time to be soiled with all ignoble use. It was the beautiful creation of Christ; it was His own Spirit of brotherly love breathed into each of His followers.

Philem. 8-21.

#### PAUL PLEADING FOR ONESIMUS.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to en-  
9 join thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I  
rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged,  
10 and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee



for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds :  
11 which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now  
12 profitable to thee and to me : whom I have sent again :  
thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels :  
13 whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead  
he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the  
14 gospel : but without thy mind would I do nothing ; that  
thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but  
15 willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season,  
16 that thou shouldest receive him for ever ; not now as a  
servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially  
to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh,  
17 and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner,  
18 receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or  
19 oweth thee ought, put that on mine account ; I Paul have  
written it with mine own hand, I will repay it : albeit I  
do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine  
20 own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee  
21 in the Lord : refresh my bowels in the Lord. Having  
confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing  
that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Paul waives his apostolic authority and humbly begs a favour. He has a difficult personal moral problem to solve, and not without reluctance accepts the only possible solution. His heart argues with his conscience, and loses. "Onesimus the Christian belongs to you," says the one voice ; "all that is best in him he owes to you. He loves and adores you as your spiritual child. Your prison will be a heaven to him. Gratitude makes him eager to live for you, and if need be die with you. He will a hundred times rather remain with you than return to his old life. Be kind to him and let him have his wish. You cannot disappoint him." But the other voice makes answer : "No, he belongs to

Philemon. He has done a wrong and must confess it. It is his duty to return and make restitution. He cannot be right with God until he has done everything in his power to put himself right with man." So Paul resolves to send Onesimus home to his master; but he confidently bespeaks for him no pagan reception, which might mean torture or death, but a warm, loving, Christian welcome, not unlike that which the prodigal son received when he came back from the far country to his father's house.

8. **all boldness in Christ.** Paul admired boldness, and asked others to pray that he might display it (Eph. vi. 20). Luke noted his possession of it (Acts ix. 29). He hoped that to the very end he would retain it (Phil. i. 20). But there were times when his instincts prompted him to be gentle and persuasive rather than bold and authoritative. To a brother like Philemon it was far better to say, "**I beseech you,**" than "**I enjoin you.**" **that which is convenient.** The word "convenient" has lost much of its meaning. What is convenient for a person means now no more than what does not give him any trouble. Formerly it meant what was in harmony with his highest principles, what was worthy of his religious profession. This was what Philemon had to consider—what was **befitting** for him as a Christian, what his Lord would expect of him.

9. **for love's sake.** This may mean either for the sake of the love between Paul and Philemon, or for the sake of love in general as the Christian ideal. Either sense is excellent. The spirit of love might suffer if Paul were to enjoin instead of entreating, for love is the most

sensitive as well as the greatest thing in the world. It presupposes a spiritual equality between those who love, and it is pleased when its rights are scrupulously regarded. **Paul the aged.** This is probably the apostle's real meaning, though Lightfoot contends that we should read "Paul the ambassador" (so the margin of R.V.; cf. Eph. vi. 20; 2 Cor. v. 20). The simple, pathetic word "old man" suits the language of entreaty far better than a formal, official title. How old Paul was at this time we cannot tell, and the point is not very important. He was "a young man" at the time of Stephen's death (Acts vii. 58), and perhaps he was still nearer fifty than sixty. Yet he might already look on himself as an old man, worn in the service of Christ. Walter Scott called himself "an old grey man" when he was fifty-five. Happily there is a sense in which such men never grow old (Ps. xcii. 14).

10. **my son . . . Onesimus.** Better, "my child." Paul lingers long (as the R.V. shows) before he utters the name—so sweet to him, but for the time, as he well knew, so unpleasant to Philemon—leading up to it with language of caressing tenderness, such as a mother might use of her new-born babe. He writes of his prison-child, born again of the Spirit of God, **Onesimus.** One can imagine how Philemon opened his eyes as he read the words, how he flung down the roll in impatience, and then how the sudden flush of hot anger softened into an expression of wonder and pity and joy. The incredible had happened. The hardened sinner had come home with the spirit of a little child.

11. **unprofitable . . . profitable.** Paul smiles

as he dictates this sentence. He gently plays with his convert's name, writing what he has doubtless often said. "Onesimus" means "Helpful." It was a name given to many Greek slaves, and one which they were naturally proud to bear. But this slave has belied his name. He has been a good-for-nothing. He has defrauded his master and absconded. But now he has undergone the great spiritual change which never fails to bring with it a moral transformation, and Paul is sure that he will henceforth live up to his name. He will be a real "Helpful" both to Paul and to Philemon.

12. **I have sent back to thee.** Not without sorrow, but with a clear sense of duty, Paul directs the fugitive to return. One wonders if he would do the same even if Philemon were a pagan master. Probably he would, though his command would be ten times more difficult to obey. He would not break the laws of Rome by keeping another man's property. The time was still far distant when a nation would proudly say of fugitive slaves, "They touch our country, and their shackles fall." The conscience of mankind had first to be educated by the Spirit of Christ. **in his own person, that is, my very heart.** So the R.V. The latter is a wonderfully tender expression. As a lover calls his beloved his sweetheart, so Paul calls the slave whom he has learned to love, his "own heart." Onesimus was doubtless in every way worthy of his affection. It is quite possible that he was a man of some culture, like many other slaves of the Empire. The higher their education the greater their value to their masters.

13. **I would have retained.** "I would fain

have kept" (R.V.). That "fain" is a very happy stroke of translation. It brings out all the wistfulness of the great apostle, so hungering for human sympathy, while yet so resolute to let no soft sentiment relax his stern sense of duty. **that on thy behalf he might minister unto me.** This is another exquisite touch. Such words of loving insight, so much higher than clever tact, would go straight to Philemon's heart, making him say, "Would that he *had* kept him to minister for me! I would gladly give Paul ten Onesimuses, if I had them, to pay him a little of my own infinite debt." **the bonds of the gospel.** Compare "my bonds in Christ" (Phil. i. 13), and "a prisoner of Christ Jesus" (vers. 1, 9). How calmly the hard fact is accepted! There is no shrill shouting against injustice. Imprisonment is accepted as an honour. The apostle's phrase became a technical expression for a common experience which was as cheerfully welcomed as one's daily bread, because it was the Master's will. Under the words there breathes the heroic spirit which made three centuries of confessors and martyrs.

14. **without thy mind.** The decision lay with the master who was nearly a thousand miles away. A month must elapse before Philemon could hear and speak. Paul had a scrupulously fine sense of honour. It was no unctuous rectitude, but the instinctive equity of a Roman citizen as well as of a Christian gentleman that impelled him to render to every man his due. **not as of necessity, but willingly.** Paul's retention of Onesimus, viewed in however favourable a light, would have been an unwarranted liberty. Philemon's service would have lost all its grace by losing its spontaneity.

15. **For perhaps.** "Perhaps" indicates a measure of uncertainty. Paul will not rashly dogmatise when he only knows "in part." He suggests what seems to him likely, and no more. He shrinks from a "verily." **he was parted from thee.** The realistic truth was that Onesimus ran away in disgrace; the idealistic, that God parted him for a season from his master. There is an alchemy that extracts from the dross of human transgression the fine gold of Divine providence. Compare Joseph's account of his own kidnapping (Gen. xlv. 5), and Peter's wonderful version of the death of Christ in Acts ii. 23. **for a season . . . for ever.** God's temporal separations end in everlasting spiritual reunions. The pain of estrangement is forgotten in the rapture of meeting to part no more. "This my slave," Philemon would say, "was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."

16. **no longer as a slave, but . . . a brother beloved.** This is the miracle of the gospel. The Spirit of Jesus makes Philemon and Onesimus, taskmaster and slave, brothers not only in name but in truth. Not that Onesimus necessarily ceases to be a slave in law. Paul does not plead for his liberation. He comes within a step of doing so, but he never takes it. Yet Onesimus' position will be completely changed. His master will daily meet him, and greet him, and treat him as a brother. And thus the very principle of bond-service—that some men may be regarded as goods and chattels—is undermined, and manumission becomes merely a matter of time. Slavery will die a natural death. **specially . . . how much rather.** Literally, "most of all to me, and how

much more to thee." A fine example of logical inexactitude, indicative of great warmth of feeling. Paul's regard for Onesimus will be superlative, Philemon's more than superlative! Excellence is beggared by super-excellence! **both in the flesh and in the Lord.** Philemon and Onesimus will be brothers both in the world and in the Church. Brothers at the Communion Table will not be strangers in the market.

17. **me a partner.** In the great *business* of winning souls for the kingdom of God. Less technically, a comrade, an intimate friend. **receive him as myself.** Paul has already called Onesimus his child (ver. 10), his heart (ver. 12), his brother (ver. 16). Now he speaks of him as his other self. Perfect love is the fusing of two souls in one. The request of the letter is that Onesimus the Christian may receive as cordial a welcome as would be accorded to Paul the Apostle (cf. Matt. x. 40).

18. **if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught** (R.V.). This was no doubt the truth, but the hypothetical "if" and the qualifying "at all" and "ought" soften as far as possible the reference to a crime which has been sincerely repented of. Plain, direct, severe censure is for the hardened conscience, gentle language for the contrite heart. **put that to my account.** Charge it to me as Onesimus' friend, his other self, his double, who love him so much that I cheerfully make all his obligations my own.

19. **I Paul write it.** In general he wrote only the salutation with his own hand, as the credential in every epistle (2 Thess. iii. 17). But here he takes the pen in his hand for another purpose.

He gives Philemon an autograph promissory note, a sort of I.O.U., and signs his name "Paul." He writes his bond in set, formal, lawyer-like terms, as one who means business. But he does it half playfully, for if he knows Philemon at all, he is sure that so true a Christian gentleman will never demand the fulfilment of the bond, but will freely and heartily forgive a brother's trespasses, as his own have been forgiven. **thou owest to me thine own self.** Thus quietly is Philemon's great secret told. He as well as Onesimus is Paul's convert. He found his true self when he found Christ, and he did both through the apostle's influence. To a spiritual father a spiritual child—such as Philemon became when his hairs were grey—instinctively feels himself under supreme obligations. Paul knows how gladly his friend will do something to liquidate his debt.

20. **let me have joy . . . refresh my heart.** In the Greek both the "me" and the "my" are emphatic. One can hear the circumflex accent in the apostle's voice. Others have happy memories of good Philemon's love. He has been a **brother** to many. He has gladdened them and refreshed them. Now it is Paul's turn. "Do something that will bring joy to *me*, that will refresh *my* heart, and do it **in Christ**, for His sake, in His Name and Spirit." The unusual Greek verb in "let me have joy, or help," is the root of the name "Onesimus," and it seems clear that Paul is again playing upon the word. "Let Philemon himself now be a 'Helpful,' an 'Onesimus,' to me!"

21. **Having confidence.** As the tone of the whole letter shows. It is not a small favour that the writer asks—forgiveness for a criminal. But



he **knows** that he has only to speak and it will be granted. This is not confidence in human nature as such, but in the Spirit of Christ which penetrates and transforms human nature. Paul knows that Philemon, the Christian, who feels that he has been forgiven ten thousand talents, will not take by the throat the brother who owes him a few hundred pence.

## Philem. 22-25.

## HOSPITALITY—SALUTATIONS.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging : for I trust that  
 23 through your prayers I shall be given unto you. There  
 salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus ;  
 24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.  
 25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.  
 Amen.

22. **prepare me a lodging.** This is too frigid. A lodging for Paul ! It suggests a room outside in the inn, a place among strangers ! Paul does not insult his friend by hinting at such a thing. What he requests is, "Be ready to show me **hospitality.**" The warmth and sacredness of Eastern hospitality have always been proverbial. **for I hope I shall be granted unto you.** The apostle is not a prophet in the narrow sense of the word. He can only use the language of **hope.** The Divine will is not fully revealed to him. There is a sweet naïveté in his use of the word **granted unto you.** It would be affectation to appear ignorant of the immense importance that would attach to his visit to Colossæ, so high is the veneration, so great the love, which his labours

have won for him in the heart of all the churches. But in his self-consciousness there is not a touch of boastfulness.

23, 24. **Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner**, who was so well known in Colossæ. If "fellow-prisoner" is to be taken literally, it means that his relations with Paul were so intimate as to excite suspicion and lead to his temporary confinement. But it may only mean that he was so constant a visitor, so faithful an attendant, in Paul's prison, that he might be said to share the apostle's captivity. For the other names mentioned here see Col. iv. 10, 14. They are valuable links of connection between the two epistles, and marks of the authenticity of both.

25. Cf. Gal. vi. 18. **your spirit** means the spirit of the persons named in the beginning of the letter. Paul does not say "your spirits," for one spirit animates and unites that household. He prays that in every bosom that spirit may be partaker of the same grace.

Eph. i. 1, 2.

SALUTATION.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ  
2 Jesus : Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **Paul . . . will of God.** See Col. i. 1. The first of many parallelisms of thought and expression in the two epistles. See Introduction, p. 15. **to the saints.** Holy ones; persons consecrated; delivered from sin and devoted to God's service. See Col. i. 2. **which are at Ephesus.** It is probable that Paul did not write the words "at Ephesus," which are wanting in the best MSS and omitted by many early writers who quote the passage. It is certain that one ancient copy of the letter had the words "in Laodicea," and it is likely that others bore the names of other Asian cities, the epistle being really an apostolic encyclical. See Introduction, pp. 13-15. **and the faithful.** Not a second class, but "the saints" in another aspect. "Faithful" has a spiritual and an ethical meaning—full of faith and worthy of trust, believing in Christ and loyal to Christ. The two meanings are frequently and very naturally blended, faith and life, creed and conduct being as cause and effect. **in Christ Jesus.** Paul's "monogram," expressing his central, vital teaching in a

single mystic phrase. To catch the meaning of that **in** is to find the key to his whole theology of experience. The phrase occurs, in various forms, twelve times in the first thirteen verses of this chapter. It is one of the links between Paul and John, and our Lord's own words, "Abide in Me" (John xv. 4), are nowhere more wonderfully illustrated than in "Ephesians." The minds of the two great apostles ran parallel. Neither of them could live without that mystic union. They had both learned the secret from Christ. Faith not only gives us a fellowship with, but somehow incorporates us in, the risen Lord.

"I have a life in Christ to live ;  
I have a death in Christ to die :  
And must I wait till Science give  
All doubts a full reply?"

2. **Grace . . . peace.** See Col. i. 2. **and the Lord Jesus Christ.** The words, omitted by the R.V. in Col. i. 2, are certainly authentic here. They imply that grace and peace come equally from God and from Jesus Christ, and nothing could more clearly or impressively indicate Paul's sense of the Divine majesty of his Lord.

#### Eph. i. 3-14.

#### ELECTION AND REDEMPTION.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly  
4 places in Christ : according as he hath chosen us in him  
before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy  
5 and without blame before him in love : having pre-

destinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ  
6 to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to  
the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made  
7 us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption  
through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the  
8 riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us  
9 in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto  
us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure  
10 which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensa-  
tion of the fulness of times he might gather together in one  
all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which  
11 are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained  
an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose  
of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own  
12 will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who  
13 first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after  
that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salva-  
tion: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed  
14 with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of  
our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased  
possession, unto the praise of his glory.

This passage is a magnificent hymn of praise. It begins, like some old Hebrew Psalm, with "Blessed be God," and ends "to the praise of His glory." From first to last it is essential poetry. It might be arranged in strophes, like the Psalms and Canticles in the Revised Version. The writer glows with the inspiration of his theme. He is at once calm and enthusiastic as he writes a hymn to the grace of God, or rather to the God of grace. He weaves into one splendid sentence—perplexing to the grammarian, but adorable to the lover of verbal music, like some grand composition of Beethoven—his thoughts of election, adoption, redemption, of the mystery of the Father's will,

the gift of the Son, the sealing of the Holy Spirit. His thoughts are all Christo-centric. God gives us every spiritual blessing in Christ. Before the creation of the world He chose us in Christ. His grace has been historically mediated to us in Christ. We have our redemption in Christ. It is God's purpose to bring all things under one Head in Christ. Formerly the Jews hoped in Christ, now the Gentiles also believe in Christ. And we are sealed with the promised Spirit in Christ. Every conception is linked to the vital truth of the mystic union of the redeemed with the Redeemer, so that Christ is all in all.

**3. Blessed be the God . . . who hath blessed us.** Songs of praise ascend where streams of mercy flow. God blesses us and we bless Him; but how different is the content of the verb in the two clauses! We bless God with thoughts and words, He blesses us with gifts and deeds of infinite love. **with every spiritual blessing.** "Every" is emphatic. If we have the feeling that temporal blessings are unevenly distributed, it is a consolation to know that spiritual blessings will be divided with absolute impartiality. The prayer for gold may be unheeded, the prayer for grace is always answered. "No good thing will He withhold," **in the heavenly places.** Literally, "the heavenlies." The phrase occurs other four times in this epistle (i. 20, ii. 6, iii. 10, vi. 12), and nowhere else in the N.T. The heavenly places are not in a land that is very far off. They lie "within and about the true Christian" (Lightfoot). Isaac Walton wrote in his memorial of a friend—

"Of this blest man let this just praise be given,  
Heaven was in him before he was in heaven."

4, 5. **he chose us . . . having foreordained us.** Election is not a speculative cobweb, but a fact of experience. Every believer knows that his salvation is from beginning to end a Divine act. And it is certain that God does nothing impulsively. He thinks things out (as any wise man does) before He acts ; whatever He effects in time He has planned in eternity. He therefore thought of us and of our salvation **before the foundation of the world**, and if the world has been spinning for long æons instead of a few thousand years, that only makes the Divinity that shapes our ends the more wonderful. **holy and without blemish.** This is God's ideal for us, and He does not mock us by bidding us look up to unattainable heights of holiness. He shows us infinite possibilities. His design that we should be pure and sinless in His holy eyes is one which He Himself will see carried through. **in love.** In their present position the words are provokingly vague. Many scholars take them over into the 5th verse, and read, "**having in love predestined us.**" Then they at once begin to palpitate with meaning. They make destiny beautiful. They teach us that God's plans and purposes are all lusted by His love. They constrain us to trust a sovereignty which is everlastingly directed by an infinitely tender Heart. **unto adoption as sons.** Paul recognised that all men are the offspring of God (Acts xvii. 28), but whenever he writes of sonship—as he does frequently—he refers to the new spiritual relationship into which men enter by faith in Christ. The glorious liberty of the sons of God is for the new-born. The figure of adoption is borrowed from Roman law, with which Paul the

Roman citizen was familiar. The practice of taking a child out of another family and making it one's own was entirely alien to Jewish thoughts and habits.

6. **his will . . . his grace.** Paul rings the changes on these two great ideas. Both are intensely real to him. He is filled with awe as he thinks of "the good pleasure of God's will," "the mystery of His will," "the counsel of His will." But he is filled with delight as he thinks of "the glory of His grace," "the riches of His grace." He knows that the one truth balances the other. He steers a clear course between the Scylla of fatalism on the one side and the Charybdis of sentimentalism on the other. He believes that nothing happens without the sovereign volition, and nothing without the infinite goodness, of God. With precisely the same sense of the real harmony of apparent antitheses, Browning exclaims, "All's love, and yet all's law." **in the Beloved.** One of the sweetest of the Saviour's names. It had already been a designation of the Messiah among the Jews. Christ is beloved of the Father for His own sake; we are beloved (v. 1) for His sake. He, the altogether lovely, is always well-pleasing to God; we, unlovely and unlovable, are well-pleasing because He encircles us with His love.

7. **our redemption.** This great word has the stricter sense of rescue by ransom, and the wider of deliverance by any means. The Christian redemption is always related to the shedding of the **blood** of Christ, which is regarded as a ransom-price (cf. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Paul is at pains to define redemption as the **forgiveness of trespasses.** The definition was probably meant



especially for the perusal of the Gnostics, who believed in redemption by illumination. Forgiveness is not by any means the only element in redemption, but it is the first and most essential, so that the part may be identified, as it is here, with the whole. **riches of his grace.** "Riches" occurs five times in this letter. It is characteristic of Paul. He teaches us that all the limitless wealth of God is made over to us in Christ. See Col. iii. 16.

8, 9. God has made His grace to **abound toward us.** Here Bunyan got half of the title of his autobiography, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners." The other half was suggested to him by 1 Tim. i. 15. **wisdom and prudence** are lauded in the Prison Epistles. Contrast the disparagement of them in Luke x. 21 and 1 Cor. i. 20, 26. In the one case wisdom is spiritual—the knowledge of **the mystery of God's will**—in the other it is carnal and secular. In the N.T. **mystery** means an open secret—something once hidden but now revealed (see p. 47). The Divine plan of redemption, the admission of the Gentiles, and the union of Christ with His Church, are the mysteries of this epistle, in which the word occurs six times.

10. **a dispensation**, or "stewardship"; literally, "economy." God is the great Householder, and the Church His household; Christ is the Steward who has supreme control over its affairs. He is entrusted with the management of everything in this age, or stage, of the world's history, called (from this passage) the Christian "dispensation." **the fulness of the times, or seasons**, of revelation and providence, is the time of Christ, our own era of grace, which will ere long end in timeless glory. **to sum up all things in Christ.** Lit., to bring

all things under one **Head**. ("Recapitulate" comes from the equivalent Latin word.) This is at once the Christian programme of Paul the apostle and the imperial ideal of Paul the Roman citizen. He knows that the unity which the Cæsars have impressed upon the Empire is external and superficial. But another organising and reconciling Factor has come. Christ will succeed where the Cæsars have failed. By destroying sin He will restore all things, both **in heaven and on earth**, to their normal condition of harmony and unity. The reunion of God's separated creation will be effected by the correlation of all things to one Head. It will not be a mere fusion or coalition, but a vital and organic union. This will be the "summing-up" of history — the consummation devoutly to be wished. **all things** might be translated "the universe," and the vast expansion of the meaning of the word in modern times only makes the apostle's confident hope the more impressive. Every Christian must needs be an optimist, both for himself and for all creation.

11. **we have obtained an inheritance.** Here the A.V. is at least as good as the R.V. That in Christ we have been made heirs of God is a familiar Pauline idea (see Rom. viii. 17). The R.V. gives the expression an O.T. turn. "We were made a heritage" means that God has chosen us as His lot or inheritance. "The Lord's portion is His people" (Deut. xxxii. 9). **foreordained . . . purpose . . . counsel . . . will.** Paul is not afraid to "reason high of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate." He is no determinist, but he wants to eliminate all idea of merit from the minds of those who are heirs of salvation. He

wishes us to recognise the telic action of a supreme Mind and Will. He bids us bless the Hand that guided and the Heart that planned. His teaching is in harmony with the growing conviction of modern times, that all force is mind-force.

12, 13. **we . . . ye.** We Jews, ye Gentiles. **we . . . hoped in Christ.** We cherished the Messianic hope; we waited long for the morning. Now the day has dawned; Israel's hope is realised; the Christ has come. **in whom . . . in whom.** One of Paul's many broken constructions. The second "in whom" picks up the thread. **the truth, the gospel.** Outside the gospel there is to Paul nothing worthy to be called "the truth." It alone gives him, as an educated and thinking man, a reasoned view of life and the universe. The patient seeker after truth finds it in Christ, and the conception of things which satisfies his intellect transforms his life. The "word of truth" is more than a philosophy, it is a gospel of salvation. **ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit.** Believers were marked or certified as true Christians when they received the Spirit of promise—the Spirit who had been promised. The reality of their faith in Christ was attested, both to their own consciousness and to the judgment of others, by their spiritual gifts and graces. The Spirit's work upon them was like the signing and sealing of a testament, only it was profound, inward, spiritual. Some ancient Fathers and some modern Catechists have spoken of baptism as the seal of union with Christ. That, however, is only an outward and visible sign. The real seal is the unmistakable and indelible stamp made on the human spirit itself by the operation of God the Holy Ghost.

14. **which is the earnest.** Read "who." The reference is not to "promise" but to "Spirit." It is a pity that the neuter "which" should ever follow "the Holy Spirit," as it habitually does both in the A.V. and the R.V. Both grammatically and theologically this is confusing. An **earnest** is an instalment of purchase-money, paid at once as a proof of the reality of a bargain and a pledge of full payment. (The Scotch say "arles," from the French *arrhes*—one of many linguistic proofs of an old *entente cordiale*.) The Spirit of truth and love and power, who possesses us rather than is possessed by us, is the first instalment of the **inheritance** which is ours in Christ. **unto the redemption** (see ver. 7). This great word has sometimes a backward, sometimes a forward look. Here the reference is evidently to the final and perfect redemption—the deliverance, still by ransom, from the last effects of sin (cf. Rom. viii. 23). Paul takes some of the most cherished words of the Old Covenant—promise, inheritance, redemption, possession—over into the New, making the Gentiles partakers of the sacred treasures which they have so long enshrined, in order that a far greater Israel, an innumerable company of redeemed spirits—God's **own possession**—may live to the **praise of His glory**.

Eph. i. 15-23.

#### PRAYER FOR THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM.

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord  
16 Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give  
thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers ;

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of  
glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revela-  
18 tion in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your under-  
standing being enlightened; that ye may know what is  
the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory  
19 of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding  
greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according  
20 to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought  
in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him  
21 at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all  
principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and  
every name that is named, not only in this world, but  
22 also in that which is to come: and hath put all things  
under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things  
23 to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that  
filleth all in all.

Paul tells his readers of an oft-repeated act of praise and prayer. He habitually thanks God for the faith and love of the churches to whom he is writing, and fervently desires for them a fuller knowledge of the glory of their spiritual heritage, and of the marvellous power which is working on their behalf—the same power which raised Christ from the grave and made Him supreme over all creation and Head of the Church which is His body and His fulness.

15. **I also, having heard.** It was natural that Paul should write in such terms to the Colossians, whom he had never seen (Col. i. 4); but could he say that he had merely “heard” of the faith of the Ephesians, among whom he had lived and laboured for nearly three years? It is scarcely possible. Acts xx. shows how warm and intimate were his relations with the Christians of Ephesus. In this epistle he must have in view,

in addition to such readers, a number of other churches, of which he has only heard by report. See Introduction, p. 13. **faith . . . love.** Paul probably dictated both these words, just as the A.V. has them. The R.V., following the best MSS, omits "love," but the resultant reading is extremely awkward. "Faith towards all the saints" is an expression quite without parallel. The omission may be an error, not of the copyist, but of Paul's own amanuensis.

16. **cease not.** See Col. i. 3; Philem. 4. **thanks . . . prayers.** It is a striking fact that nearly all the apostle's recorded thanksgivings and prayers are altruistic. His own personality does not overshadow the throne of grace. In his intense desire to save others he all but forgets (like Wilberforce) that he has a soul of his own to save, and his sympathy is pre-eminent in his communion with God. His prayers are intercessions. His spirit basks in the sunshine of others' joy; and only the sorrows of others throw a shadow over him.

17. **the God of our Lord.** God endears Himself to us through all the others who have loved and worshipped Him. We feel drawn to the God of Abram, David, Isaiah; we adore the God of the saints and martyrs; we will think often before we renounce our own father's and mother's God. But the God who wins all our love is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who knew Him best has perfectly revealed Him to us as **the Father of glory**, a phrase which adds so much to the Psalmist's "King of glory" (Ps. xxiv. 8, 10). **a spirit of wisdom.** Some would read "the Spirit of wisdom." In any case

the real spirit of wisdom is the gift of the Holy Spirit who guides men into all truth. The apostle who most deeply distrusts "the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor. i. 20) most highly prizes "spiritual wisdom" (Col. i. 9), "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. ii. 7). "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers."

18. **the eyes of your heart.** Plato speaks of "the eye of the soul," and Milton prays: "So much the rather, Thou, Celestial Light, dwell inward, there plant eyes." **the hope of his calling** is the hope related to the calling which He has given us. This is not so much the subjective emotion as the objective prospect; the radiant heavenly hope that is set before us; the beckoning Christian vision of perfection. **riches . . . glory . . . inheritance.** No one knew better than Paul how to make magnificent language express magnificent things. "Our inheritance" (repeated from ver. 14) is now called "His inheritance among the saints,"—the inheritance which is His gift to the saints. Another interpretation, which makes the saints themselves His heritage, on the analogy of "the Lord's portion is His people," is less likely.

19. **his power to us-ward.** His power streaming toward us, and for ever energising on our behalf. In iii. 20 it is called "the power that worketh in us." The same Divine might by which Christ rose victorious from the grave is taking us in hand, so that nothing is impossible. We have all omnipotence behind us, and we cannot fail (cf. Isa. xl. 26-31).

20. **he raised him.** Christianity as a conquering faith reposes on this fact of history. The

N.T. message is distinctively the Gospel of the Resurrection. Christ's rising again from the dead is the most stimulating and uplifting force in the moral life of mankind, for it is the victory of idealism over materialism. It lights for us the lamp of immortality. **made him to sit on his right hand.** On the throne of the universe, as Lord of all. The adoring hosts with songs surround it, and He sits thereon (Rev. iii. 21).

21. **far above all.** The highest place that Heaven affords is His by right. **principalities . . . dominion.** These words were current in the angelology and angelolatry of the time; abstract names for the invisible elemental spirits of heaven and earth (see Col. i. 16). If Paul does not relegate them to the region of myth, he at any rate dethrones them from the place of worship in the human heart. For him there is but one Name that is to be named with Divine honours.

22, 23. **put . . . under his feet.** A reminiscence of Ps. viii. 7, where man is idealised as lord of creation. That conception is first fully realised in Christ, risen, exalted, reigning. **head . . . to the church.** In Paul's epistles the word "church" ranges in meaning from the little company of believers worshipping in a private house, or the single congregation of a town, to the Christian community of a province or country, and finally to the whole brotherhood of believers throughout the world—the Church universal or Catholic. In Ephesians it always has the widest significance. The relation between Christ and His Church is a matter of supreme importance. It is not merely the external association of sovereign and subject, teacher and taught, but the vital, organic relation



of **head** and **body**. Christ is literally the Life of the Church, which is His body, and through which He accomplishes His will. And just as the body can do nothing without the Head, so, we may reverently say, the Head can do nothing without the body. Therefore the Church is also called **the fulness**, or complement, of Christ. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him (Col. ii. 9), and He imparts all that fulness to the Church, which thus becomes His medium of perfect self-realisation. "Such is Christ's love for the Church, that He, as it were, regards Himself as incomplete unless He has the Church united to Him as a body" (Beza). **him that filleth all in all**. The reference is to Christ. He fills all things with all things. The universe is His and the fulness thereof. For other statements regarding His relation to "all things," see Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3.

## Eph. ii. 1-10.

## THE WORKMANSHIP OF GOD.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses  
2 and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to  
the course of this world, according to the prince of the  
power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the  
3 children of disobedience: among whom also we all had  
our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh,  
fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and  
were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.  
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith  
5 he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath  
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are  
6 saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit

7 together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the  
 ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his  
 8 grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For  
 by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of  
 9 yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any  
 man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created  
 in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before  
 ordained that we should walk in them.

He who raised and exalted Christ has in love raised and exalted sinners with Him, saving them not because of any merits of their own but in the wealth of His grace, and preparing them for a life of holiness which He has already prepared for them. This is one of the grandest evangelical passages in the N.T. It abounds in vivid, startling contrasts—death and life, nature and grace, works and faith, wrath and love, this world and the heavenlies, the working of the spirit of evil and the workmanship of God.

1. **And you . . .** This is another of Paul's many broken constructions (*anacoloutha*). In the Greek we do not reach the verb which has slipped from his mind till we get to the 5th verse, where he recovers the lost thread. But the translators have inserted the missing word in the 1st verse. **when ye were dead.** The natural man is in a state of moral and spiritual insensibility, similar to that of a paralysed arm in the body. He is dead to the motives and voices of the spiritual world, just as the true Christian in his turn becomes dead to the motives and voices of the sensual world (Col. iii. 3). **dead . . . ye walked . . . we lived.** The sequence is very striking. Their hearts throbbed, their eyes glistened, their spirits danced in busy scenes of earthly glory and pleasure, love

and hope. They seemed to be bubbling over with vitality. Yet they were dead! (Cf. 1 Tim. v. 6.)

2. **the course of this world**, or this age. There is a drift of opinion, a tide of sentiment, in the epoch on which we have been cast from which none of us can quite escape. "The spirit of the age" is a modern phrase which scarcely conveys the idea, unless we were to think of the *Zeitgeist* as predominantly bad. **the prince of the power of the air**. "That the notion of the air being the dwelling-place of spirits, and specially of evil, was current, appears to be beyond doubt. There is no difficulty in supposing that St. Paul is here alluding to such current notions. Nor are we to suppose that he is conveying any special revelation about the matter" (Abbott). To us moderns the idea of an air-prince inevitably suggests something quite different! **the prince . . . of the spirit that now worketh**. This is a difficult clause. The thought seems to be that there is an impersonal evil spirit that seduces the minds of disobedient men, and that this world-spirit has a personal origin. It is clear that Paul believed not merely in a principle but a prince of evil, a superhuman instigator of rebellion against God, a prince ruling not in absolute kingship, but as a pretender, a usurper. **sons of disobedience**. A Hebrew mode of expression. Compare "sons of iniquity," "sons of light," "sons of perdition." Also, **children of wrath** in the next verse, which means worthy of, or exposed to, wrath, as in such phrases as "a son of stripes," "a son of death."

3, 4. **wrath . . . mercy . . . great love**. The proximity of the words is striking. Pure love and equally pure wrath are next neighbours. Perhaps

nothing is so desiderated in the religion of to-day as the restoration of the idea of wrath. It is so difficult for men to be angry without sinning that we naturally shrink from attributing wrath to God. But who can either love or fear a God who does not care enough for us to be wrathful (with perfect holiness) when we sin, as the most loving father is angry with sons who have been really wicked? Paul believes in a God of wrath *because* he believes in a God of **great love**. The spirit of man is both "consumed and quickened by the glance of God." **we also are Jews, the rest Gentiles.**

5. **quickened us . . . with Christ.** Another expression of the marvellous union between Christ and believers, which is so close that every experience of His has its spiritual analogue in them. They die with Him, and they are quickened (become "quick," or alive) with Him. Then they ascend with Him, and sit in heavenly places with Him, while all the time they remain on this prosaic earth. **have ye been saved.** Salvation is variously viewed in the N.T. as past, present, or future. Here it is regarded as an accomplished fact, never requiring to be repeated, but with abiding issues.

5-8. **by grace . . . exceeding riches of his grace . . . by grace.** Grace, which is God's redeeming love for sinners, is the cardinal fact in Paul's theology. It occurs over a hundred times in his letters. It is his *inevitable* word. Its various aspects are to him the facets of a priceless gem. Merit has no place in salvation, which is from beginning to end **by grace, through faith**. Pride is a mistake as well as a sin; grace precludes all glorying; salvation comes to us as **the gift of God**.

9, 10. **not of works . . . for good works.** No man dreaded good works so much as Paul, and no man loved them more. His mind was perfectly balanced. He saw clearly that while we are not saved *by* good works, we are created in Christ Jesus *for* good works. We do not serve for salvation, we are saved for service. It has been well said by Adolphe Monod that this little word "for" reconciles St. Paul and St. James better than all the commentators. **we are his workmanship.** All Nature is God's handiwork, but the finest products of His skill are sinners made saints. **created us in Christ Jesus** (cf. Gal. vi. 15). Breathing into man the breath of life was scarcely so wonderful as is breathing into sinful man the Holy Spirit. Conversion is the highest kind of creation.

#### Eph. ii. 11-22.

#### CHRIST MAKING AND PREACHING PEACE.

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles  
in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which  
is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;  
12 that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from  
the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the  
covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God  
13 in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes  
14 were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he  
is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken  
15 down the middle wall of partition between us; having  
abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of com-  
mandments contained in ordinances; for to make in  
16 himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that  
he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the

17 cross, having slain the enmity thereby : and came and  
 18 preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them  
 19 one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no  
 more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the  
 20 saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon  
 the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ  
 21 himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the  
 building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple  
 22 in the Lord : in whom ye also are builded together for an  
 habitation of God through the Spirit.

The sweet, dominant note of this passage is peace. Having heard it once, we listen for it again and again, and not in vain. To see the olive branch which a Jew presented to the Gentile world was in those days enough to take one's breath away. In his hot youth Paul would have rejected the idea of a compact between the circumcised and the uncircumcised with unlimited scorn. But a portent has appeared which has, in his own language, slain and abolished the old enmity. It is the Cross. Jew and Gentile come nigh to God, and to one another, through Christ's blood. Both have access in one Spirit to the Father, and in His presence they are reconciled. Christ creates a new manhood, neither Jewish nor Gentile but Christian ; and all believers form one holy temple inhabited by God.

11. **remember that aforetime.** Not inconsistent with the advice to forget the things which are behind (Phil. iii. 13). If you are thinking of the past complacently, forget it ; if humbly and thankfully, cherish the memory (cf. Isa. li. 1). "I often take a dander up and down my unregenerate days," said a Scottish saint. **Circumcision** had once been to Paul a sacramental mark, the sign of

entrance into covenant with God, but by Divine grace he has emancipated himself entirely from that realm of ideas. Instead of a sign in the flesh, made by human hands, he now desires a reality in the spirit, made by the hand of God.

12. **without Christ . . . without God.** The spiritual poverty of the Gentiles seemed to Paul a fivefold deprivation. They were without the Messiah, without the commonwealth of Israel, without the covenants, without hope, without God. Contrast what he says of Israel (Rom. ix. 3-5). The statement that the Gentiles are "without God" is a general one. There were noble exceptions. Paul elsewhere quotes with approval a devout Gentile saying, "For we are also His offspring." But even now a reading of the best that has been said by the religious teachers of Greece only serves to confirm one's sense of the vast superiority of the religious heritage of Israel. **aliens . . . strangers.** In those days it was the Gentiles who were to the Jews undesirable aliens. They were strangers—a familiar civic term—to the theocratic kingdom, outlanders who had no rights and privileges among the chosen people, spiritual inferiors who received at the best but a cold welcome as proselytes of the gate.

13. **far off . . . made nigh** (cf. Isa. lvii. 19). To sin is to go into the far country, to repent is to come nigh again to the Father's House. On the whole the heathen were unquestionably remote from God in comparison with Israel, who had heard the voice, "Draw nigh to Me, and I will draw nigh to you." **nigh in the blood of Christ.** His life-blood is the condition of our acceptance (Matt. xxvi. 28). Every believer becomes like a high

priest entering the holy place of communion with blood not his own.

14. **he is our peace.** "He" is emphatic—He in His own person, He alone. The primary idea is peace between Jew and Gentile, but that of peace between God and man is close at hand. None of the gifts of God come to us apart from Christ, the unspeakable Gift. We ask God to give us truth, life, peace; we receive Christ, and find that **He** is the Truth and the Life, **He** is our Peace. **both one.** Instead of a sharp division there is now a perfect union, all nations forming one family of the living God. **the middle wall.** The figure was probably suggested to Paul by the wall in the Temple area dividing the Court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews. On this wall was inscribed a warning (unearthed only a few years ago) that any man of another nation who passed inside would have himself to blame for the death which would ensue. Paul in imagination sees this wall broken down, as within a few years it was broken down in fact. For a modern parallel one thinks of the wall of partition at the Jews Wailing Place, where for many centuries they cried in vain for entrance. At last a bloodless revolution has come, the gates are open, and the outcasts are admitted inside, just as if the middle wall had suddenly been broken down.

15. **the enmity, even the law.** The apposition of these two expressions is somewhat harsh, but the meaning is clear. The enmity is the racial antipathy between Jew and Gentile. Christ has ended it by abrogating the law, which is the ground of Jewish pride and hostility, and bringing in the new order of grace, which is



equally kind to Jew and Gentile. By drawing to Himself these age-long national foes, by filling them both alike with His Spirit, Christ **creates of the twain one new man**, a wholly fresh type of manhood, which is at once international and ideally human just because it is Christian.

16. **reconcile unto God.** Christ brings Jew and Gentile into right relations to each other by bringing both into right relations to the Father **in one body**, the Church. **having slain the enmity.** How many evils He slew in the hour He was slain! His cross is a two-edged sword with which He kills all envy and strife. It is a magic wand with which He transforms sworn foes into bosom friends.

17. **he . . . preached peace . . . peace.** The repetition has rhetorical force. Christ makes peace (ver. 15), indeed He *is* our peace (ver. 14), before He preaches peace. **he came and preached.** When? After His death and resurrection, in the might of His Spirit, through the ministry of His apostles and prophets. Thus He reached the Gentiles who were **far off**. And by such means He is preaching still. Every true evangelist is an organ-pipe filled with the breath of His Spirit.

18. **our access to the Father.** Only the pure and holy can enjoy God's fellowship. Such is Christ, and such are we who are identified with Him by faith. We have the freedom of children in our Father's house and presence.

19. **the household of God.** This translation retains the idea of a house, but is apt to suggest "servants," which is not the thought. **The family** (consisting of children) is the real meaning. There

is not only a City of God, in which we who were strangers and foreigners are now fellow-citizens with the saints, enjoying the full freedom of the City, but a Family of God, in which we who were wayward and wandering children are now at home with our Father, with never a thought of quitting His presence again.

20. **the foundation.** This may mean the foundation laid by apostles and prophets, or the foundation which consists of apostles and prophets. The second is the likelier meaning, though elsewhere Christ Himself is emphatically called the one foundation (1 Cor. iii. 11). The Church is based on the faith of Christians and the Godhead of Christ (see Matt. xvi. 18). He is here called **the chief corner stone**, which in ancient architecture was regarded as more important than the foundation (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 6). **prophets** are of course N.T. prophets, men inspired and enthused by the new Evangel, not fore-tellers but forth-tellers of God's message to a redeemed world.

21, 22. **each several building.** We have to imagine "an extensive pile of buildings in process of construction at different points on a common plan. The several parts are adjusted to each other so as to preserve the unity of design" (Abbott). The whole **grows** into a symmetrically beautiful sanctuary. There are many churches, and yet one Church, which is the habitation of God in the Spirit. The Christian Jew who is so fascinated by this splendid conception has forgotten the old Temple on Mount Sion, because he sees a new and infinitely more spacious one rising **in the Lord**, resplendent with all the might and majesty of the risen and exalted Redeemer.

Eph. iii. 1-13.

## PAUL'S MISSION TO THE GENTILES.

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you  
2 Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace  
3 of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by  
revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote  
4 afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may under-  
5 stand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in  
other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as  
it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by  
6 the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of  
the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the  
7 gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the  
gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual  
8 working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the  
least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach  
9 among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and  
to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,  
which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in  
10 God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the in-  
tent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly  
places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom  
11 of God, according to the eternal purpose which he pur-  
12 posed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness  
13 and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore  
I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which  
is your glory.

This paragraph is a digression. Paul goes off at a tangent, and does not return to his starting-point till ver. 14. A reference to his imprisonment on behalf of the Gentiles prompts him to enlarge on the commission which he has received to declare to all men the Divine Secret, long hidden but now

revealed, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the Jews, fellow-partakers with them of all spiritual privileges. The passage is intensely interesting as a reflection of Paul's self-consciousness, which combines an almost abject lowness with an amazing loftiness of spirit. He is less than the least of all saints, and yet it is given to him to illuminate by his mission and teaching not only the nations of this world but the highest created intelligences in heavenly places.

1. **I Paul.** We have already come upon this formula in Col. i. 23; Philem. 19. A man may repeat "I" very often without being in the least egoistic, if he is all the while saying, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." **the prisoner of Jesus Christ.** This designation is used, with variations, four times in the Pauline epistles. It is thus that Nero's prisoner prefers to regard and name himself. He is suffering for Christ's cause; his Master has brought him to a Roman prison. So Rutherford used to sign himself "Christ's prisoner in Aberdeen." So Luther was His prisoner in the Wartburg, Bunyan in Bedford. The whole world of letters as well as the Church has reason to thank Him for selecting such men as His prisoners. When the prison doors closed upon them, Heaven opened.

2. Here the construction is broken. Paul is beginning a prayer (see ver. 14), when the word "Gentiles" suggests to him his great commission, and he must needs speak of it. **if ye have heard.** Paul could not have addressed such words to a church with which he was familiar. See Introduction, p. 14. **the dispensation** (see i. 10). Paul is the steward in God's House, the dispenser of His grace to all the Gentiles. **that grace of God**

(so R.V.) was given him not for his own sake, but for the whole world.

3, 4. **by revelation.** A phrase of frequent occurrence in Paul's epistles (see Gal. i. 12, ii. 2). He claims to be an inspired man, to whom Divine secrets have been supernaturally disclosed. His doctrine is not the product of other men's best teaching or of his own strenuous thinking, but of God's direct communications to him (Gal. i. 15, 16). **the mystery . . . the mystery of Christ, which . . . hath now been revealed.** It is God's love of the Gentiles, resulting in their admission to His favour on equal terms with the Jews, that is so named. To us this is a commonplace, but to Paul it was as startling as the discovery of a new world. **as I wrote afore.** Better, "as I have already written above."

5. **his holy apostles and prophets** (cf. ii. 20). This clause forms one of the common arguments against the Pauline authorship of the epistle. The author, it is said, could never have talked of the "holy apostles" if he had been one of them himself; the phrase betrays the conditions of a later age; it has already a Catholic flavour. But in point of fact Paul habitually calls all Christian saints (or holy), and frequently uses the word when he is personally included. He would not in the least object to our saying "St. Paul" if only we would say "St. John Brown" and "St. Peter Jones." It is not a question of man's holiness, but of God's hallowing. To speak of oneself as "consecrated" is to claim no merit, for consecration (except when we abuse the word) is a Divine, not a human act.

6. **fellow-heirs.** The word "fellow" is thrice

used in the verse (R.V.). Paul rejoices in the thought of the goodly fellowship, still so novel and so strange, of Jews and Gentiles. They are all heirs of the same kingdom, members of the same body, partakers of the same promise in **Christ Jesus**.

7. **I . . . a minister**. This thought always moved Paul to adoring wonder. The ministry came to him by **the gift of the grace of God**. His natural endowments, his home privileges, his college education, and especially his conversion, contributed to the result. But it was a Divine call over and above all this that made him a minister. It was **the working of the power of God** within him. One remembers the advice of a great preacher to young men not to become ministers if they can help it! If they are once thrilled by the touch of that Divine Power they cannot help it. They bow to their fate. Woe to them if they preach not, rapture if they do!

8. **less-than-the-least**. It is all one word in Greek, a word which none but Paul could have coined, in which the comparative degree is piled on the top of the superlative. Never was a man more conscious of personal unworthiness than Paul. He would have cheerfully accepted Renan's description of him as "an ugly little Jew," only it was his moral rather than his physical ugliness that troubled him. And yet **unto me was this grace given!** Compare David's words, "What am *I* . . . that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" **the unsearchable riches**. Never till we come to the Pastorals do we find the word "riches" used in the sense of material wealth. Paul delights to think of his spiritual treasures. He is "poor yet making many rich," for he possesses,

and shares with others, all the wealth of Christ, which is unsearchable (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 21).

9. **to make all men see.** Lit., to clear up, or bring to light (cf. 2 Tim i. 10). Paul is calmly conscious that his preaching to the Gentiles is the greatest clearing up of ideas—*Aufklärung*, as the Germans say—that the world has ever seen. It is the disclosing of the Divine Secret of the ages. No wonder Paul was amazed that *he* should be the chosen medium of this vast illumination.

10. **known through the church.** There is also an enlightenment in heaven! The highest created spirits—principalities and powers—are not perfect in knowledge; God has many things still to teach them; and now their time of revelation is come. They are to complete their education by the study of things on earth. The Church—the whole company of believers—is to instruct these students of heaven. She knows better than they can the manifold (or many-coloured) wisdom of God. She can teach them what she has learned by sinning, suffering, and being saved. In her as in a mirror they will see reflections of Divine attributes more brilliant and wonderful than they have ever yet beheld. These are things which “the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. i. 12). From all this we learn that our little planet, with its enthralling spiritual drama, is immeasurably greater in Heaven’s sight than whole solar systems. Bigness is not greatness; mind is the measure of all things.

12. **boldness and access.** In this verse Paul comes quietly back to earth, and feels again for the common chord. Apart from Christ we have no confidence in prayer, unless we are fools who

rush in where angels fear to tread. But in Christ we use the boldness and freedom of children who know that they have the run of their father's house. As another apostle says, "Perfect love casteth out fear."

13. **my tribulations . . . your glory.** The prisoner bids his readers not pity his sufferings too much, even if endured for *their* sake. Looked at in another light, they will all be transfigured. Seen as God beholds them, they are experiences to glory in. Faith sees the martyr's aureole round his head, his crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Eph. iii. 14-21.

#### THE LOVE WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our  
 15 Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven  
 16 and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to  
 the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by  
 17 his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your  
 hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,  
 18 may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the  
 19 breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know  
 the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might  
 20 be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that  
 is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask  
 21 or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto  
 him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all  
 ages, world without end. Amen.

This is the noblest of all the recorded prayers of St. Paul, leading up to one of his grandest doxologies. The power of the Spirit, the indwelling of Christ, the knowledge of His love, the fulness



of God—these are the blessings which he asks for his readers. And then he gives glory to God who can do infinitely more than he or they can either ask or think!

14. **I bow my knees.** His boldness and confidence (ver. 12) do not detract from his profound reverence. Standing was the usual Jewish posture in prayer (Mark xi. 25), kneeling was expressive of unusual emotion.

15. **every family.** The Greek word for “family” (*patria*) comes from the one for “father” (*pater*). Paul’s meaning is that not only the Holy Family in Heaven, but each family on earth, is in the closest connection with the Eternal Father, as the very name indicates. Divine Fatherhood is not a figure of speech, but an eternal reality mirrored in the most common and at the same time most sacred of human relationships.

16. **riches of his glory.** We may well pray for great blessings when we think of the wealth of Him to whom we pray. “None can ever ask too much.” **power through his Spirit.** The Christian is at once a weak man, who even glories in his weakness (2 Cor. xii. 5, 9), and a strong, brave, victorious man, who is filled and thrilled by the might of the Divine Spirit (Acts i. 8).

17. **Christ . . . in your hearts.** It is not a memory, an influence, a doctrine, but the living Christ that dwells in the believer’s heart (cf. Gal. ii. 20; Col. i. 27). Paul is the greatest and the sanest of mystics. Reason, conscience, imagination, heart, and will are all infinitely strengthened by the immanence of the risen Saviour. His real presence is conditioned **by faith**; it is not magical but spiritual. **rooted and grounded.** Here are two

figures. The Christian life is a growth, with love as the soil; and a structure, with love as the foundation. Love is not further defined, but probably it is here both Divine and human, the second emanating from the first. As love is God's first attribute, it must be the radical or basal principle of the whole Christian character.

18. **able to comprehend.** Or, "strong to apprehend." One needs to have a strong soul, keen in spiritual intelligence, to grasp the fact about to be mentioned. The passionate longing for real knowledge is characteristic of the Prison letters. The four dimensions of the thing to be apprehended need not be too laboriously defined—broad as the world, long as eternity, high as heaven, deep as hell. They indicate in general its vastness. But what is this thing, which Paul seems to forget to specify? Probably *love*, which he has just mentioned in the previous verse, and is about to name again in the next. What raises him to such a pitch of wonder is the "huge tenderness" of **the love of Christ.**

19. **know . . . passeth knowledge.** Though this love is so broad and deep and glorious, we may know it with the intuition of the spiritually renewed mind. Every Christian has a real and growing knowledge of Christ's love. And yet we do not, we cannot know it. "God only knows the love of God." It eternally invites, and eternally eludes, our efforts to grasp and to measure it. It satisfies us just because it is transcendent, infinite. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it." **filled with all the fulness of God.** This means filled with God in all His fulness. Emptied of ourselves, we are

filled up to the measure of our faith with His wisdom, love, and power. Some of His saints have been called God-intoxicated men.

20. **exceeding abundantly.** Another of the superlatives in which Paul took such delight. He minted not a few of them as a means of circulating his own stupendous thoughts. God is able to do all that we ask, above all that we ask, abundantly above all that we ask, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think! Nothing is beyond the **power which worketh** not only for us but **in us**, enlarging our capacities to receive all that God has to give. No wonder that the apostle bursts into a fervent doxology, "To Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever!"

#### Eph. iv. 1-16.

#### DIVERSITY OF GIFTS, UNITY OF SPIRIT.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, for- 3 bearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the 4 unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope 5 of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through 7 all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, *When he ascended up on high, he 9 led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.* (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended 10 first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended

is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens,  
11 that he might fill all things.) And he gave some,  
apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists;  
12 and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the  
saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of  
13 the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the  
faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a  
perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness  
14 of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed  
to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,  
by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby  
15 they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love,  
may grow up into him in all things, which is the head,  
16 even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined  
together and compacted by that which every joint  
supplieth, according to the effectual working in the  
measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto  
the edifying of itself in love.

Here we pass from Divine truths and principles to their application. No Christian doctrine has merely a theoretical interest. There is no such thing as an abstract and otiose faith. Creed and conduct, doctrine and duty, faith and fidelity are causally related like tree and fruit, fountain and stream. After a general exhortation to conduct worthy of the Christian vocation, Paul gives perfect expression to his doctrine of the essential unity of the Church, as the one body of Christ, animated by one Spirit, baptized in the name of one Lord, loving one Father in heaven, supplied with a rich variety of gifts for one great purpose—the evolving of a Christlike manhood in every individual believer. It is the most remarkable utterance regarding the universal Church to be found in the whole N.T.

1. **I therefore.** For similar transitions from teaching to exhortation see Rom. xii. 1 ; Col. iii. 5. **the prisoner.** There is a quiet dignity in the words. The writer's imprisonment does not impair, but greatly enhances, his authority. That very fidelity to principle which has brought him so low has exalted him more than ever in the eyes of all the churches. **to walk worthily.** Compare Christ's repeated phrase "worthy of Me" (Matt. x. 37, 38). This epistle contains six emphatic references to the Christian **walk**. We have been created in Christ Jesus for it (ii. 10); it should be in keeping with our vocation (iv. 1); it must be altogether different from that of non-Christians (iv. 17); it is to be Christlike (v. 1-2), transparent (v. 8), and circumspect (v. 15).

2, 3. **lowliness . . . peace.** This garland of graces adorns every true Christian. He is lowly, meek, patient, forbearing, loving, peaceful. Ideally, of course, no human walk is perfectly **worthy** of the gospel. The Christian life is one of **endeavouring** here and attaining hereafter. **the unity of the Spirit.** A wonderful phrase, describing a unity not based on self-interest, not dictated by policy, not ratified by contract; the sacred unity of men diverse in views, temperaments, and inclinations, but all animated, controlled, and subdued by one and the same Spirit. **peace** is **the bond** in which this unity is to be maintained. Not peace at any price, but peace with honour to God.

4-6. **one body . . . one God and Father.** "One" is impressively used seven times. The unity of the Church is established by six other great unities. There is one mystical body animated by

one Spirit, cheered by one Hope, saved by one Faith, ruled by one Lord, purified by one Baptism, loved by one Father. There may be many changing conceptions of each of these realities, but there must be one abiding truth, and the nearer we come to it in thought and life, the more complete must be our Christian unity. **God . . . over all . . . through all . . . in all.** The first expresses His transcendence, the second and third His immanence. God is the infinite Spirit,

“that impels  
All living things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.”

7, 8. **gifts unto men.** The unity of the Church is a unity in diversity. There is no more monotony in the realm of Grace than in that of Nature. When Christ rose and ascended, He was a returning Conqueror, laden with spoils, which He at once began to distribute to His Church. This He did, not indiscriminately, but wisely and carefully. He gave gifts unto men, and His gifts were men. The Church's true wealth, like the nation's, is not its silver and gold, but its noble human lives. **he saith.** Better, “it is said,” “*on dit.*” Some think that “God” or “the Scripture” is to be understood. The quotation is from Ps. lxxviii. 18, but “received gifts among men” is changed into “given gifts unto men.” “St. Paul does not intend either to quote exactly or to interpret, but in the familiar Jewish fashion adapts his passage to his own use, knowing that those of his readers who are familiar with the psalm would recognise the alteration and see the purpose of it” (Abbott).

9. **ascended . . . descended.** The doctrines

of Christ's pre-existence and incarnation are clearly implied here. Some indeed think that "descended into the lower part of the earth" means "descended into Hades." But the more probable meaning is "came down to this lower earth." "The doctrine of a Hades-visit and a Hades-ministry has no obvious relation" to the matter under discussion (Salmond).

10. **above all the heaven.** An allusion to the "seven heavens" of the Jews. Christ is above the seventh. The Son of the Highest takes the highest station. His presence is the glory of the "ninth heaven" of Dante's *Paradiso*. **fill all things** (cf. i. 23). He who has ascended up on high pervades and energises all things with His activity.

11. **he gave apostles . . . teachers.** Parents give their sons to the ministry, their daughters to the mission field, but it is Christ who first gives them, as His best gifts to His Church. **apostles.** The word was not limited to the Twelve, but applied to Paul, Barnabas, James, and others. **prophets.** See ii. 20. **pastors and teachers** were not itinerant but settled ministers, having the double function of shepherding and instructing a local church. One man was a pastor-teacher.

12. **for the perfecting.** Christ gives gifts unto men for the perfecting (or full equipment) of the saints unto the work of ministering with a view to the building up of His body. The clauses are not co-ordinate as in the A.V., but each dependent on the one preceding. Talents are for equipment, equipment for ministering, and ministering for the building up of the Church.

The passage contains no suggestion of a ministerial "order." Every believer is, in the primitive sense of the word—the sense intended here—a **minister** of Christ.

13. **we all attain.** Here is a twofold ideal. (1) **unity** through faith and full knowledge. The causes of division are imperfect faith and imperfect knowledge. The more firmly we believe in Christ and the more definitely we know Him, the more close do we draw to each other. (2) The **perfect manhood** of all believers. Christ has no favourites. He perfects (fully equips) some for the perfecting (full growth) of all. There is something splendidly Pauline, both in conception and expression, in the synonym given here for perfection—"the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If this is the Christian ideal, it is not presumptuous to say to any believer, "Be Christlike." It is only summoning him to fulfil his destiny.

14. **no longer children.** Suggested by "full-grown" in the previous verse. The "perfect man" remains for ever childlike, but has long ceased to be childish. And he is no more **tossed to and fro** on waves of doubt and error (cf. Jas. i. 6). **sleight . . . craftiness . . . wiles.** This expresses Paul's opinion of the teaching of some of his contemporaries, inside as well as outside the Church. It seems to him quite insincere, reminding him of clever conjuring, skilful throwing of dice, sharp practice generally. It finds an easy prey among those who are still **children**, simple and inexperienced.

15. **speaking the truth.** Better, "cherishing truth," *i.e.* Divine evangelical truth. This is to be done **in love**, for the highest truth loses



all its sweetness for ourselves and all its power over others if it is not lodged in a loving heart. **grow up . . . into him.** This is the language of biology. Christ is not merely an outward Example given us for imitation; He is the Type to which the new life within us is to conform. As the acorn mysteriously grows up into the oak, conforming to its type, so the believer grows up into Christ. Before the new birth such growth is impossible; after, it is natural and one might say inevitable.

16. **Christ . . . all the body.** Another figurative statement of the dependence of the Church universal, as Christ's spiritual Body, upon Him as its Head. The vital and organic relation of the members, first to their Head, and then to each other, is the secret of the Body's continual growth in the life-giving element of love.

#### Eph. iv. 17-24.

#### LEARNING CHRIST.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity  
18 of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that  
19 is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lascivi-  
20 ousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye  
21 have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is  
22 in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the  
23 deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This is one of many Pauline passages which bring the old and false life into sharp contrast with the new and true. The marks of the one are vanity, darkness, alienation, ignorance, heart-hardening, insensibility, licentiousness, uncleanness, greediness, corruption, lust, deceit. The marks of the other are truth, righteousness, holiness (cf. Gal. v. 19-23).

17. **I testify . . . in the Lord.** Paul makes an appeal to his readers, the power of which lies in the boldness with which he identifies himself with Christ and speaks in His name. **walk no longer as the Gentiles.** Paul might have exhorted his readers not to walk like the *other* Gentiles, but his view is that they have entirely ceased to be Gentiles. Formerly they were Gentiles in contrast with the Jews; now they are Christians in contrast with the Gentiles. The word "Gentiles" had almost the same taint or stigma as "heathen."

18. **the life of God.** This is also man's true life. The moral and spiritual life to which we are called is not arbitrarily imposed upon us as the mere will of God; it is commended to us as the very life of God, which He personally lives. And the real human tragedy is that we are alienated from this life through our **ignorance**, and that our very ignorance is not innocent. We pity the sorrows of humanity—a refined form of self-pity; but the ultimate truth is that humanity has **hardened its heart** until its light has become darkness. Hardening implies guilt, and humanity

behaves itself as guilty. It has an uneasy conscience; it cannot hide its sense of shame; whenever it pauses to recollect itself, it trembles as a guilty thing surprised.

19. **gave themselves up** (contrast Rom. i. 24, 26, 28). Here the abandonment is ascribed to their own will: "They gave themselves up." A Divine reaction is necessitated by the human choice. If we deliberately make evil our good, His love is thwarted. If He cannot persuade us, He will not compel us. But does He ever cease to say, "How shall I give thee up?" (Hos. xi. 8).

20. **ye did not so learn Christ**. An extreme understatement (called in rhetoric a litotes), making the reader exclaim, "God forbid! we learned Him in exactly the opposite way." Learning Christ is much more than learning about Him; it means coming to know Him as a living personal Saviour and Friend. He is not only the Teacher but the Truth; He does far more than preach, He *is*, the Gospel.

21. **ye heard him**. Not with their outward ears did they (Gentiles) ever hear the Prophet of Nazareth; but in the depths of their soul they heard the risen Christ calling them to arise and follow Him. They were **taught in him**, taught not only by His apostles or evangelists, but in an experience of living fellowship with Himself.

22-24. **put off . . . put on**. The knowledge of Christ always makes a man change his habits, which means, literally, his clothes; habits, good or bad, being the garments of the soul. Here the verbs are both aorists, indicating two sharp, decisive, and simultaneous actions, by which a man casts away the old nature, loathing it as a thing

of corruption, and eagerly puts on the soul's new nature, loving its perfect purity. **lusts of deceit . . . righteousness of truth.** Lusts and lies are bosom friends, righteousness and truth kiss each other. **after God** is a phrase which contains much in little. The new man, the twice-born, is **created** in harmony with God's great idea, re-fashioned in His own image, **in righteousness and holiness**, and will no longer disappoint his Maker.

Eph. iv. 25-32.

**SINS TO BE UPROOTED, GRACES TO BE CULTIVATED.**

- 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.  
 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil.  
 27 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day  
 31 of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Many of those whom Paul was addressing were like fresh converts in some modern mission field, raw recruits in the army of Christ, with everything still to learn. They must be warned against such

elementary sins as lying, bad temper, stealing, filthy and abusive talk, bitterness and malice. They must be exhorted to be truthful, honest, diligent, pure in speech, meek in spirit, kind and forgiving in disposition.

25. **lying . . . truth.** Untruthfulness of all sorts seems to be ingrained in the Oriental character. Paul has a charm which can exorcise the lying spirit. My neighbour and I are both members of the body of Christ, and the right hand never lies to the left. It is impossible that I should deceive the man whom I love in Christ.

26, 27. **angry, and sin not** (Ps. iv. 4). There are times when anger is highly virtuous, and he is a poor creature, neither loving good nor hating evil greatly, who is never righteously indignant. But anger's work is soon done, and the tide of passionate feeling should quickly subside. A day of it is usually more than enough. In the East the new day began at sunset, not in the morning. The advice, therefore, to the angry man is not to "sleep over it," but to put the angry feeling away before the sun goes down. Else how can he pray, "Forgive . . . as we have forgiven"? To brood over wrongs is to be mastered by the spirit of evil, to **give place to the devil.**

28. **steal no more.** This being a moral law of every nation, to fall below the world's standard would dishonour the name of Christ, who so often asked His followers, "What do ye *more* than others?" **working . . . to give.** The anticipated pleasure of being able to help dear friends in need is one of the strongest incentives to labour.

29. **corrupt speech.** The utterance of an impure imagination. To have clean lips we must

“stanch the spring of guilty thought.” The grace of God within us enables us so to speak as to **give grace** to others.

30. **grieve not the Spirit**, who is a Person, the most sensitive in the universe. A look, a tone, a thought may grieve Him, and before we know it the Spirit of joy and peace is gone, and will only return at the sight of our tears.

31, 32. **all bitterness . . . malice**. Christianity charms away all sins of temper. It constrains us to be **kind . . . forgiving**. The Cross that procures our pardon makes us all tender-hearted.

“In the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy.”

#### Eph. v. 1-14.

#### CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;  
2 and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and  
hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to  
3 God for a sweet-smelling savour. But fornication, and  
all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named  
4 among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor  
foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient:  
5 but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no  
whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man,  
who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom  
6 of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with  
vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath  
7 of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye  
8 therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes  
darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as

9 children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all  
10 goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is  
11 acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with  
the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.  
12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are  
13 done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov-  
ed are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make  
14 manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that  
sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give  
thee light.

The forgiving love of God in Christ is the motive and the measure of Christian love. Sins of uncleanness should not even be named among Christians; it is a shame to speak of them; they arouse God's wrath and exclude from His kingdom. Children of light have nothing to do with the works of darkness but to reprove them, to expose them, to let Christ's light flash upon them and destroy them.

1. **followers of God.** Better, "imitators of God." We have to thank the R.V. for this wonderful phrase. The *imitatio Dei* is the highest endeavour of the human mind. The mere thought of its possibility is an ennobling inspiration. Man's ideal is God, nothing lower. His loftiest conduct, in the measure in which it resembles the life of God, is the expression of His true self. Only for God's **dear children**, re-born of His Spirit, is this imitation possible, but for them it becomes a second nature. What a piece of work is a Christian man! In thought and action he can imitate the living and true God.

2. **walk in love.** Every Christian is to be **in love**, living and walking in this element. In the special sense of the word Paul was perhaps never

“in love,” though we really do not know; but in the Christian sense of the word, love was the air which he habitually breathed, witness 1 Cor. xiii. **even as Christ . . . loved.** This verse directs us to imitate the Son as the previous one called us to imitate the Father. It sets before us the perfect example of Christ. It sounds like an echo of His own “new commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you” (John xiii. 34). The Christian motive and standard give the old law of love to one’s neighbour a new significance and power. **loved . . . and gave himself.** Christ loved not in word, but in deed and in truth. His love is interpreted and measured by the Cross. Paul scarcely ever mentions the one without the other, for in his thought they are inseparable. His Gospel is not, “He loved me,” but “He loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20; cf. Eph. v. 25). He regards Christ’s death as **an offering and a sacrifice** to God, and for man. The moral influence of the Cross upon human hearts was not for Christ the primary consideration. His first thought was God. He desired to enable His Father to lavish His love upon sinners without dimming the glory of His holiness. Loving us, whom He knew to be guilty, He offered Himself to God on our behalf, and that oblation has a spiritual fragrance—**an odour of a sweet smell**—which makes it infinitely well-pleasing to God.

3. **as becometh saints.** In the N.T. sense every Christian is a saint (see Col. i. 2), and purity **becomes** a saint as valour a soldier. Concerning a whole class of sins it befits a follower of Jesus to be silent. They are offences which bring a blush to the cheek of innocence. It is



shameful even to speak of them (ver. 12), except it be to **reprove** them (ver. 11). Paul names some of them in this very passage, in order that he may brand them. No one could be more plain and explicit than he in exposing heathen vices, but he cannot write the words and think of the things without a burning feeling of shame. Henry Drummond used to say he felt as if he must change his very clothes after listening to some men's confessions.

4. **rather giving of thanks.** High thoughts expelling low; hallelujahs dulling the ears to satanic ribaldry.

5. **kingdom of God and Christ.** Nothing that defileth can enter it, for it is pure as God is pure. Christ habitually spoke of the kingdom of God, or of Heaven, only rarely of His own kingdom. Paul's linking of the Father's kingdom with the Son's is a striking testimony to his sense of the majesty of Christ. The two realms are one because the two Persons are one (cf. Rev. xi. 15).

6. **empty words.** Paul refers to the perilous sophisms of ultra-spiritual teachers within the Church, who made light of sins of uncleanness, arguing that if the spirit was pure it did not matter what happened to the vile body. In the sacred name of liberty they offered the followers of Jesus a licence to do as they pleased. They used religion to excuse vice. They made their philosophy "procuress to the lords of hell."

7. **Be not . . . partakers with them.** We are not to seek the friendship of those who on any pretext palliate evil. We are to think of them as sinners for whom Christ died, and pray for their conversion, but, be they never so rich, handsome,

and clever, they are enemies of God and must not be our friends.

8, 9. **darkness . . . light.** Those who formerly were not only in the darkness, but themselves darkness visible, are now not only in the light, but themselves **light in the Lord**, shining far into the darkness around them. Both Christ and Christians are the light of the world (John viii. 12; Matt. v. 14). **children of light.** A beautiful Hebrew idiom. Contrast ii. 2, 3 and v. 6. Milton calls light itself the "offspring of Heaven first-born." Every Christian is a child of the light, and every Christian grace a **fruit of the light** (R.V.). This second figure was too original for some of the early copyists, who changed it into "the fruit of the Spirit" (cf. Gal. v. 22).

11. **unfruitful works of darkness.** The figure is maintained. Plants thrive in light and wither in darkness.

12. **done in secret.** Every one who does evil hates the light (John iii. 20). The special reference here is to the hateful orgies of the occult pagan mysteries.

13. **made manifest** (cf. John iii. 20, 21). We expose sin most effectively, not by denouncing it, but by bringing it into contrast with the beauty of holiness. Light reveals darkness, and the mere presence of virtue makes vice hide its head for shame. **everything that is made manifest is light.** This clause is very difficult. How can the hidden vices in question be said with any point to become light? Perhaps we ought to read, "everything that makes manifest is light."

14. **he saith.** Or, "it is said." (Cf. iv. 8.) But what is the source of the quotation? The

words are not found verbatim in Scripture. The nearest approach to them is in Isa. lx. 1. Did Paul's memory fail him when he tried to cite this familiar passage? It is extremely unlikely. It is much more probable that he quotes from some early Christian liturgy. "The words may have been used in the reception after baptism" (Abbott). Conversion is described as an awaking from sleep, an arising from the dead, a coming forth into the light of day (cf. Luke i. 78).

Eph. v. 15-21.

THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but  
16 as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.  
17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the  
18 will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine,  
19 wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking  
to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,  
singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;  
20 giving thanks always for all things unto God and the  
21 Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting  
yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

For the seventh and last time Paul exhorts his readers to think of their "walk." Let them be careful and wise, eager to make the most of time, and endeavouring to know the Lord's will. Instead of the delusive joys of the wine-cup, let them seek the exhilaration of the Holy Spirit and the rapture of song. And let them ever be thankful and humble.

15. **circumspectly.** Or, "carefully." The adverb goes with "look" rather than with "walk." Careful eyes make sure feet. **unwise . . . wise.** The

same apostle who so frequently depreciates worldly wisdom, ardently praises the wisdom which consists in "understanding what the will of the Lord is."

16. **redeeming the time.** "Making your market to the full from the opportunity of this life" (Ramsay). The chance of doing good in evil days is so precious that no price is too high to pay for it. If we cannot purchase the privilege of serving Christ without bartering our treasures, let us never grudge the expense (see Matt. xiii. 45). Buy nothing in the market of Vanity Fair, but buy truth and time in God's great Exchange.

18. **drunken . . . filled.** Every man seeks exhilaration. He loves to have his feelings excited, his imagination fired, his spirit thrilled. The drink habit is the perversion of a natural instinct. It is a fool's way of drowning care and rising victorious over the ills of life. Intoxication is a parody of inspiration. Wine can never do the work of the Spirit of God in the body and soul of man. But let every believer be filled with the Spirit, intoxicated with God, and he at once realises the power of a holy enthusiasm to quench the passion for sensuous excitement, as a great fire puts out a little one.

19. **psalms, hymns, songs** (see Col. iii. 16). The reference is rather to singing in social and domestic circles than in Church gatherings. The Hebrew psalms, the Christian hymns, the spiritual odes of experience, are to make all life musical. If we have **melody in the heart**, so that "our secret souls a holy strain repeat," we go even to life's battles like soldiers marching to martial

strains. We can "make life, death, and the vast forever, one grand sweet song."

20. **thanks always for all things.** This is still more emphatic than the words of Paul's earliest epistle, "in everything give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 18). There is no room for murmuring in the Christian life. All things are somehow the expression of our Father's love. "I worship thee, sweet will of God."

21. **the fear of Christ.** This is doubtless the correct reading; all the best MSS have it. But it is so singular that the perplexed copyists changed it into the familiar phrase, "the fear of God." The meaning is that Christ is not only to be loved as the Redeemer of our souls, but feared as the Judge of our daily lives. "The fear of the Lord" (*i.e.* Christ) is a motive of subduing power (2 Cor. v. 11). Here it is used as an incentive to humility in our intercourse with our fellow-Christians.

#### Eph. v. 22-33.

### HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as  
 23 unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife,  
 even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the  
 24 saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject  
 unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in  
 25 every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ  
 26 also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he  
 might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by  
 27 the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious  
 church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;  
 28 but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought  
 men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that

29 loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet  
 hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it,  
 30 even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his  
 31 body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall  
 a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined  
 32 unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a  
 great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the  
 33 church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular  
 so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she  
 reverence her husband.

The apostle gives special injunctions to wives and husbands. Wives owe subjection to their husbands, and husbands love to their wives. The relation is compared to that of Christ and the Church. As Christ is Head of the Church, so the husband is head of the wife; and as Christ loves the Church, so the husband is to love his wife.

22-24. **Wives, be in subjection . . . subject in everything.** Add to this the words in ver. 33, "and let the wife see that she **fear her husband.**" Cf. Col. iii. 18. Here the apostle's thoughts are those of the ancient world, Jewish and Gentile. He shares to some extent the universal Oriental conception of the natural inferiority of woman to man. He confirms the ideas of his time. The theory of the subjection of woman is one which the twentieth century is keenly scrutinising. Woman's "lord and master" is a creature of the past. Her obligations are not subjection and fear, but the same reverence, confidence, and love which are her own due. Husband and wife are not superior and inferior, but equals in Christ Jesus.

23. **being himself the saviour.** Paul calls attention to the fact that the analogy between Christ as Head of the Church and the husband as

head of the wife fails in one important point. Christ is the Saviour of the body, that is, the Church; in this respect He is alone and incomparable. Here the word **saviour** occurs for the first time in the Pauline epistles. Only once again (Phil. iii. 30) do we meet it till we come to the Pastoral Epistles, where it is applied to the Father more often than the Son.

25. **love . . . even as Christ.** In this ideal there is nothing relative to time and place. It is absolute; no higher is conceivable. Conjugal love finds its motive and measure in Christ's love of His Church. It is no violent delight with violent end. It is as pure and spiritual as it is warm and passionate. "It is not Time's fool; it hath the quality of everlastingness." "Many waters cannot quench it." **Christ loved . . . and gave himself** (cf. Gal. ii. 20). Paul cannot dissociate the love of Christ from Calvary. It is the Saviour's dying love—sacrificing and redeeming—that has such tremendous driving power in the life of humanity (see 2 Cor. v. 14, 15). From this passage we learn that the Cross wins its greatest triumphs in the Christian home.

26, 27. **sanctify it.** "It" rather detracts from the beauty of this exquisite passage. Substitute "her" four times, to keep the charm of the figure. The Church is regarded as Christ's bride. He loves her, purifies her, adorns her, and finally presents her, glorious, immaculate, fair in eternal youth, "without spot" of sin, "or wrinkle" of age, "or any such thing" (see Rev. xix. 7, 8). **the washing of water.** Lit., "the laver of water." Christ cleanses the Church symbolically with **water**, spiritually with **the word**. There is no

occasion to read even the beginning of a sacramentarian doctrine into these words.

28, 29. **as their own bodies.** Even as Christ loves the Church which is His mystical body, so the husband is to love his wife who has, in the same spiritual sense, become his body, **his own flesh** (ver. 29), identified with **himself** (vers. 28, 33).

31. See Gen. ii. 24.

32. **This mystery is great.** The mystery is (probably) the sacred union of the Bridegroom and the Bride, with which marriage is compared. Here the Vulgate reads, "*Sacramentum hoc magnum est,*" which led the Roman Church to regard marriage as a sacrament. **I speak** is often used by Paul with the sense of "I mean."

Eph. vi. 1-9.

### CHILDREN AND PARENTS, SLAVES AND MASTERS.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right.  
 2 Honour thy father and mother ; which is the first com-  
 3 mandment with promise ; that it may be well with thee,  
 4 and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers,  
 provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in  
 5 the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be  
 obedient to them that are your masters according to the  
 flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart,  
 6 as unto Christ ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers ;  
 but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from  
 7 the heart ; with good will doing service, as to the Lord,  
 8 and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing  
 any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord,  
 9 whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the



same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Children owe obedience to their parents, slaves to their masters. The children of Christian parents are in the Lord, and are to be trained according to His principles. Bond-servants have their labour dignified and hallowed by these great thoughts : they owe obedience to Christ, they are servants of Christ, they can do the will of God, they can render service to the Lord, and they will receive their reward from the Lord. Masters are to remember that they have a Master who has no favourites.

1. **obey . . . in the Lord.** Paul is familiar with the idea that every Hebrew child was an heir of the blessings of the Old Covenant, and he assumes that the children of Christians are in the Lord, *i.e.* in Christ. They belong to Him, they have been united to Him, even before their baptism, which is the symbol of their union. **this is right.** In harmony both with natural law and with revelation. The Holy Child Jesus was subject to His parents (Luke ii. 51).

2. **with promise.** If the reference is to the commandments of the Decalogue, the fifth is the only one which has a promise appended to it. But the Ten, which were doubtless first learned, formed a preface to many others, some of which were commandments with promise.

3. **on the earth.** This takes the place of the O.T. words, "in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. xx. 12). There is one Hebrew term for "land" and "earth." The apostle shows

how untrammelled his spirit is by changing a territorial promise into a world-wide one. He knows well that the Divine Father means to bless all His children.

4. **provoke not.** "Perhaps it is some terrible family scene that made Paul so keenly alive to the duty owed by a father to his children. Probably nothing in family life makes a more awful and lasting impression on a sensitive mind than a scene where a respected and beloved parent makes a demand beyond what love or duty permits, and tries to enforce that demand by authority and threats. If Paul had to face such a scene, we can appreciate the reason why he lays so much stress on the duty of parents to respect their children's just feelings. According to our conjecture Paul had good cause to know the harm that parents may do by not reasonably considering their children's desires and beliefs" (Ramsay).

5. **Slaves, be obedient.** The words are addressed to Christian slaves—men and women—who have become spiritually free. It is hard for them to be told that their obligations to their masters, Christian or heathen, remain absolutely unchanged. The N.T. preaches no immediate social revolution. It does not denounce slavery as it denounces drunkenness and immorality. It dreads anarchy, it loves order. It does not lay the axe at the root of the upas tree, but it does something more wonderful: it creates a new atmosphere in which the tree withers and dies. **fear and trembling.** Many contexts prove that this phrase expresses no more than that earnest, anxious desire to do one's very best which animates all conscientious servants. It does not mean the

ignoble feeling of slavish terror (see 2 Cor. vii. 15; Phil. ii. 12).

6, 7. **eyeservice.** Contrast young Milton's resolve to live "as ever in my great Taskmaster's eye." **men-pleasers.** Compare the apostle's indignant question in Gal. i. 10, "Am I seeking to please *men*?" All servants begin to work with a new spirit as soon as they resolve to be God-pleasers, "doing service, **not** unto men."

8. **shall receive again.** All faithful service is recognised, remembered, and recompensed by the Divine Master. Fidelity receives its present reward, inward and spiritual if not outward and material, and in the Great Day it will receive its final reward—entrance into the joy of the Lord (Matt. xxv. 21, 23).

9. **the same things.** "All things whatsoever ye would that men (here slaves) should do to you, do ye (masters) also to them" (Matt. vii. 12). Treat them with the same respect and affection which you expect to receive from them. They are not "animated tools," as Aristotle said; they are "brothers beloved" (Philem. 16). This precept, if observed in the spirit, would of course lead straight to manumission; for what master, if he had a taste of slavery, would not long to be free? Thus the leaven began to work, which was ere long to change the whole social system of the ancient world.

Eph. vi. 10-20.

### THE ARMOUR OF GOD.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the  
11 power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God,  
that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against  
principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the  
darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in  
13 high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour  
of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,  
14 and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having  
your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-  
15 plate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the prepara-  
16 tion of the gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield  
of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery  
17 darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation,  
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God :  
18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the  
Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and  
19 supplication for all saints ; and for me, that utterance may  
be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to  
20 make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am  
an ambassador in bonds : that therein I may speak boldly,  
as I ought to speak.

Seductions to sin come to us not only from this visible world, but from an invisible world of malignant spirits. We have to maintain a conflict with forces of evil. While we live, temptations will not die. How shall we win our battle? By wearing the panoply of God and praying at all seasons in the Spirit. For all saints Paul desires supplication, and makes a pathetic appeal on his own behalf, that as an imprisoned ambassador he may speak with boldness.

10. **be strong.** The Christian's moral power (his *dunamis* or dynamic energy) is really spiritual power. It is the strength of union with Christ, who was victorious in life's whole battle, and whose conquering might becomes ours through faith (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 9).

11. **whole armour.** The Greek word is *panoplia*, whence our "panoply" (see Luke xi. 22). The Eternal City was nothing if not military, and Paul spiritualises a brilliant figure that flashed before his eyes every hour of the day—the full-armed Roman soldier. He thinks of an armour of celestial metal and tempering which the Christian soldier needs to wear. There is a striking passage on the Divine panoply in the "Book of Wisdom" (v. 17) which may have been familiar to the apostle.

**the wiles.** Lit., the methods.

12. **flesh and blood.** Earthly, human tempters, in contrast with invisible foes. **world-rulers.** Great kings were thus magniloquently described in Rabbinical literature. Here the reference is to demoniacal powers. **in the heavenly places.** Some read, "For we wrestle . . . in the heavenly places," which are already entered by faith. Clearly, however, it is not the wrestlers, but the hosts of evil, who are located in the heavenlies. This is a very unusual conception, parallels to which are, however, found in some pre-Christian literature, especially in the "Book of the Secrets of Enoch."

13. **in the evil day.** Any time of fierce temptation. On the day of His betrayal Jesus said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Our conduct in some day of trial will fix our destiny. **to withstand . . . to stand.** To withstand in the time of attack, to stand steady and ready always. As the danger is perpetual, the Christian soldier must be perpetually on the alert, never off his guard.

14-17. The pieces of the armour of God are **truth**, the believer's own sincerity and simplicity; **righteousness**, alike of status and of character, imputed and imparted; **readiness** to go and preach

the gospel of peace; **faith**, the active principle of the Christian life; **salvation**, Divine deliverance from the guilt and power of sin; and **the word of God**, which was Christ's own weapon in His spiritual conflicts. With all this we are braced, covered, shod, shielded. Our weapons of defence are numerous, our single weapon of offence is the sword of the Spirit. The one part of the Christian soldier's person for which there is no protection is his back; it is to need none. He must have "breast and back as either should be." **fiery darts** were used in ancient warfare; they were darts or arrows tipped with tow, dipped in pitch, and set on fire. The tow, the pitch, and the fire have all their analogues in our moral conflicts.

18. **all prayer**. The four "all's" in this verse are characteristic of Paul—all prayer, all seasons, all perseverance, all saints (cf. Phil. i. 3, 4). His eager spirit is satisfied with nothing less than the maximum of everything. **Prayer in the Spirit** is the antithesis of praying with "vain repetitions" (Matt. vi. 7). The Spirit creates the atmosphere of real communion and intense devotion.

19, 20. **with boldness**. Moral courage; lit., "outspokenness." Although Paul has spoken so bravely for Christ in many lands, he yet feels, perhaps more than ever, the need of the prayers of his brethren, to inspire him with confidence when he opens his mouth in the capital of the world. He has a clear conception of how he **ought to speak**. The spirit of the ambassador of Christ is almost as important as his message. Not with bated breath and whispering humbleness, but with the fearless eloquence of conviction, is he to make known **the mystery of the gospel**.

Eph. vi. 21-24.

## PAUL'S MESSENGER—FAREWELL.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do,  
 Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the  
 22 Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have  
 sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know  
 23 our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. Peace  
 be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the  
 24 Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them  
 that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

21. **ye also.** The passage about Tychicus is almost the same as Col. iv. 7. Only, **also** is added. The conjunction has critical value, linking as it does the two epistles together, and indicating that Colossians was written just before Ephesians. **in the Lord.** This is the last of many uses of this phrase in the epistle. Not only the Christian brotherhood and ministry, but all spiritual blessings and offices, are fruits of the mystic union between Christ and His Church. "In the Lord" indicates both the sphere and the atmosphere in which every privilege is to be enjoyed and every task to be fulfilled.

23-24. **Peace . . . faith.** Paul shows his originality in his benedictions as in everything else. They never become stereotyped. This one is in the third person instead of the second—"all them" instead of "you"—which harmonises well with the theory that the letter is addressed not to one community but to a circle of churches. **love our Lord.** This is what He desires first, most, and always. "Do you love Me?" is His question (John xxi. 15). Love alone slakes His thirst. **love . . . in**

**sincerity.** This does not accurately render the great word with which the epistle ends, and the "in uncorruptness" of the R.V. is intolerably prosaic. "Imperishably," "unchangeably," or "everlastingly," is the idea. Our love of Christ, like His love for us, is to be a never-withering flower.



Phil. i. 1, 2.

### SALUTATION.

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the  
2 bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **servants.** Gr., “bond-servants.” The word implies Christ’s ownership of believers, and their obligation to do His will. But the servile element is quite eliminated. Christ’s service is perfect freedom—the obedience of sons (Rom. viii. 15). Paul feels no need to assert his apostolic authority in addressing this best-loved church. He is the servant of Christ like the lowliest believer. **all the saints.** See Col. i. 2. **bishops and deacons.** “Bishops” are literally those who have the *oversight*. There were several of them in one church. “Deacons” are those who *serve* the church. The Philippian Church, as the oldest in Europe, had more time than others to develop her institutions. But there can be no doubt that “the Pauline epistles, omitting for the present the Pastorals, exhibit Church polity in a rudimentary and fluid state in which official designations are not clearly defined, and the offices themselves have not taken permanent and definite shape” (Vincent).

Phil. i. 3-11.

## THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,  
 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making re-  
 5 quest with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from  
 6 the first day until now ; being confident of this very thing,  
 that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform  
 7 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  
 8 grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after  
 9 you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray,  
 that your love may abound yet more and more in know-  
 10 ledge and in all judgment ; that ye may approve things  
 that are excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without  
 11 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.

Paul never wrote to any church with a gratitude so warm and strong as that which wells up within him when he addresses the Philippians. He always remembers them with joy, they dwell in his heart, and he yearns for intercourse with them. He prays that they may grow towards perfection in love, knowledge, righteousness.

3, 4. **all . . . always . . . every . . . all.** This exuberance is Pauline. The writer is anything but a cold logician. He is a man of the warmest, tenderest feeling. **with joy.** This is the keynote of the epistle. "Joy" and "rejoice" occur ten times. The prisoner in Rome rejoices greatly (iv. 10), and again and again he bids his

church in Philippi rejoice. Ten years have passed since he founded that church, and his happy relations with it have never been disturbed. It has been a ceaseless comfort to him; and it is still his joy and crown (iv. 1).

5. **fellowship in.** Rather, "fellowship unto," *i.e.* in furtherance of, the gospel. Paul and the Philippians, though far apart, have been working together in a great cause. He delights to think of them as comrades. "Fellowship" doubtless refers especially to the pecuniary aid which they have several times sent him, but he thinks rather of that communion of spirit which has prompted their generosity.

6. **begun . . . perfect.** The **good work** began at the time of their conversion, and it was going on. From first to last it was Divine, and as such it could not stop short of perfection. God is not content with half-done work; He will "perfect that which concerneth us." Therefore we who co-operate with Him must not be easily satisfied. Our positive and comparative degree must rise to the superlative; our good be crowned with the best. "That to perfection's sacred height we nearer still may rise." "I shall be satisfied . . . with Thy likeness." **the day of Jesus Christ.** The time of His second coming (*parousia*, presence); "the day when the Lord reveals Himself in His fulness to the world, when He judges evil and fulfils His great purpose of redemption among men" (Davidson). The apostles expected that day to dawn in their lifetime.

7. **in my heart.** This is the language of love. Paul was a true Greatheart. Multitudes found shelter and comfort in his sympathy. **partakers**

**with me.** The Philippians cast in their lot with Paul. By their warm affection and generous gifts they identify themselves, as far as distance allows them, with the cause for which he suffers. While he languishes in a Roman prison, experiencing the law's delays, they are with him in spirit, as if sharing his bonds. **defence** is to be taken in the strict legal sense. But it is the gospel, rather than Paul, that is on the defence. He fully realises the importance of his trial before the highest earthly tribunal. As protagonist of the Church, as defender of the faith, he aims at the **confirmation** of the gospel in the Roman Empire. He wishes it to be recognised as a legitimate religion, which will be a step towards its adoption as the one universal and absolute religion.

8. **I long for you.** With that peculiar affection which warms the heart of a Christian minister. It is a longing "in the tender mercies of Jesus Christ," as if one's own personality were merged in that of the great Lover of souls.

9-11. **I pray.** Another of those wonderful prayers which so enrich Paul's letters, making him, after our Lord Himself, the best master of the art of prayer. A man's earnest and fervent petitions clearly reveal his ideals. He wrestles with God for things which he really desires for himself and others. Paul's highest wish for the Philippians is that the love which is already their distinction—not a blind but a clear-sighted love, a sure guide to things excellent—may so increase that their spirit shall always be sincere, their example innocuous, their life full of fruit to God's glory. **abound** is a favourite Pauline word, used four times in this epistle, and often elsewhere. The

grace of God hath abounded . . . the sufferings of Christ abound . . . that your love may abound. "Love alone knows no excess." **without offence** may mean either "without stumbling" or "without causing others to stumble." **fruits** should be "fruit." Compare "the fruit of the Spirit," Gal. v. 22. The Christian graces form a unity, a single luscious cluster of ripe fruit.

Phil. i. 12-26.

### CHRIST IS PREACHED.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things  
which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the  
13 furtherance of the gospel ; so that my bonds in Christ are  
14 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  
15 fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife ;  
16 and some also of good will : the one preach Christ of  
contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to  
17 my bonds : but the other of love, knowing that I am  
18 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 rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.  
19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through  
your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,  
20 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  
21 body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live  
22 is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this  
is the fruit of my labour : yet what I shall choose I wot  
23 not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to  
24 depart, and to be with Christ ; which is far better : never-  
25 theless 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; 26 that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

This passage finely illustrates Paul the aged's breadth of vision and tolerance of spirit. He recognises the soul of good in things evil, the bright side of dark providences, the root of the matter in very imperfect characters, the service rendered to God even by jealous and spiteful rivals. In Rome, in prison, he rejoices, and will rejoice, for Christ's cause is prevailing.

**12. the things which happened unto me.** Lit., "the things concerning me," my circumstances, my prison experiences. These have tended to the **progress of the gospel.** If the first natural feelings of the Philippians who have heard of his captivity have been distress and anxiety, let their next feeling be gratitude, for the cause which seemed to be receiving a set-back is really advancing by leaps and bounds. Such indications of progress accord far better with the Roman than the Cæsarean imprisonment, and the references to the Prætorian Guard (ver. 13) and Cæsar's household (iv. 22) seem quite conclusive for the Roman authorship.

**13. in Christ.** The R.V. gives these words their right place in the sentence: "My bonds have become manifest as being in Christ." The real meaning of the charge against him has been revealed. He is no ordinary criminal, no political agitator. He is in prison for his faith in Christ. And his noble bearing as a captive is commending that faith to all with whom he comes in contact. **in**

**the palace** (A.V.) is a translation that still has some defenders. While no native Roman would ever use the word *prætorium* in this sense, it is suggested that a provincial like Paul might make this mistake! But the rendering in the R.V. is much better. The Prætorian Guard consisted of 10,000 picked men, and not a few of them were hearing the name of Christ. Mommsen and Ramsay suggest that the word refers rather to "the judicial authorities" before whom Paul has already appeared; but this idea lacks corroboration.

14. **waxing confident.** Paul's arrival in Rome, even as a prisoner, thrills the church there like the coming of a general to a weak and dispirited army. His mere presence has a quickening and reassuring effect. Despondency, doubt, and fear are put to shame by his invincible spirit.

"Languor is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not in your brow.  
                                  At your voice,  
Panic, despair, flee away."

15-17. **envy and strife . . . faction.** Some preached Christ in a spirit of rivalry. They were moved by jealousy to publish Love Divine! They were slack in the work of evangelising till they received this strange and sinister inspiration. We cannot suppose that they were Judaisers. If they had been, Paul must have condemned instead of commending their preaching. They were orthodox men who loved the pre-eminence. They preached not because of zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, or a desire to save souls, but for the purpose of throwing another preacher

into the shade. They thought it would be a bitter thing for Paul in prison—it would add affliction to his bonds—to hear of their success. They did not know that great soul. He rejoices in their preaching. He disregards their motives and thinks only of their message. They are making Christ's name to resound through the city, and that is enough for him. If there are many greater preachers in Rome than Paul, no one is so glad as Paul. How Christ will be magnified!

“Lo, I rejoice  
In thy success as thou! Let our God's praise  
Go bravely through the world at last! What care  
Through me or thee?”

19. **to my salvation.** Paul is still seeking salvation! Not in the narrow sense of the word—the forgiveness of sin. He received that long ago, but he is not satisfied. He is pricked with a holy discontent. He seeks a full, perfect, final salvation. **the supply.** It is difficult to decide between the two renderings, “the supply which the Spirit gives,” and “the supply which is the Spirit.” Both are grammatically correct, and each gives a good sense.

20. **ashamed,** in the sense of “shamed,” put to shame by others. There is no fear of Paul's ever being ashamed to own his Lord. But he is about to be tried again, and he wants to comport himself with such calm confidence before his judges that, instead of being covered with shame, he may, living or dying, glorify Christ. His keen sense of personal honour is rooted in his single-minded desire for the honour of his Lord. Enough if he can be sure that “whatever record leaps to light, *HE* never shall be shamed.”



21. **to live is Christ.** "Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ." **to die is gain.** The natural thought is that death ends all. "*Linquenda domus et tellus et placens uxor,*" sighs Horace. The rest is darkness. No, says Paul, to die is gain. For to die, as to live, is Christ!

22. **if to live.** The construction of this verse is doubtful. The R.V. and its margin show the possible renderings of the Greek words. The sense seems to be, that Paul would desire death as gain, unless the proper result of his labours should be his continuance in life, and then he would be in a dilemma.

23. **in a strait.** Hemmed in between two alternatives. To the apostle life and death are both desirable things. He is willing to depart, not because he sighs for rest, but because to die is to be with Christ; and willing to remain, because life means labour for the welfare of those whom he loves. The shepherd is ready to stay with his flock, the pilot at his wheel, the sentry at his post. **to depart.** Literally, to unmoor one's vessel and put out to sea, or to strike one's tent and silently move away (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 6.). **to be with Christ.** Paul no longer thinks of death as a sleep till the second advent (1 Thess. iv. 14). It is an immediate entrance into the joy of his Lord. The upper room of the Father's House, with the glorious Presence, the beatific Vision, is **very far better** than anything on earth.

"We bow our heads at going out, we think,  
And enter straight another golden chamber of the King's,  
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier."

25. **I know.** This is not an inspired prophecy,

but a personal conviction. Christ's Church still needs the apostle, and he is immortal till his work is done.

Phil. i. 27-30.

### THE LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL.

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: 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  
28 gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you  
29 of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also  
30 to suffer for his sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

There is a manner of life, a style of living, that is worthy of the gospel, giving fitting expression to its principles in the sphere of duty. The notes of this life are steadfastness and unity of spirit, activity on behalf of the gospel, courage in the face of opposition. The heroism which God gives to those who toil and suffer for Him is a prophecy of their final salvation.

27. **manner of life.** Literally, "Only live-as-citizens worthily of the gospel." The corresponding noun, "citizenship," or citizen-life, is found in iii. 20. If you are citizens of the eternal kingdom of God, live up to, in harmony with, this great conception. "What manner of persons ought ye to be?" **one spirit . . . one soul.** Paul does not make fine psychological distinctions, but uses popular language. This is the first of several exhortations to unity in the Philippian Church. There seems to have been some slight clashing of opinions and

crossing of wills among a few of its members. Paul rallies the whole Church to contend for something far higher than little personal victories—to strive for **the faith of the gospel**. “Faith” has here its usual meaning of personal trust in Christ as the Saviour, which is the active principle of the whole Christian life. Not till we come to the Pastorals do we find the word used in the sense of an objective faith, a formulated creed.

28. **the adversaries.** Heathen opponents. **token of perdition . . . salvation.** The heroism of the saints is itself a prophecy or omen of the issue of their conflict. The very spirit in which they fight is an indication that they are on the winning side and their adversaries doomed to disaster. Faith must be triumphant, it must issue in **salvation**, final and complete, which is meanwhile a future boon for “saved” men.

29. **granted . . . to suffer.** A paradox. God rewards the faithful by giving them the opportunity and prerogative of suffering. Adversity, as Bacon said, is the blessing of the N.T. A brave soldier counts it the highest honour to be sent into the fighting line, where the dangers are greatest and wounds are most plentiful.

30. **the same conflict.** A metaphor of the arena. Christians are God’s athletes, wrestling (lit. “agonising”) in the power of faith and overthrowing all their spiritual foes.

#### Phil. ii. I-II.

### THE MIND OF CHRIST JESUS.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any

2 bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded,  
 having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.  
 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in  
 lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than them-  
 4 selves. Look not every man on his own things, but every  
 5 man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you,  
 6 which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of  
 7 God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but  
 made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form  
 8 of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and  
 being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and  
 became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.  
 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given  
 10 him a name which is above every name: that at the name  
 of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and  
 11 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.

This splendid passage on the Person of Christ is not part of a theological discussion. It emerges naturally in the course of a pathetic plea for harmony of spirit, brotherly love, lowliness of mind. These graces are commended, not by moral rhetoric, but by a simple, resistless appeal to the supreme example of Christ. He who was the Highest stooped to be the lowest of all. He emptied Himself of His Divine condition. Humanity, service, obedience unto death, the shame and anguish of the Cross, were the degrees of His descent. God has rewarded His humiliation with an exaltation above all creatures, and a Name which commands universal homage.

1. Paul returns to his earnest plea for that unity of spirit which is sister to lowliness of mind (i. 27, ii. 3). He appeals first to certain invariable

concomitants of genuine faith, which cannot but tend to foster these graces. There is a comfort, a consolation, a fellowship, a compassion, which are in their very nature self-forgetful, social, unifying. In the measure in which they are active, they weld a church into a true and strong brotherhood.

2. **my joy.** Pastoral joy. Paul's happiness in his Philippian Church is already great, and they can fulfil it—absolutely perfect it—by unity and harmony of spirit. They will not refuse him this joy; they cannot grieve his spirit. Such is his second plea—a boldly personal one, which he knows he has earned the right to urge. **same . . . same . . . one . . . one.** Paul uses the tautology of earnestness. Every Christian has his individual characteristics, and no man is of much use to the Church unless he has a mind, a will, an ideal of his own. Yet all Christians are animated by one and the same Spirit. "We have the mind of Christ."

3. **faction and vainglory.** Personal ambition and vanity should have no place in the society of Jesus. The greatest is he who humbles himself as a little child. **lowliness of mind.** Augustine called humility the first, second, and third Christian grace. In classical Greek the word was always used contemptuously for meanness or abjectness of spirit. Christianity gave it a new ethical content, making it the expression of that new spirit which came into the world with Christ—the lowliness which is the condition and the index of true greatness (see Matt. xi. 29).

5. **this mind.** The Christian is one who has, in the highest sense, come to his right mind. This is the mind of Christ, who is every man's

true self. Animated by His Spirit, we at once begin the realisation of our ideal manhood.

6. **form of God.** The word "form" signifies both reality and appearance. In His pre-incarnate state Christ was really God, and He was manifested as God, not yet to man, but to spiritual intelligences. **a prize.** A thing to be grasped at, violently and prematurely seized. It will not do to interpret this as meaning, "He counted not equality with God *a thing to be held fast.*" It is not a question of retaining but of attaining. The prize is still in the future. It has to be won. Christ would not at once claim the value of God among men; He would not compel them straightway to fall down and worship Him as Divine. He would labour and suffer and wait. His Divine honours must not be snatched before the time; they must come to Him at the end and as the reward of a career of self-renunciation. He would take no royal road, no short cut, to the lordship of human hearts (see Matt. iv. 1-10). As if the highest place were not already His by right, He would win it by lowly love and perfect sacrifice.

7. **emptied himself.** Not of His Divine nature, but of the glories and prerogatives of God. "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see. Mild, He lays His glory by." **form of a servant.** As above, the word "form" again implies that He was what He seemed to be—now a servant, or rather a bond-servant. **the likeness of men.** "Likeness" expresses similarity without sameness, which is here a most important distinction. He was man, but with a mysterious difference. His manhood was not His whole self. It did not exhaust His significance. The very fact that He

habitually called Himself the Son of Man indicated a consciousness of something far higher and grander.

8. **in fashion as a man.** "In appearance," in outward guise, in what appealed to the senses, He was a man. There was no aureole round His head, no Divine form or comeliness. **obedient.** That is, unto God, whose will it was that He should suffer. **the cross.** It is now the beautiful symbol of the religion of holiness and love. But in ancient minds it aroused the same feelings of revulsion and horror as the gibbet does in ours. "Far be the very name of the cross," cried Cicero, "not only from the bodies of Roman citizens, but from their imagination, eyes, and ears!"

9-11. **exalted him.** By the valley of humiliation He came to the highest celestial altitudes. This is the finest illustration of His own words in Matt. xxiii. 12. **the name.** The great Name given to Christ was THE LORD. In O.T. Greek this was the glorious Divine Name, taking the place of the Hebrew "Jahveh," which came to be regarded as too sacred for human lips to utter. In the very first age of the Christian Church it was transferred by all believers—many of them passionate monotheists—to the crucified and risen Christ. It was God's purpose, they believed, that every tongue should praise Him and acknowledge Him to be the LORD! This is Divinity indeed.

Phil. ii. 12-18.

### WORKING OUT SALVATION.

12 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.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to  
 14 do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmur-  
 15 ings and disputings : that ye may be blameless and harm-  
 less, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a  
 crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as  
 16 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  
 17 vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered  
 upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and  
 18 rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy,  
 and rejoice with me.

There is nothing that quickens the moral life of man like a passion for Christ. In view of His humiliation and exaltation the Philippians are exhorted to work out for themselves a full salvation, co-operating herein with God, the supreme Worker. By thankful, peaceful, unblamable lives let them shine in the world. Let them convince the apostle that his toil has not been fruitless. He and they, like all other Christians, are priests bringing offerings to God ; and if his libation must be his own blood, he is ready to make it. Let the martyr's death be an occasion of triumph in the Church.

12. **my beloved.** The true pastor loves his church as a lover his bride. **your salvation :** in the fullest sense of the splendid term. As believers, they are already saved ; let them **work out** a complete salvation. They have within them the germ of the perfect life ; let them labour to bring it to full fruition. Work out what God is working in ! He gives all His resources to any one who will be His fellow-labourer. " All the work of the world," says a man of science, " is merely a taking advantage of energies already



there." **fear and trembling.** Not the abject terror of bond-service, but the sensitive fear of love, which will leave nothing undone, and always aims at perfection (see Eph. vi. 5).

13, 14. **to will . . . to work.** God both awakens the desire for salvation and enables us to attain it. He creates a passion for the ideal, and brings it within our reach. He takes infinite pains with us. He works wisely and effectually, never overpowering our wills, but treating us as rational beings who are to be constrained, not compelled, to let Him have His way with us. Faith works with Him towards the realising of all His **good pleasure**, His perfect satisfaction.

15. **lights in the world** (see Matt. v. 14). "Murmuring and disputing," like every other "blemish" of character, dim our spiritual light. **children of God** should have the likeness of the royal family of heaven. The **crooked and perverse**, who dwell in the world around us, ought to see at a glance that the believer's life has been straightened out.

16. **run . . . labour.** Both are favourite words in Paul's vocabulary, suggestive of the high pressure at which he lives. For him the world is an arena in which men must run, a sounding labour-house vast in which they must toil. And he hopes it is not all an effort unmeaning and vain. May there be something to glory of in the crowning day—the **day of Christ**, who will award the prizes.

17. **I am offered.** Poured out as a libation or drink-offering. Paul thinks of the Philippians as Christian priests, who offer faith and all its fruits as a sacrifice and service to God. If, over

and above this sacrifice of theirs, he must pour out, as from a wine-cup, his own heart's blood, he will not grieve. He rejoices to give the best to the Highest, and he bids others rejoice as they think of love's final sacrifice.

Phil. ii. 19-30.

### FELLOW-WORKERS.

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly  
 unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I  
 20 know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who  
 21 will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own,  
 22 not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the  
 proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath  
 23 served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to  
 send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with  
 24 me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come  
 25 shortly. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you  
 Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and  
 fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered  
 26 to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full  
 of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been  
 27 sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death : but God  
 had mercy on him ; and not on him only, but on me also,  
 28 lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him there-  
 fore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye  
 may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.  
 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness ; and  
 30 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.

Paul is happy in his fellow-workers, and no wonder, for how he loves, honours, and trusts them ! Here we get a brief but charming glimpse

of two of them. Timothy has ever the warmest place in that great heart. No man is quite like him. He does not, like so many, serve his own interests. From the first there has been an elective affinity between him and the apostle, who always thinks of him as a son. Epaphroditus' portrait, sketched here and nowhere else, is also singularly beautiful. He is an altruist, with a heart always at leisure from itself. He lives to run the errands of others. He hazards his life for the sake of others. In sickness he is troubled only by the trouble of others. Such a man is to be welcomed with joy and held in honour everywhere.

19. **I hope.** Hopes and fears pursue each other in Paul's mind. His end may not be yet. Perhaps it will be possible ere long to spare Timothy.

20. **no man likeminded.** Literally, "equal-souled." Timothy is the man after Paul's own heart. No other comrade has a "soul" of just the same fine fibre. The Philippians know what he is, for they have put him to **the proof**. He was with Paul at the founding of the Philippian Church (Acts xvi.). **care truly.** It is in this aspect that Timothy most resembles Paul—in his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the churches.

21. **all seek their own.** Strong words, uttered under some keen sense of disappointment. To be a Christian and to prefer one's own things to those of Christ, seeking comfort and ease, shirking duty and danger—this seems a contradiction in terms. It is to lose life in trying to find it.

22. **serveth . . . serveth with.** The added "with" in the second clause is very suggestive. Paul was about to say, "As a son serveth his father, so Timothy serveth me." But he checks himself

midway, struck with a sudden fear of seeming too masterful, and gives the sentence another turn: "he serveth *with* me." Paul and Timothy are brethren, both alike servants of Christ. It is a touching proof of the apostle's simplicity and humility.

23. **I shall see how.** His vision is limited. He waits the issue in uncertainty. He modifies his first strong "I know" (i. 25) into "I hope" (twice, vers. 19, 23) and "I trust" (ver. 24).

25. **my brother.** Paul and Epaphroditus are **brothers**, living in the same spiritual household; **fellow-workers**, labouring in the same business; **fellow-soldiers**, fighting in the same army—the household, the business, the army of Christ. **your messenger.** Lit. "your angel," sent from the Philippians with the tribute of their affection. He was also their **apostle** and their **priestly minister.** All these words are carefully chosen for their sacred and honourable associations; so highly does Paul magnify the office of this alms-bearer, almost putting a halo round his head.

26. **he was troubled.** Not because he was sick, but because they had heard that he was sick. He was troubled because he knew their hearts were troubled about him. Their anxiety distressed him more than his own almost fatal sickness. This is the acme of self-forgetfulness.

27. **sorrow upon sorrow,** like wave after wave. To Epaphroditus as to Paul death would no doubt be a gain (i. 21), a transition of which one might think with joy (ii. 18). Yet Paul is very human, and he feels how real a sorrow the death of a true friend would be to him! God in **mercy** spares him that grief.

29. **in the Lord.** On his return Epaphroditus must receive a welcome home. How well he will have deserved one! It is to be with **all joy**, and it will be so much the sweeter if it is hallowed by the sense of the presence of Christ Himself—if it is a welcome “in the Lord.”

30. **hazarding his life.** A figure taken from gambling. Paul often watched the Roman soldiers around him eagerly throwing dice. He saw some reckless fellow put his all into a venture. Could faith in Christ induce a man to risk as much? Epaphroditus' noble conduct was the answer. He ventured all for Christ's sake. **lacking.** The only thing which was lacking in the Philippians' holy service—their sacrificial offering of love—was the presentation of their gift to the apostle. This was Epaphroditus' task, and in fulfilling it he came very near the gates of death.

Phil. iii. 1-14.

**NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH.**

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for  
2 you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers,  
3 beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision,  
which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ  
4 Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I  
might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man  
thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh,  
5 I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel,  
of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as  
6 touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting  
the church; touching the righteousness which is in the  
7 law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those  
8 I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all

things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win  
 9 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 which is of  
 10 God by faith : that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being  
 11 made conformable unto his death ; if by any means I  
 12 might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect : but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which  
 13 also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching  
 14 forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In these fourteen verses "I" occurs fourteen times. The paragraph contains the writer's spiritual autobiography. The first part of it tells of Saul the Pharisee, the second of Paul the Christian. The Pharisee had every conceivable earthly advantage : he belonged to all the aristocracies, social, intellectual, spiritual ; and he counted his gains as joyfully as a miser his gold. But to be a Christian he threw every advantage and every privilege away ; he counted the world well lost for Christ ; he sought and found the righteousness of God through faith. And now his one ambition is to become perfectly Christlike. This is the ideal towards which he eagerly presses, like a runner speeding to his goal.

1. **rejoice.** There is a shade of difference between "rejoice-in the Lord" and "rejoice in-the-Lord." The second is the meaning here. The Lord's fellowship is for believers the sphere and

element of spiritual joy. Paul would not have the Christian mind "to anchor by one gloomy thought." In Christ's presence is (here and now) fulness of joy. **the same things**: as he had written in previous letters, or spoken in his addresses. **not irksome**: to go over the lesson again and again, to make the truth impressive by reiteration. Paul seems to be drawing his letter to a close, when suddenly he thinks of a danger to his beloved converts of which he must write once more. Has news just reached him of a meditated attack by the Judaisers on a church that has hitherto been safe?

2. **the dogs**. In the East the dogs live in the streets, homeless and ownerless. In Constantinople there are to-day six thousand of them that belong to nobody but the Sultan. Before Christ came the Jew had long thought of the Gentiles as dogs. In the shelter of his spiritual home, where his God cared for him, he sometimes pitied but mostly despised those outcasts who had no roof for their heads. But Paul has come to know better. The proud Jews have made themselves the wanderers, the outcasts—**the dogs**—while the Christian has found the true home of the soul. **evil workers**: counteracting the good done by the evangelists of Jesus Christ. **the concision**. Paul has now come to think of circumcision as a mere mutilation. Physical gashing can never save the soul. Such strong language has of course no bearing on the question of the hygienic value of the ancient rite. It is necessary for the exposure of a superstition.

3. **the circumcision**: which, in its only permanent religious significance, is "of the heart" (Rom. ii. 29). The Christian proves that he has it by three things: he knows how to **worship**—not

with ritual but by the Spirit; what to **boast** of—not of national privileges but of the world's Saviour; what to put his **confidence** in—not in the flesh but in that Saviour's merits.

4. **the flesh.** Man's condition before he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus; the old self; the natural man.

5. **Israel** was a chosen race, **Benjamin** a noble tribe, **an Hebrew of Hebrews** the speaker of a sacred language, and a **Pharisee** an enthusiast for Divine laws. Such an enthusiast was Paul, speaking that language, sprung from that tribe and race!

7. **gain . . . loss.** Paul wrote **gains**. He had often counted them, and his heart glowed at the discovery that he had perhaps more to his credit than any man living. What blood was in his veins; how noble his extraction; how strict his legalism; how blameless his life! These were his assets, and he had no debts. But there came a time when he transferred all his gains to the other side of the account, massing them together as so much "loss for Christ." On the vacant side of "gain" he then wrote the one word **Christ**, and knew that he was still the richest man in the world.

8. **the excellency.** The surpassing value; the magnificence. **the knowledge.** There is a kind of knowledge that merely flatters and puffs up its possessor, but this kind edifies like love itself. To know Christ is the highest wisdom and science. **my Lord.** Paul usually writes "our Lord," but in this intensely personal passage he grapples his Divine Friend to his own soul with hoops of steel. The comfort of the Bible, Luther used to say, lies in the personal pronouns. **loss of all things.** In



our own day the Jew who becomes a Christian is still disowned and disinherited. Sometimes the burial service is read for him by his kinsfolk. He is dead to them!

9. **righteousness . . . of God.** This was the gift of God to penitent sinners united by faith to Jesus Christ. A splendid new conception, supplanting the old idea of righteousness by law-abiding. "Paul taught the whole world righteousness," says Clement of Rome.

10. **resurrection . . . sufferings.** Paul desires to share Christ's victorious power and His sacrificial pain. The resurrection of Christ, a fact of history, becomes to every believer a fact of experience. Faith in it makes a man an optimist. Its uplifting power is immeasurable. Paul also desires to have fellowship with Christ's sufferings, through profound sympathy with the world's sorrow and need. He desires to become conformed unto His death, to be ready for love's last and perfect sacrifice (cf. 1 John iii. 16).

12. **not . . . made perfect.** Saul the Pharisee thought himself "blameless" (ver. 6), but Paul the Christian knows better. He has not attained. The glittering heights of holiness are still far above him. He feels the immense stimulus of an unrealised ideal. Christ **apprehended** him long ago, and bade him **apprehend** perfection. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

13. **one thing.** Paul's supreme passion unifies and simplifies his life, focuses his energies, claims all his time and thought for one mighty endeavour. He **forgets** the things which are behind, especially his successes, wasting no hours in complacent retro-

spects, acting in the living present, and preparing for the glorious future.

14. **I press on.** Like a runner he thinks of his goal, and quickens his pace as he nears it. **the prize.** Two meanings are possible: either, the prize which is itself the high (upward, heavenward) calling; or, the prize which is associated with that calling to make it more attractive. The Christian thinks of the joy that is set before him, as Christ Himself did (Heb. xii. 2). The calling is itself **in Christ Jesus**, which indicates that He is the medium through which we receive it.

Phil. iii. 15-21.

#### THE IMITATION OF THE SAINTS.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded :  
 and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall  
 16 reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we  
 have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us  
 17 mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of  
 me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an  
 18 ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you  
 often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the  
 19 enemies of the cross of Christ : whose end is destruction,  
 whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their  
 20 shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is  
 in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the  
 21 Lord Jesus Christ : who shall change our vile body, that it  
 may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to  
 the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things  
 unto himself.

Having finished his chapter of self-revelation, Paul returns to earnest exhortation. As a standard

of conduct he boldly offers the example of the saints. Many of those who profess to follow Christ lead lives of shame, but true Christians are citizens of heaven, and must keep its laws, remembering that the Saviour will return to make them, in body as well as in spirit, like Himself.

15, 16. **perfect.** In ver. 12 Paul said, "I am not perfect." It is somewhat puzzling to see that he now includes himself among "the perfect." The word is of course used in two senses: (1) absolutely good, pure, holy; (2) full-grown, mature, no longer childishly ignorant and weak. Both meanings are equally common in the N.T. **reveal . . . walk.** The increasing revelation comes to those who walk in the light. Obedience has been finely called the organ of spiritual knowledge.

17. **imitators.** The reference in ver. 16 to a rule of life prompts the question, What *is* the rule? If the old law is dead, what takes its place? Paul answers by inviting men to walk in his own footsteps—to imitate himself and his fellow-workers (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 1). Alongside of the *imitatio Christi* there is need of an *imitatio Christianorum*. Men who utterly disregard the former may be allured by the latter. There is no egotism, only the simplicity of truth, in Paul's words. But what a weight of responsibility they lay on all Christians!

18, 19. **enemies of the cross.** Christian liberty seems to some minds liberty to sin. The indulgence of the body, they think, cannot hurt the soul. Christianity is not law but love—and *such* love! Paul weeps that "Christians"—enemies of Christ's Cross—should thus glory in their shame,

and shudders at the thought of their end. **god . . . belly.** "I bow before no other but myself, and to my belly, chief of deities."

20. **citizenship.** This was always a great word to Paul, and to the end he was doubtless proud to say, "*Civis Romanus sum.*" But he has received, not achieved, a far higher honour and dignity—the citizenship of heaven. Every Christian enjoys the privileges, shares the protection, and keeps the laws of that glorious kingdom. He has civic rights in a polity whose constitution is Divine and eternal.

21. **our vile body.** Paul does not say that. He has none of the Stoic's and ascetic's contempt for the body. He speaks of it reverently. It is redeemed as fully as the soul. But it is meanwhile **the body of our humiliation**, subject to weakness, decay, death. From all this Christ has the power and the will to liberate it, by re-fashioning it in the image of His own glorified heavenly body.

#### Phil. iv. 1-9.

### CHRISTIAN UNITY, JOY, AND PEACE.

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.  
 2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of  
 3 the same mind in the Lord. And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-  
 4 labourers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice  
 5 in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.  
 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made

7 known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds  
8 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  
9 things. 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.

With one more outburst of warm affection Paul gives his final exhortations to his Philippian brethren. His ideal is a united Church, studying the things that make for peace; a Church pervaded by the atmosphere of joy; a Church whose members are lifted by prayer above care, and who rival each other in the eager pursuit of everything noble and worthy of praise.

1. **my beloved** (twice). The word is tenderly repeated. Paul thinks of his church with love, with longing, with joy, with triumph, and again with love. He loves first and last and without end. **crown** is not the kingly or priestly diadem, but the athlete's wreath of victory. The Philippian Church is a chaplet for the apostle's brow.

2, 3. Euodia and Syntyche both loved the gospel, both laboured with Paul in the gospel. They were both "in the Lord." But they could not labour together without some friction. They were not of the same mind. They looked askance at each other's ways. Paul seeks to reconcile them. They cannot be enemies **in the Lord**, they must be friends. In the atmosphere of His realised presence their differences melt away like ice in the sunbeams. **yokefellow**. It is impossible to say who is

addressed here. Epaphroditus, Timothy, the husband of Euodia or of Syntyche are conjectures. Some scholars read, "Synzygus, rightly so called." **and the rest.** There are many workers in the Philipian Church, and all are exhorted to be peace-makers, as befits those whose names are written in the Book of Life.

4. **Rejoice.** Christianity is in a sense "the Worship of Sorrow." But its final outcome can only be joy. It overcomes all the *Weltschmerz*—the sorrow of the world. "I marvelled," says Tennyson,

"Wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice ! Rejoice !'"

5. **forbearance.** A well-known classical word, translated by Matthew Arnold "sweet reasonableness." We find it in 2 Cor. x. 1, where it is rendered "the **gentleness** of Christ." **The Lord is at hand.** How sweet was this thought to the early Christians! They greeted each other with "Maran-atha"—"the Lord cometh!"

6. **careful:** in the old sense of the word—harassing care, worry, *atra cura*. The cure for such carefulness is prayerfulness with thanksgiving (cf. Matt. vi. 31, 32).

7. **peace of God.** That inward tranquillity which is a gift of the God of peace. Like His gift of infinite love, it is beyond the apprehension of reason; it is a thing to be experienced, never fully understood. It will **guard** the heart, as brave soldiers calmly defend a besieged town. Temptations, doubts, and fears seek admission, but find no entrance into the citadel of Mansoul, where peace reigns.

8, 9. **whatsoever things.** No passage in Paul's writings has such a Hellenic ring as this. He earnestly recommends **thinking**. Hegel says that "thinking itself is a service of God." Paul's ideals for the reflective mind—truth, honour, justice, purity, loveliness—are all nobly classical. These were virtues of which the Greeks would talk all day and every day. But Christianity did two things: it gave each of these themes a higher, holier meaning; and it transferred them out of the realm of thought into that of action. This was thinking to good purpose. "These things **do**." The distinction of Christianity is its magnificent driving energy, its power to get things done, to change dreams into deeds.

Phil. iv. 10-20.

PAUL'S SECRET OF CONTENTMENT.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last  
your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were  
11 also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak  
in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state  
12 I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be  
abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in  
all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry,  
13 both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things  
14 through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding  
ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my  
15 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  
16 receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent  
17 once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire  
a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.  
18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of

Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing  
 19 to God. But my God shall supply all your need according  
 20 to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In conclusion, Paul tells of his joy in the latest of the many gifts of the Philippian Church. He acknowledges it with an exquisite courtesy, in which a note of proud independence is charmingly blended with one of touching gratitude. And what does he make of "this matter of giving and receiving"? He transfigures it. He throws over it the radiance of heaven. He displays it in its eternal spiritual relations. He shows its worth for God. Christian beneficence blesses him that gives as well as him that takes, yielding an ever-increasing fruit (or interest) in all after-time. It is more than a natural expression of loving sympathy between man and man. It is a holy and fragrant sacrifice to God, who will reward it in a manner worthy of Himself.

10. **ye have revived.** "ye have made your thought for me bloom again," like flowers in spring-time. A delightful way of praising their liberality, implying, it is superfluous to say, no reproach, no suggestion of a time of wintry coldness! Far from it, they "were indeed taking thought all along" (impf. tense); only they had no opportunity of fulfilling their wish.

11. **to be content.** Literally, "self-sufficient," independent of others. A favourite word among the Stoics, from whom Paul probably borrowed it. The Stoic was self-sufficient in the strength of his own "unconquerable soul"; the Christian in the might of the Spirit of Christ within him.



12. **instructed.** "I have learned the secret." Lit., "I have been initiated into the mystery." Paul was familiar with the Greek mysteries, which somewhat resembled those of Freemasonry. Christianity too, he suggests, has its mysteries, into which every believer ought to be initiated, and one of them is the secret of contentment, of self-sufficiency, of keeping one's spirit superior to the fluctuations of fortune, like "a mark of everlasting light above the howling senses' ebb and flow."

13. **I can do all things.** The Christian's dynamic is the risen Christ. Nothing ever cuts him off from the centre of power but his own failing faith. Having in Christ an unlimited reserve of superhuman strength, he can confront every emergency, doing and bearing all things according to the will of God.

14. **fellowship.** No grace seems higher to Paul than communion in suffering. Just as it was his own passionate desire to know the fellowship of Christ's suffering (iii. 10), so he is profoundly thankful that the Philippians wish to have fellowship with him in his own experiences of captivity and poverty. "Pain is the deepest thing we have in our nature, and union through pain has always seemed to me more real and more holy than any other" (A. H. Hallam).

15. **in the beginning of the gospel:** the first preaching of it in Macedonia, about ten years before (see Acts xvii. 1-15). At that time the Philippian Church alone gave him material aid. **giving and receiving.** The Philippians giving, Paul receiving. In Greek the words have a mercantile ring, like our "credit and debit." The apostle playfully suggests that the Philippians have opened an

account with him! There is no reason for importing (as some do) the idea of the interchange of temporal for spiritual gifts. It is an ordinary matter of giving and receiving money.

16. **in Thessalonica.** Now Saloniki, at the head of the gulf of the same name. In that city Paul remained for some time and founded a church, but the pecuniary help he received there, when he was straitened in outward circumstances, came not from the converts of the place but from Philippi, 100 miles away. The fact stands out clear and vivid in his memory after a lapse of ten years.

17. **Not that I desire the gift.** For gifts as such, apart from the love of the givers and the blessing which their generosity must bring to themselves, he has no desire. A cheque from a well-wisher who was not a true Christian would give him little or no pleasure. What he does desire more than anything else is **the fruit**, or recompense, **which abounds** to the advantage of those who with a pure motive offer the sacrifices of love. Strike out the A.V.'s "may"; the reward is certain.

18. **I abound.** I have enough and more; my cup overflows. **the things.** Paul instinctively avoids the use of the word "money." The gift of love was much more than a purse of gold; it was an offering to God, pure and acceptable; like the ascending odour of some ancient oblation, the generosity of it was fragrant to His spirit. So much good as that can be said of money! What is sometimes called "filthy lucre" may have the sweetness, to God and man, of a holy sacrifice.

19. **all your need.** "Your" is emphatic. "My God will fulfil every need of yours, as ye have supplied mine." Paul feels that *he* can never repay the gifts they have sent him; he must always be hopelessly in debt. But he can pray, and God will repay. His unsearchable **riches** will adequately recompense the offering of love. He will give "gloriously (in glory) in Christ Jesus." Here "glory" is not the future glory of heaven; but the present splendour of Divine grace.

Phil. iv. 21-23.

#### GREETINGS AND FAREWELL.

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which  
22 are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly  
23 they that are of Cæsar's household. The grace of our  
Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

21. **every saint** is every Christian. Paul may mean either "Salute - in - Christ every saint," or "Salute every saint-in-Christ." The difference is unimportant, and either sense excellent. Paul had around him a large circle of **brethren**—converts and comrades—who knew that he was writing, and desired to send their loving greetings.

22. **Cæsar's household.** The phrase is one of many indications that the letter was written in Rome rather than Cæsarea. "Household does not signify members of the imperial family, but the whole *ménage* of the imperial residence—slaves, freedmen, household servants, and other dependents, possibly some of high rank" (Vincent). The house in which Nero was making himself eternally infamous

was a strange school for saints. But light penetrates the darkest places. Some of those who had to wait every day in the presence of Nero were all the time beholding the Face of Christ, and the vision was transforming them into His image. Paul had not been a prisoner in vain.

**1 Tim. i. 1, 2.**

**GREETING.**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our  
2 hope; unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

1, 2. **by the commandment.** Or, "the authority." The commission was not human but Divine. **God our Saviour.** It is one of the peculiarities of the Pastorals that they apply the word "Saviour" to God the Father more frequently than to Christ the Son—three times in 1 Timothy and as often in Titus. This seems due to the author's Greek habits of thought. **Christ Jesus our hope.** A new and beautiful title of our Lord, the abstract noun being made personal, as in Watts's hymn, "Our God, our Help . . . our Hope." Christ is the ground, the substance of believers' hopes for themselves and the universe. Compare "the blessed hope" in Tit. ii. 13. **my true child.** The apostle's dearest son, for ten years his companion (cf. Phil. ii. 22). **mercy** is an addition to the "grace and peace" of the common Pauline salutation. So in 2 Tim. i. 2.

1 Tim. i. 3-11.

## SOUND DOCTRINE.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went  
 into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they  
 4 teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and  
 endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than  
 5 godly edifying which is in faith : so do. Now the end of  
 the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of  
 6 a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned : from which  
 some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling ;  
 7 desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither  
 8 what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know  
 9 that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully ; knowing  
 this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but  
 for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for  
 sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers  
 10 and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whore-  
 mongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind,  
 for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if  
 there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine ;  
 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which  
 was committed to my trust.

Timothy has already been orally instructed to remain in Ephesus as the guardian of sound doctrine. His charge is now put in writing. He is to remember that the end and aim of all Christian teaching is love. False teachers are great only in talking, disputing, questioning ; their confidence is in proportion to their ignorance ; while they pretend to teach the law they have not a notion of its real value.

3. at **Ephesus.** The words no doubt reflect an authentic tradition of Timothy's life and work

in this city after Paul's removal. **mightest charge.** The word "charge" occurs seven times in the epistle, five times as a verb, twice as a noun. The idea is present to the writer's mind from first to last. Sometimes it is he who gives a charge to Timothy (i. 5, 18, vi. 13), sometimes it is Timothy who is authoritatively to charge (twice translated "command") others (i. 3, iv. 11, v. 7, vi. 13). The letter as a whole might be entitled "The Pastor's Charge." **to-teach-a-different-doctrine** is one word in Greek. "To be heterodox" conveys its flavour. There is a theological standard which every one ought to accept. The Church has established her confession of faith, her pattern of sound words, and Timothy is enjoined to command men to teach nothing contrary to the creed—to be orthodox.

4. **fables . . . genealogies.** It is a question whether these were the product of the Rabbinic or the Gnostic mind, both of which were given to spinning grotesque fancies and giving them forth as gospel truths. As the heterodox teachers whom the writer has in view pretend to be teachers of the law (ver. 7), it is natural to infer that not a few of the myths and genealogies in question were of Jewish origin. **minister questionings.** Fanciful tales merely tickle the ears and loosen the tongue. They have no relation to the serious business of life. They are received with foolish credulity instead of rational **faith.** They end in conversation, not conversion. Christianity, on the contrary, is **a dispensation of God,** a stewardship of His grace to men, imparting not barren ideas, empty speculations, but eternal and life-giving truths.

5. **the end,** or purpose, of **the charge** which

Timothy receives is the awakening of **love** in the hearts of his hearers. The gospel must prove that it does not issue in a war of words but in lives of self-forgetting love. It is to attest itself by its beautiful practical results. Its glory is that it has power to kindle a passion of love in every heart that receives it, to fill the whole earth with love when it has free course. Such love, the writer teaches, springs from a nature that has become pure, inward, and sincere; a man's **heart, conscience, and faith** must each be adjusted to a Divine standard before love can reign supreme in his life.

6. **vain jangling.** Better, "empty talking," all the more silly because it is so solemn and religious. "Empty chaff well meant for grain."

7. **teachers** (cf. Rom. ii. 21-23). Their self-confidence is sublime, their intelligence puerile, even childish. They have need to go to school and begin at the lowest form.

8. **the law.** The law is good, but it is for those who are not good. Its provisions are negative. Its end is the repression of evil rather than the promotion of righteousness. To the tempted it utters its categorical "Thou shalt not." The writer goes right through the Decalogue. The ungodly are condemned in the first and second commandments, the profane in the third and fourth, murderers of fathers and mothers in the fifth, manslayers, fornicators, man-stealers, profane swearers in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth respectively. This commonplace idea of the use of the Decalogue is far removed from the profound Pauline conception of the historical function of the law as a tutor to bring men to Christ.



10. **sound doctrine.** These are favourite words in the Pastorals. "Sound" occurs seven times in them and nowhere else; "doctrine" fifteen times, against seven times in the rest of the N.T. "Sound doctrine" is literally healthful teaching, as opposed to what is sickly, morbid. This is in itself a fine broad unfettered conception; but in the Pastorals "the doctrine" has become a definite body of truth which is alone recognised as "sound" or orthodox. These epistles are essentially didactic; hence the frequent recurrence of the words "teach," "teacher," "teaching," "apt to teach."

11. **gospel of the glory.** This is magnificent language. "The author can think of no more striking contrast than that between the endless prattle of the false teachers and the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (Köhler).

#### I Tim. i. 12-17.

### PAUL'S VOCATION ILLUSTRATING DIVINE MERCY.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me,  
 for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the  
 13 ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor,  
 and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it  
 14 ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was  
 exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ  
 15 Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all  
 acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to  
 16 save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this  
 cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might  
 shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which

17 should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul's ministry, and the steps that led up to it, form a striking object lesson for the Christian Pastor. His savage indignation as a persecutor, of which he could never think without remorse, did not shut him out from mercy. He became the subject of the Lord's abounding grace, and felt that the chief of sinners was saved. He concluded that the Lord must have specially chosen him in order to display His longsuffering and to illustrate the victorious power of faith.

12. **enabled me:** gave me ability for His service. **counted me faithful.** After his years of waiting and testing in Arabia and Tarsus, Paul was approved as trustworthy (see Acts xi. 26, xiii. 1). **the ministry.** Better, "His service."

13. The three sins which Paul confesses form a climax, which our weak word "injurious" spoils. He was a **reviler** of the name of Christ, a **persecutor** of His Church, an **outrager** of justice and humanity. **I did it ignorantly.** Cf. Luke xxiii. 34.

14. **grace . . . abounded.** Add to this the words of next verse, "sinners, of whom I am chief," and we have Bunyan's "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners." The Pharisee and the Tinker went to the same school. Their great minds ran parallel. Because they thought so profoundly about their sin, they saw so clearly the splendour of salvation. **with faith and love.** In wonderful contrast to the old unbelief and hatred.

15. **Faithful is the saying.** The words occur five times in the Pastorals (there alone), each time introducing some weighty axiom. The use of such set forms of speech became much more common in the sub-apostolic age. **I am chief.** An expression of the deepest humility. Paul the aged does not say, "I *was* the chief of sinners," but "I *am*." The confessor really feels what he says. Other men's sins seem venial in comparison with his own. While Christ "knew no sin," and never sought forgiveness, those who have become most like Him have always had the sharpest sense of personal guilt. This is one of the strongest proofs of His uniqueness.

16. **in me first.** Better, "in me as chief," as in the previous verse. Paul feels that he is chosen as a **pattern**, or sample, or typical case. If *he* receives mercy, let no one despair.

"I the chief of sinners am,  
I'm a miracle of grace."

17. **King eternal.** Lit., "King of the æons, or ages." "The writer so names God with evident allusion to the Gnostics, who dream of orders of æons in which the being of the Godhead is unfolded. God is Lord over them all, the only true God" (Köhler).

I Tim. i. 18-20.

### DANGER OF SHIPWRECK.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according  
to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by  
19 them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a

## 208 Westminster New Testament

good conscience ; which some having put away concerning  
20 faith have made shipwreck : of whom is Hymenæus and  
Alexander ; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they  
may learn not to blaspheme.

Timothy is urged to be a brave fighter in the army of the Lord, under the stimulus of the inspiring memories of his time of consecration to Christ's service. It is not inappropriate to remind him of some who made a fair beginning, but whose faith and life went to wreck and ruin.

18. **the prophecies.** Before Paul called Timothy to be his comrade in evangelism, prophetic voices in the Church had given the assurance that the young man would be a brave soldier in the army of Jesus Christ, for beneath his gentleness it had been discerned that he was by no means lacking in strength of character. Let him now fulfil these confident hopes, when he has to stand alone in face of opposition. **the** (not "a") **good warfare** is the same for him as for every believer. If all saints are not soldiers, some are failing in their duty.

19. **thrust from them.** Faith and conscience are like good angels, eloquently pleading, reluctant to depart, and finally so importunate that they are incontinently **thrust** out of doors. It is a fatal error. If an angry and mutinous crew throw skipper and pilot overboard in a storm, it is a miracle if they do not suffer **shipwreck**. Hymenæus is named again in 2 Tim. ii. 17. Alexander may be the coppersmith mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 14.

20. **delivered to Satan.** This is difficult to interpret. Some indignant repudiation is implied. An experience of the hardness and bitterness of the fruits of sin may make men weary of ill-doing,

and thus Satan may become against his will a teacher of virtue.

I Tim. ii. 1-7.

### PRAYERS FOR ALL MEN.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men ;  
2 for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.  
3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our  
4 Saviour ; who will have all men to be saved, and to come  
5 unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ  
6 Jesus ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified  
7 in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not ;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

Here we can read between the lines that the Church has fightings without and fears within. She has to reckon, on the one hand, with a jealous Government, ever spying upon her actions, ever ready to let its wrath burst forth and shatter her tranquillity ; and, on the other, with a form of teaching within her own borders which questions the unity of God and the humanity of Christ, while it assumes that the knowledge of the highest truth is the possession of an intellectual coterie. To meet this situation, it is enjoined that prayers be offered for all men, and especially for the Government ; and it is taught that all men alike are to be brought to a full knowledge of the truth, which is summed up in the simple creed that there is one God, one Mediator who is Himself man, and one atonement once made for all men.

1, 2. **prayers . . . for kings and all that are in high place.** "This is the answer which the Church returns to all persecutions" (Köhler). She will harbour no idea of revenge; she will give back love for hatred; she will overcome evil with good. Tranquillising her own spirit with the great thought that God wills the salvation of her enemies, since Christ paid a ransom for all, she can forgivingly pray for them that despitefully use her. She is surely therefore justified in claiming that Christianity is essentially a loyal religion. **godliness and gravity.** These words are found in none of the letters ascribed to Paul except the Pastorals, where "godliness" (or "piety") occurs ten times and "gravity" three times (also "grave" three times). Both terms were familiar to the religious teachers of Greece. The repetition of them in the Pastorals creates a certain atmosphere. Christianity is elsewhere a rapturous mystic communion with the risen Saviour; here it is **piety**. It is elsewhere the heroic, aggressive advocacy of a splendid cause; here it is the **gravity** of a tranquil civic life.

4. **who willeth.** This does not mean "who decrees that all men should be saved," but "who wishes." If God's will were done, all men *would* be saved, but God has made the human will free, and never overrides it. God is now willing, is man? Whether all men will ultimately become willing is quite beyond the scope of this passage. It is far from teaching dogmatic universalism. **the knowledge.** Better, "the full knowledge" (*epignosis*). The Gnostics said that this was only for the initiated, but in Christianity there is no inner circle from which the vulgar throng are excluded.

All **truth** is common property. The Spirit takes of the things of Christ to enlighten every man (cf. Col. i. 28).

5. **one mediator.** This truth seems to us quite axiomatic, but it was only after a long controversy that it was accepted by the whole early Church. The Gnostics believed in a multitude of mediators—angels or æons—among whom Christ was in danger either of being lost sight of altogether, or of being transformed into a shadowy, mythical (Doketic) being quite different from the **man Christ Jesus**. The Divine greatness of Christ and His perfect Son-of-manhood are truths equally important to the writer.

6. **a ransom for all.** This recalls "a ransom for many" in Matt. xx. 28, only the preposition "for" differs slightly in the two phrases: in the first it means "on behalf of," in the second "in the place of." A ransom is what is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption. Christ gave **himself**—a ransom of infinite worth. The language is figurative, and must not be pressed, as it is when the question is asked, To whom is the ransom paid? Christ made an atonement which is appropriate for **all** and appropriated by the **many** who believe. **the testimony** regarding this central fact of redemption could not be borne till the fulness of the times—till the Christian era.

7. **I was appointed.** Elsewhere we find frequent allusions to Paul's Divine appointment to be a preacher, *or* an apostle, *or* a teacher. Here the terms are all accumulated together (cf. 2 Tim. i. 11).

1 Tim. ii. 8-15.

## WOMAN'S SPHERE.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy  
 9 hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also,  
 that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with  
 shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or  
 10 gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh  
 11 women professing godliness) with good works. Let the  
 12 woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer  
 not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man,  
 13 but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then  
 14 Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being  
 15 deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she  
 shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and  
 charity and holiness with sobriety.

Men, not women, are to lead others in prayer. Women are to dress modestly, their best adornment being their good works. They are to be silent in the public assembly, neither teaching nor ruling. The accepted belief that woman was created after man and fell before him proves her inferiority. It will be her salvation to limit herself to the bearing and rearing of children, leading a quiet, sober life of faith and love.

8. **that the men pray.** The men in distinction from the women. The R.V. makes the meaning clear by inserting "the." Those who pray are to do it with uplifted hands, with holy hands, and in a spirit of love. "The raising of the hands with the palm upturned was the usual attitude of prayer both in classical antiquity and in the early Christian Church; the opened hands expected to be filled from above" (Köhler). "Holy hands"



meant more than clean hands (Ps. xxiv. 4); it meant hands consecrated to the service of God. To pray in an angry, disputatious spirit was to forget that one was speaking in the audience-chamber of a God of love.

9. **shamefastness** is the correct spelling. It means the modesty which is *fast* or rooted in the character, whereas shamefacedness means sheepishness. **sobriety** and "sober" are found six times in the Pastorals and in none of the other Pauline letters. It was a Greek ideal, the first of the four cardinal virtues—temperance, wisdom, justice, courage. Like "sound," "grave," and "pious," it gives its own stamp to the writings in which it occurs so often.

10. **not with braided hair . . . but through good works.** The change of preposition, from "with" to "through," goes with the fact that the second adornment is metaphorical. The author of the Pastorals was extremely fond of the phrase "good, or beautiful, works." He uses it fourteen times. His temperament was not at all speculative, but eminently practical. He reserves all his enthusiasm for good conduct. Only once does he, in true Pauline fashion, suggest the contrast between faith and works (Tit. iii. 5).

11, 12. **to learn . . . not to teach.** If it is remembered that the words were written in the East, where it is proverbial that "woman has never a soul to save," it will be seen that it was a great step of progress to **permit** her even **to learn**. But she is still to be kept in **subjection**. She may glorify God by good works in private, but not by good words in public. She must neither teach nor rule, but be "**in quietness**"—the last words are repeated with

emphasis. Logically this forbids her nowadays to be a Sunday-school teacher, or an evangelist, or a missionary. But injunctions regarding the **subjection** of woman, like those regarding the obedience of bond-servants, can only be regarded as provisional. Both women and slaves have been educated and emancipated. Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria have made "the regiment (*i.e.* sovereignty) of women," Elizabeth Fry and Catherine Booth the evangelism of women, facts beyond dispute. The Holy Spirit has set His seal to the consecrated use of all Nature's gifts to woman.

13. **Adam . . . then Eve.** Adam was created first and sinned second, Eve was created second and sinned first. Therefore let woman recognise that she is both weaker and worse than man, and let her never attempt either to teach or to control him. The premises of this argument—in which the Rabbis, to their shame, delighted—find no confirmation either in science or in experience.

15. **she shall be saved.** Woman's devotion to domestic duties, her absorption in her children, will be—in a popular, not a theological sense—her salvation. Here the German Hausfrau is the ideal.

1 Tim. iii. 1-13.

### THE CHARACTER OF BISHOPS AND DEACONS.

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a  
 2 bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be  
 blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of  
 3 good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not  
 given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but

4 patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well  
his own house, having his children in subjection with all  
5 gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house,  
6 how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice,  
lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemna-  
7 tion of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report  
of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and  
8 the snare of the devil. Likewise must the deacons be  
grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not  
9 greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in  
10 a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved;  
then let them use the office of a deacon, being found  
11 blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not  
12 slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons  
be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their  
13 own houses well. For they that have used the office of a  
deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and  
great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Some of the qualifications for the episcopacy and the diaconate now call forth the remark, "Surely that goes without saying!" The bishop must be the husband of one wife, must not take too much wine, must not be a striker or brawler! But these things serve to throw a strong light on the conditions in which the early Church was working and the abuses she was setting herself to correct. The injunctions are still very useful in the similar environment of the modern mission field.

1. a bishop. "Bishop," "apostle," and "deacon" were at first loose, interchangeable terms, expressing "oversight," "mission," and "service"—functions rather than offices. In time they have become specific and distinct. In the Pastorals the "oversight" is an office which a man may seek, but it is still far from the monarchical

episcopate of Ignatius, a fact which fixes their date within the first century. It is a question whether Paul himself was a methodical administrator, skilled in ecclesiastical polity, or "a mighty idealist filled with Christian enthusiasm, who knew no other church government than that of Christ Himself inspiring His disciples with the knowledge of what they ought to do and say" (Reville).

2. **one wife.** The meaning is not that a bishop should marry only once, but that he should not have two wives at once. Many converts would have a plurality of wives, and they might not be immediately required to put them all away except one, but it was self-evident that only the man whose own house was in order could be called to take care of the Church of God.

6. **lifted up with pride.** "Puffed up," thinking little of the sacred duties of the office but much of its honours, the bishop may fall into the same condemnation as the devil, his ambition being his ruin, his pride going before destruction.

7. **good testimony.** One might almost say a good "testimonial" from those who are without. The opinion of men of the world is not to be disregarded in the choice of Church overseers. Their spiritual vision is necessarily dim, but their moral judgments are shrewd. They do not know theology, but they know a good man. Their **reproach** is a thing to fear.

9. **the mystery.** The now open secret, hidden from none who have spiritual discernment (see Eph. i. 9).

11. **women in like manner.** Not wives, but women deacons. The position of the injunction—right in the midst of the instructions about

deacons — makes this clear. Phœbe is called a deaconess, or servant, of the church of Cenchræa, probably in an unofficial sense (Rom. xvi. 1); but here is a technical order of deaconesses, “grave . . . faithful in all things.” Köhler suggests that the verse may be a marginal note that has got into the text; this would explain why the next sentence so strangely returns to the duties of deacons.

13. **a good degree.** Or, rather, “standing.” This does not mean a higher step in the ladder of Church honours, nor promotion in the Last Day, but the personal esteem and influence in the Church which are won by faithful service. Moral prestige is the idea.

#### I Tim. iii. 14-16.

#### THE CHURCH AND ITS FOUNDER.

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto  
 15 thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know  
 how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God,  
 which is the church of the living God, the pillar and  
 16 ground of the truth. And without controversy great is  
 the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,  
 justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the  
 Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into  
 glory.

Exemplary conduct is expected of those who are members of the household of God, which has to uphold the truth in the world, bearing its testimony to the great Mystery of godliness—Christ Himself in His various earthly and heavenly relations.

14. The writer's movements are uncertain. He

offers counsel and warning in case his hopes of a personal visit are disappointed.

15. **the house of God.** While in the O.T. this meant the temple, in the N.T. it means not the dwelling-house but the living household of God. In the absence of the definite article, Hort thinks we should read "a house . . . which is a church . . . a pillar and ground," meaning a local church, such as the one at Ephesus. But this is very doubtful. It is much more likely that the whole society of believers, the Church universal, is regarded as the ground and stay of the truth.

16. **the mystery of godliness.** The Divine Secret on which godliness is nourished. It is scarcely to be rendered "the mystery of our (objective) religion"; the idea is here more intimate and personal. As in Col. i. 27, the Mystery is Christ Himself. **He who**, not "God" (*hos*, not *Theos*), is undoubtedly the right reading (R.V.). The "Secret" is alluded to in tones of awe, as if one reverently hesitated to raise a veil. The great Name is intentionally left unspoken, but all the initiated will at once understand, and supply the sweetest Name on mortal tongue. The words which follow are probably taken from an early Christian hymn or creed. The six clauses are arranged in pairs, perhaps for antiphonal chanting. Each clause presents some aspect of our Lord's career, from His birth to His ascension, with a progression of ideas, however, which is not temporal but poetical. "Justified in the Spirit," probably means "justified when He rose from the grave in a spiritual body." Flesh is contrasted with Spirit, angels with nations, and world with glory. "This

fragment, in its grand lapidary style, is worthy to be placed by the side of the Apostles' Creed" (Köhler).

I Tim. iv. 1-5.

FALSE TEACHERS.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to  
 2 seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in  
 hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot  
 3 iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain  
 from meats, which God hath created to be received  
 with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the  
 4 truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing  
 5 to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for  
 it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

The Church must be prepared for aberrations from the faith—for seductive doctrines inspired from beneath and ascetic practices that mask evil lives. Let her maintain her Christian liberty, counting all meats clean (as her Lord did) which are consecrated by God's word and by prayer.

1. **the faith.** Not so much the individual's subjective trust as the Church's objective creed. The word was rarely, if ever, used in this sense in the first Christian age. **devils . . . men.** The writer teaches that demons, or seducing spirits, pervert men's minds, and then men pervert the truth. It is not enough to explain sin psychologically; one is ultimately driven back to metaphysics.

2. **hypocrisy.** Such seduction may explain, but does not excuse, the hypocrisy of men who speak lies. Their sin is laid to their own charge. Indeed, it is well known that, however they brazen

it out before men, they are **branded in their own consciences**, as delinquent slaves were branded in their bodies, so that they *know* themselves guilty. The meaning is not "seared" (A.V.), callous, hardened beyond feeling, but "self-condemned." The inward monitor has not ceased to speak; it is still doing its work to good purpose. "To sit alone with my conscience is judgment enough for me."

3, 4. **forbidding . . . commanding**: where God neither forbade nor commanded. Celibacy and asceticism were already in vogue when the Pastorals were written. "The liberty of a Christian man," for which Luther had long after to contend so strenuously, was imperilled. **which God created**. This was what the Gnostic denied. Flesh and matter were to him inherently bad, so bad that the great God could have had no hand in their creation, which must have been the work of some demigod. Such an idea the writer utterly repudiates. Christianity will have nothing to do with any morbid view of the world. In all things it is healthy-minded. If to some minds flesh seems intrinsically evil, "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." It is the thinker, not the thing, that is wrong. Christ has redeemed man's body as well as his soul, and He has taught His followers to make all meats clean (Mark vii. 19).

5. **it is sanctified**. All human life has been consecrated by the **word of God**, and is daily consecrated by **prayer**. "Word of God" does not mean exclusively the written word. One is tempted to write Word with a capital letter. In the highest sense, our earthly lot has been hallowed



by the living Divine Word, who became flesh and dwelt among men.

I Tim. iv. 6-16.

### A GOOD MINISTER.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, where-  
7 unto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.  
8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that  
9 now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful  
10 saying and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of  
11 those that believe. These things command and teach.  
12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in  
13 spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance  
14 to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.  
15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;  
16 that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

A good minister is nourished on the words of the faith, not on fables; he practises godliness, not asceticism; he is an example to believers; he is a zealous reader, exhorter, and teacher; cultivating his gifts and concentrating his energies, he makes visible progress; ever taking heed to his life as

much as to his teaching, he saves himself as well as his hearers.

6, 7. **nourished in the words.** "The words of the faith" are the bread of life. They do more than gratify the intellectual passion for learning; they create vital energy. Man lives by them (Matt. iv. 4). **fables.** Lit. "myths," described as profane and senile, bordering on the one hand on blasphemy, on the other on dotage. This applies equally to the grotesque imaginations of the Rabbis and the philosophical figments of the Gnostics.

8. **bodily exercise** refers not to athleticism but to asceticism. The writer approves of a due attention to the body. Some men would do well to fast more, others to eat more. It is a matter to be determined by common sense, and has a **little** bearing upon health and happiness. But **godliness** is beneficial for all things. It is characteristic of the writer's sober, practical habit of mind that he speaks of the **profitableness** of godliness. The utilitarian spirit, which wishes to make the best of both worlds, is not entirely absent. This is in harmony with the fact that a somewhat rigid and formal **piety** is here the highest conception, whereas in the earlier epistles faith in the risen Christ and ecstatic union with Him are the master-ideas.

10. **God . . . the Saviour.** See i. 1. **all men.** Divine grace is all-embracing, but it is by faith that some men receive it, and so are **specially** blessed.

12. **thy youth.** This may expose Timothy, as a spiritual guide, to criticism. But he may atone for "the crime of being a young man," and display qualities which will make him a shining

**example** to every believer. The position of **faith** in the ranks with the other graces, instead of being the leader of them all, calls for note (cf. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22).

13. **give heed to reading.** The public reading of the O.T. (Acts xiii. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 14); probably, too, by this time, of apostolic letters and evangelical memoirs.

14. **the gift that is in thee.** The gift, or Divine fire, is essential to the preacher. In the earlier epistles it falls on *all* believers, without any second cause, by the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. Here it is limited to the preacher, and mediated by the Church, first through the influence of prophetic voices, and second through the touch of holy men. The age of prophetic enthusiasm appears to have passed, and that of churchmanship begun.

15. Here the changes in the R.V. are important —“be diligent” for “meditate,” and “progress” for “profiting.”

16. **Take heed.** There is a climax in the words of urgent entreaty addressed to the preacher: take heed, neglect not, be diligent, give thyself, continue, save thyself. Eternal issues, for himself and others, hang on his fidelity.

#### I Tim. v. 1-16.

### THE CONSECRATION OF WIDOWHOOD.

Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the  
 2 younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers;  
 3 the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honour widows  
 4 that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children

or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents : for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works ; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse : for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry ; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged ; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

This passage presents difficulties. Some confusion is caused by the simultaneous treatment of two subjects—the Church's care of poor widows, and the establishing of an order of widows, rich or poor, to serve the Church. Only widows (in the ordinary sense) who are really destitute, homeless, and friendless are to be provided for

out of the Church funds. No one can be received into the sacred order of Church widows till she is sixty years of age, and unless she is devout and prayerful, with the record of a life already spent in good works. An unfavourable judgment is passed upon younger widows. Some of them have "turned aside unto Satan," and for this reason all of them are refused admission into the holy sisterhood. They are advised to remarry, in the hope that the grace of God may come to them along the channel of domestic duties.

1. **elder** means here senior, implying nothing official. Elder and younger men and women are to be treated as fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters. The Church is a holy family (see Matt. xii. 50).

4-8. **let them first learn.** "First" means before they seek Church relief. **them** is ambiguous. The meaning may be either that widows are to show their piety (or godliness) at home by caring (if they can) for their family, or that the family are to show their piety by caring for their widowed mother. Either sense is quite good. Not to provide for one's own is to be worse than **an unbeliever**, who obeys the dictates of nature and conscience (see Mark vii. 11-13).

9, 10. **enrolled as a widow.** Lit., "put on the catalogue." Frequent reference is made in the writings of the sub-apostolic age to this order of Church widows, consecrated to a life of prayer and good deeds. Evidently it resembled some modern sisterhoods. There is an entrance test which is decidedly severe: the candidates must

already have lived holy and beautiful lives of active usefulness.

12. **condemnation.** Probably the meaning is that younger widows have incurred the displeasure of the community because they have broken the vow of service which they have too rashly made. They have not kept **faith** with the Church. Therefore in future the younger widows are all to be refused admission into the new order. It is evident that this veto, like that on female prophesying, was of the nature of emergency legislation. It would soon be discovered that the age limit made many a good and faithful worker bury her talent in the earth.

1 Tim. v. 17-25.

#### TIMOTHY'S RELATION TO ELDERS— PERSONAL ADVICE.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double  
honour, especially they who labour in the word and  
18 doctrine. For the scripture saith, *Thou shalt not muzzle  
the ox that treadeth out the corn.* And, *The labourer is*  
19 *worthy of his reward.* Against an elder receive not an  
20 accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them  
21 that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I  
charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and  
the elect angels, that thou observe these things without  
preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.  
22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of  
23 other men's sins: keep thyself pure. Drink no longer  
water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and  
24 thine often infirmities. Some men's sins are open before-  
hand, going before to judgment; and some men they

25 follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

Elders are to be honoured, remunerated, and unmolested. Should one of them really offend in life or doctrine, he is to be reprovèd before his brethren. No man is to be hastily ordained, and there must be no favouritism. Judgment against offenders is sometimes very easy, sometimes very difficult. In a surprising digression Timothy is warned against asceticism in the form of total abstinence from wine.

17. **the elders.** In ver. 1 "elder" meant senior, here it means presbyter. Age has given a name to office. While all the elders **rule**, some are also engaged in **teaching**, and the latter are paid for their services.

18. **The labourer.** The quotation is from Luke x. 7, which seems to indicate that when the Pastorals were written the Evangelical narratives were already regarded as **scripture**.

19. **Against an elder.** This wise rule is taken from Deut. xix. 15.

20, 21. **before** (twice). Better, "in the sight of." Each elder is to live in the sight of all his brethren. Timothy is to realise that he is in the sight of God, Christ, and unfallen angels. The nearness of the good, and especially of the best, has an immense constraining and restraining power over us. The silent appeal from the eyes of those whom we honour and love is irresistible. The Greek word for **prejudice** (R.V.) is a Latinism, one of several which occur in the Pastorals.

22. **Lay hands hastily.** This probably refers

to the ordination of elders. The office is sacred, laxity and haste in the choice and appointment of officers is sacrilege. To condone or ignore sin is to share it.

23. In a digression Timothy is advised to drink a little wine, not as a beverage, but as a medicine. Up till that time he had been abstaining. It was the age of the Gnostic, who sought salvation by asceticism, making abstinence not only a regimen but a religion. Water-drinking had thus come to be associated with deadly error! At such a time a man is bound to assert his liberty, whether he uses it or not. It was in view of an entirely different situation that Paul, without laying down any law, stated a far higher principle (Rom. xiv. 21).

24, 25. **before . . . after.** Some men's sins are so patent that they seem to come to court before the culprit, making his trial a mere form; others will not come till they are hunted out of their lairs. Sooner or later man's goodness comes to light (cf. Ps. xxxvii. 6).

1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

### THE DUTIES OF SLAVES.

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and  
 2 his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

Christian slaves are greatly to honour, and faithfully to serve, their masters, whether pagan or



Christian. This will be for the glory of God and the gospel.

1. **under the yoke.** This is a reference to the old practice of making captives pass under a "yoke," formed of a spear laid on two upright spears, as the symbol of their degradation to slavery. Just because bond-service was the hardest of lots, it was the one in which Christians had the finest opportunity of displaying the power of faith. A great responsibility rested on Christian slaves, for many critical eyes were on them. If they were not better men and servants than others, would not their God and their creed be **blasphemed** by the heathen?

2. **believing masters.** They are men who recognise the spiritual liberty, equality, and brotherhood of all believers, sitting side by side with their slaves at the Table of the Lord. This wonderful change from the old tyrannical relationship puts Christian slaves on their honour. They will not for a moment imagine that they are free to be insolent to such men, who though their brothers in Christ are their masters still, to be served with all the greater heartiness and fidelity because they are **believing and beloved.**

I Tim. vi. 3-10.

### FALSE DOCTRINE.

- 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the
- 4 doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil sur-
- 5 misings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,

and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness :  
 6 from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with content-  
 7 ment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this  
 8 world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And  
 9 having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But  
 they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and  
 into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in  
 10 destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the  
 root of all evil : which while some coveted after, they have  
 erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with  
 many sorrows.

Those who teach unsound doctrine are proud, ignorant, disputatious, corrupt, covetous. Christians alone have true riches and know the secret of contentment. Covetousness exposes men to many temptations, and is the root of all kinds of evil.

3-5. **a different doctrine.** Opposed to the doctrine which is in harmony with **godliness** (see i. 3). In the writer's mind orthodoxy and reverence go together, while heterodoxy keeps company with impiety. Heretics are conceited, ignorant, quarrelsome, selfish. To those sweeping statements there were, one hopes, some exceptions. But the age of honest doubt was apparently not yet come. Heretics do not as a rule now try to appear godly for the sake of gain.

6. **But godliness . . . is . . . gain.** This is a pious afterthought. The writer would of course repudiate the idea of commending religion merely because it pays. He does not confound piety with prudence. Nevertheless, he thinks it well to assure his readers that godliness *is* gain. Perhaps he does it in the spirit of the philosophical maxim that virtue is its own reward.

7. **for neither** (R.V.). Here "for" seems

clearly (as Hort says) an intrusion; it mars the beauty of a pathetic utterance that links together birth and death. This is one of those rare cases where, in spite of all the MS. authority, the A.V. gives us what the author most probably wrote or dictated.

9, 10. **desire to be rich.** The evil of money lies in the **desire** for it, the love of it, the **reaching after** it, as if it were the chief good. The best as well as the worst of men have to seek it; but while the former consecrate it to God, and make it a blessing to the world, the latter spend it on their lusts, and make it a curse to everybody.

#### I Tim. vi. 11-16.

#### EXHORTATIONS TO FIDELITY.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow  
 after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meek-  
 12 ness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal  
 life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a  
 13 good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge  
 in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before  
 Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good  
 14 confession; that thou keep this commandment without  
 spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus  
 15 Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the  
 blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord  
 16 of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the  
 light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath  
 seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power ever-  
 lasting. Amen.

Timothy is to flee all that is evil and follow all that is good, to remember his own good confession

and that of his Lord, to keep the sacred charge he has received until the return of Christ, which will be effected by the one glorious God who is over all.

11. **man of God.** Like some O.T. prophet, called and dedicated to God's service (1 Kings xvii. 18, 24). "His one thought was God, in that one thought he abode." **righteousness.** In the great epistles righteousness is the gift of God, the state of acceptance with Himself into which one enters by faith. In the Pastorals (except in 2 Tim. iv. 8) it means ethical, subjective, human righteousness—right conduct between man and man. The position of **faith**, in the middle of a group of graces, instead of leading the van, is again remarkable, for what is meant is saving faith in God, not fidelity to man (cf. iv. 12).

12. **the good fight.** Here the figure is athletic rather than military, taken from the arena, not the field of battle. The contest is Faith against Unbelief, and the prize is eternal life. So 2 Tim. iv. 7. **the good confession**—that which every Christian ought to make (Matt. x. 32)—was made by Timothy before many witnesses. This may refer to his baptism, his ordination, or to that time of trial and imprisonment which is mentioned in Heb. xiii. 23.

13. **in the sight of God.** Timothy is reminded that there are still more august witnesses of his whole life. He is ever under the eyes of God and Christ Jesus. **who . . . witnessed.** The preacher's spirit is stirred by the memory of the grand pattern of all good confessions, that of Christ Himself before Pilate. How much it once cost to be true to one's convictions is pathetically

indicated by the fact that the word for **witness** (*martus*, whence "martyr") gradually came to mean one who laid down his life for the truth.

14. **the commandment.** This may mean either the charge contained in the present paragraph, or the whole Pastoral charge to hold and preach the gospel in its purity. **the appearing.** The Second Advent. There are two words for our Lord's return, and the one used in the Pastorals (*epiphany*) occurs but once in the earlier epistles, in a passage where it is combined with the other word—"the manifestation, or appearing, of His presence" (*parousia*, 2 Thess. ii. 8).

15. **only Potentate.** This splendid passage is probably another extract from a primitive Christian hymn or creed. In iii. 16 Christ was exalted, here **God** is glorified. The attributes in which He is clothed have a bearing on a definite situation. They meet and answer the spirit of the times. They are intended for the reflection of all who are either coquetting with the theosophy of the Gnostics or conniving at the apotheosis of the Cæsars. The repeated **only** is very impressive. What are all æons and emperors in the presence of the King of kings? He is the only Potentate; He only hath immortality.

#### I Tim. vi. 17-19.

#### PRECEPTS FOR WEALTHY CHRISTIANS.

- 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living  
 18 God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to dis-

19 tribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Christian men of wealth are exhorted to humility, faith, liberality, to preparation for the future, to thoughts of the only life which deserves the name.

17-19. **rich . . . rich** : in different senses. He who is rich in gold is urged to become rich in good works. Not he who has much, but he who gives much, is rich before God. The writer rings the changes on this theme. The one kind of wealth is uncertain, the other is sure as a bed-rock—a firm **foundation** on which one may build for all time to come. **life indeed**. This is in contrast with the sense-life, or self-life, which when it is over seems but a shadow, a vapour, a dream. Much that is called life is mere existence or vegetation. The life in God is real on both sides of the grave.

1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

#### FINAL APPEAL TO TIMOTHY.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of  
21 science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

20. **that which is committed**. Literally, "the deposit." The word occurs again in 2 Tim. i. 12, 14, and nowhere else. In the present passage there can be no doubt as to the meaning. The deposit is the treasure of evangelical truth—as dis-

tinguished from every kind of error—entrusted to Timothy's keeping. **oppositions.** Some scholars find in this word an allusion to Marcion's "Antitheses"—his tabulated passages from the Old Testament and the Gospel arranged to prove the difference of the two economies and the superiority of the latter. In that case the sentence must be (as Harnack thinks) a very late addition. But "antitheses" may mean any teaching opposed to true Christian doctrine. **knowledge falsely so called.** The word for knowledge is *gnosis*, and here a direct reference to the system of the Gnostics seems most probable. These teachers arrogated this name to themselves because they claimed to be able to penetrate the deepest secrets of existence by a purely rational knowledge. They stood at the opposite pole from the modern Agnostic, who disowns all knowledge of the ultimate mysteries of life. Their "knowledge" is here dismissed as "pseudonymous," falsely named; as so much **babble**, full of sound, empty of sense.

21. **have erred.** The word for "err" is confined to the Pastorals, where it occurs four times. It means "miss the mark," and there is pathos in this final touch. Heretics are not condemned to suffer. They need fear no inquisition. They have simply "missed the mark."

2 Tim. i. 1, 2.

## THE SALUTATION.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. The salutation is shorter than those at the beginning of the other Pastorals. **according to** is ambiguous. It may mean that Paul was called either on the ground of the promise, or for the sake of publishing the promise (cf. Tit i. 1). **my beloved son.** Better, **child** (as in 1 Tim. i. 2), always dear, and dearer than ever when the end is in sight. Here the word does not necessarily imply more than kinship of spirit, whereas the phrase used in 1 Tim. i. 2, "my true child in the faith," seems to presuppose spiritual parentage.

2 Tim. i. 3-14.

## THE SPIRIT OF POWER.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of  
4 thee in my prayers night and day; greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with  
5 joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.  
6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.  
7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power,  
8 and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his



prisoner : but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the  
9 gospel according to the power of God ; who hath saved us,  
and called us with an holy calling, not according to our  
works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which  
10 was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is  
now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus  
Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life  
11 and immortality to light through the gospel : whereunto I  
am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher  
12 of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these  
things : nevertheless I am not ashamed : for I know whom  
I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep  
that which I have committed unto him against that day.  
13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard  
14 of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That  
good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the  
Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Timothy is ever in Paul's thoughts and prayers. The apostle's confidence in him is based on two things—his personal and inherited faith, and his Divine gift or Charism. One of the marks of the true gospel is that it emancipates those who proclaim it from all fear and all shame. It gives them the spirit of power ; it clothes them with God's own might. It makes them willing to suffer, for it irradiates their lives with the hope of immortality.

3, 5. **forefathers . . . grandmother . . . mother.** Paul rejoices to remember that both he and his dearest friend have an inherited faith. Paul's ancestors served God, and Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice gave him an example of sincere faith. It was the influence of these devout women that constrained Timothy to accept Christ with all the ardour of young manhood. While faith is a personal relation to God,

it is unquestionably strengthened by the memory of a line of believing "forebears." Grace does not run in the blood, but it is natural and almost inevitable that the ties of religion should be entwined with those of home and kindred.

4. **tears . . . joy.** The younger man's tears at parting, the elder man's joy at meeting. Both of them were men of deep feeling, anything but Stoics. Timothy was probably the more emotional of the two, but Paul too had many melting moods (see 2 Cor. ii. 4; Phil. iii. 18), and bids others not only rejoice with those who do rejoice but weep with those who weep.

5. **thy mother.** Timothy belonged to that great company of sons—including Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, the Wesleys, not to speak of Jesus of Nazareth—whose spiritual indebtedness to their mothers has been inestimable.

6. **stir up the gift.** The English is less expressive than the Greek, which means "stir (the embers) into a flame." God's gift to the preacher of glowing heart and kindling speech needs assiduous attention to keep it from burning low like the dull glimmer of dying embers on the hearth. **laying on of my hands.** In 1 Tim. iv. 14 the imposition of the hands of the elders, not of Paul, is the medium by which the Divine fire comes to Timothy. But there is no contradiction if we regard Paul as presiding at the ordination, while the Presbytery assisted him. Protestants have agreed to interpret this rite as the outward sign and seal of an inward spiritual grace already imparted, Catholics as the mysterious means of there and then conveying Divine grace by a human channel. If the latter interpretation is correct—which is not improbable—the conception must be pronounced quite un-Pauline.

7. **a sound mind.** The R.V. has "discipline," meaning thereby the schooling of others. But "self-discipline" would probably come nearer the idea: "that calm self-possession, that presence of mind, which is the indispensable condition of all successful activity" (Köhler).

8. **suffer hardship with the gospel** (R.V.). Here the gospel is personified and regarded as sensitively suffering in a selfish world. Timothy is exhorted to suffer with it. But the more probable sense is, "Suffer hardship with me (Paul) on behalf of the gospel" (see ver. 12).

9. **saved us . . . called us.** "Us" means not merely "you and me," but all believers. The **holy calling** which they receive is both to a heavenly life and an earthly service. This beautiful passage on the work of Christ is saturated with Pauline ideas. One thing alone is new. The grace of God was not only prepared for us, but **given** to us, in Christ Jesus, before times eternal. Compare John's great conception of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8). The Atonement and its benefits are regarded *sub specie æternitatis*.

10. **abolished death** (see 1 Cor. xv. 55). For the Christian "there is no death, what seems so is transition." Christ has brought life and incorruption to light. Plato reasoned well, and gave a noble voice to the pathetic human longing after immortality. But he confessed that he was only groping in the region of shadows. The philosopher, the poet, the lover, and the saint have each his own special arguments for a Hereafter. But it is Christ who is the Light both of this world and the world to come. His objective

resurrection irradiated the spiritual land. It confirmed men's subjective aspirations and changed them into things most surely believed. It makes every Christian certain of a life beyond the grave.

12. **I know whom.** Better, "I know Him whom." The apostle has trusted God, and is persuaded that He is able to guard his **deposit**, that is, the treasure of evangelical truth which God has committed to him. There is a beautiful mutual trust. Paul is God's trustee, and will do his best to fulfil his sacred obligations, but he rejoices that God Himself, and no mere man, is the supreme and ultimate Trustee and Guardian of the faith. This is certainly the meaning of the word "deposit" in the two other passages where it occurs (1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14), and there is no reason for changing it here as both the A.V. and the R.V. do.

14. **guard by the Holy Ghost.** Timothy is enjoined to guard *his* deposit, received primarily from Paul, ultimately from God, and to do it in the might of the Holy Spirit who has taken up His abode in him as in all believers.

2 Tim. i. 15-18.

#### MANY APOSTATES AND A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be  
 16 turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Her-  
 17 mogenes. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of  
 18 my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out  
 very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Paul has been saddened by the desertion of some of his followers in the province of Asia, but he pours out his feelings of warm gratitude for the kindness of a Christian of Ephesus, who not only helped him when he was in that city, but has since then sought him out and cheered him in his Roman prison. "This short paragraph belongs to those portions of the Pastoral Epistles before whose naturalness and directness the critic is silenced. Here a genuine fragment of an apostolic letter has probably been used" (Köhler).

15. The two deserters named are otherwise quite unknown. Whether they should be called recreants from Christ as well as from Paul we cannot tell. Timothy no doubt knew them well.

16. **Onesiphorus** is one who does nothing by halves. He refreshes Paul "oft"; he seeks him out "diligently"; he ministers to him in "many things." He earns the blessing promised to those who do a kindness to Christ by visiting and ministering to a prisoner (Matt. xxv. 40).

18. **the Lord grant.** This parenthesis (R.V.) is a slender foundation for a doctrine of prayers for the dead, which some have built upon it. We have, first, no right to assume that Onesiphorus was dead; and, second, a fervent ejaculation is not the same thing as a deliberate, set prayer.

### 2 Tim. ii. 1-13.

#### ENDURANCE AND ITS REWARD.

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in  
2 Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me

among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful  
 3 men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou there-  
 fore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.  
 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs  
 of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him  
 5 to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet  
 6 is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husband-  
 man that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.  
 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understand-  
 8 ing in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed  
 of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:  
 9 wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds;  
 10 but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure  
 all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain  
 the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.  
 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we  
 12 shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign  
 13 with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if  
 we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny  
 himself.

Timothy is exhorted to suffer like a soldier, to strive like an athlete, to labour like a husbandman. He is to keep himself unentangled, that he may at any moment obey his Master's behests. He is cheered by thoughts of the risen Christ, by Paul's own example, by the vision of the eternal glory of God's elect. He is reminded that every man reaps as he sows.

2. **commit thou.** Or, "deposit thou." The noun is found in i. 12, 14. The writer is careful that there should be a tradition of Christian doctrine in the Church. He entrusts the truth to Timothy, who is to commit it to faithful (or believing) men, who will teach others, and so on. This is a fine conception—*Quasi cursores, vitæ*

*lampada tradunt.* But it is evident that "the real tradition of doctrine is dependent on the character of the teachers, and is not bound up with the privileges of a class" (Köhler). The apostolic succession is an evangelical succession.

3-5. **a good soldier.** Military language abounds in the Roman epistles. The soldier's life is one of **hardship**. He must put the claims of king and country above those of home and family. He must keep himself detached, **unentangled**, though the attachments of life are just the most pleasant part of it. Nor is the athlete's life easy. If the strong man who runs a race desires to win the victor's **wreath**, he must obey the rules of the sport to the letter. There is no prize to the competitor who does not "play the game." How much (the apostle often says to himself) the Christian has to learn from both the soldier and the athlete! What sacrifices they make, how terribly they toil, for their own ideal—military or athletic glory. Will not Timothy and every other Christian do as much for their Lord?

6. **The husbandman.** The emphatic word in this sentence is **laboureth**. The diligent, labouring husbandman, as distinguished from the idler, the fritter-day, will see the harvest first. The field of the slothful is described in Prov. xxiv. 30. Spiritual tillage is always toilsome; the office can never be a sinecure; but all husbandry is God's as well as man's (1 Cor. iii. 9), and He gives the increase.

8. **Remember Jesus Christ.** This is the Christian's inspiration as he goes to work and to war. He remembers not only the dead Christ of the past, but the **risen**, living Christ of the

present. He remembers Him at the Supper that he may remember Him everywhere.

9. **as a malefactor.** This term is historically exact. Paul was accused, and ultimately condemned, not as a Christian, but as a disturber of the peace, an **evil-doer**. To be a Christian was not in itself a crime till the days of Domitian (81-96 A.D.). **the word . . . not bound.** For so much liberty as this the captive is grateful. From his prison he is free to send forth winged words that will fly to the ends of the earth. His soul suffers from no prison damp or cramp. Other captives have rejoiced in the same freedom of the pen, and as splendidly used it: John on his rocky isle, Bunyan in his Bedford "den," Rutherford in his city by the Northern Sea.

10. **for the elect's sake.** Paul endures all things *in order that* the elect may obtain salvation with eternal glory. Election is not a Divine fiat that settles matters out of hand. It counts not only upon the vicarious suffering of Christ, but upon the ministerial labour and suffering of His Church. It is conditioned by human sympathy.

11-13. **faithful . . . saying.** The words thus introduced are doubtless an extract from another ancient hymn or confession. Their rhythm and euphony are perfect. They might well have been printed in poetical form. What courage they must have inspired in those days of persecution! They form one of the most beautiful and suggestive fragments of early Christianity. Some think that the words **if we died** refer to spiritual death in baptism, but there is more blood and fire in them than that. They mean "if we died as martyrs."



2 Tim. ii. 14-26.

## THE FAITHFUL PREACHER.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them  
before the Lord that they strive not about words to no  
15 profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to  
shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth  
not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.  
16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will  
17 increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat  
as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus;  
18 who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the  
resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of  
19 some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure,  
having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.  
And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart  
20 from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only  
vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth;  
21 and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man  
therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel  
unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and  
22 prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts:  
but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them  
23 that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and  
unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender  
24 strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but  
25 be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness  
instructing those that oppose themselves; if God per-  
adventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging  
26 of the truth: and that they may recover themselves out  
of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him  
at his will.

The servant of Christ the Lord is to be a faithful workman, diligent, consecrated, efficient; shunning what is unprofitable as well as what is evil,

ardently pursuing the true and the good; ever peaceful, gentle, forbearing; endeavouring by his spirit as well as his teaching to charm his opponents back from the mazes of error to the paths of repentance and obedience.

14. **strive-about-words.** From the Greek we derive our English term "logomachy." To wrangle about party catchwords and shibboleths is as unprofitable as beating the air. It **subverts the hearers.** If Christianity is only a battle of words, sane men wish to be saved from it.

15. **approved unto God.** Among these argumentative doctors Timothy cannot hope to win golden opinions. It would be no good sign if his words and actions commanded their approval. But that must not concern him. To his own Master he stands or falls. God's approval is enough.

17. **a gangrene.** This means a cancer in the Church, the body of Christ, extremely difficult to excise, and almost certain to grow again and again. An appalling image of the fatal results of the levity of spiritual guides.

18. **resurrection . . . past.** It is difficult to know exactly what was the doctrine of the two teachers named. Perhaps they asserted that the only resurrection which a Christian needs is spiritual. They may even have quoted a number of Pauline passages on that subject (such as Rom. vi. 11; Col. iii. 1), ignoring others which speak of a literal resurrection. If it had fallen to Paul himself to correct this error, would he not have given explanations?

19. **the foundation of God.** When so many strange doctrines were floating in the air, it was a comfort to think of what was stable. The

Church which God had founded was **firm** as His own eternal throne. After the manner of ancient temples and public buildings, the foundation is said to have two mystical inscriptions, the one regarding the mutual knowledge of Christ and His members, and the other regarding the holiness of those who name His Name.

20. **honour . . . dishonour.** Here the Church is regarded as a mixed society (cf. Matt. xiii. 47). Its members are like the vessels of a great house, to be honoured or dishonoured by the Master. The humblest member may be like a vessel of pure gold, the greatest like one of base pewter. What our Master looks for in all the members of His household alike is golden conduct.

“ Honour and shame from no condition rise :  
Act well thy part, there all the honour lies.”

22. **flee . . . follow.** This is excellent moral strategy. Do not fight, but flee, youthful lusts, and pursue other things. It is not the dictate of cowardice, but of common sense. The way to conquer temptation is to switch the mind entirely off what is evil and switch it on to what is good. We should now call this good psychology.

24. **must not strive.** The subject of this paragraph is “the Lord’s servant,” and here we learn that his doctrine is after all but one thing. His spirit and bearing towards all men, and especially his opponents, are equally important. He can accomplish as much by courtesy and charity as by preaching and teaching. The servant has always the Master as his model :

“ A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,  
The first true Gentleman that ever breathed.”

26. **taken captive.** The R.V. gives an entirely new turn to this difficult sentence, and introduces the beautiful idea, perfectly consonant with what has gone before, that it is the business of the Lord's servant to captivate souls to do the will of God. Every true preacher has a certain personal magnetism, a spiritual fascination, which is the gift of One who from the Cross takes all hearts captive.

2 Tim. iii. 1-9.

### DEGENERATES.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall  
 2 come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,  
 covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to  
 3 parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection,  
 trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers  
 4 of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded,  
 5 lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a  
 form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from  
 6 such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep  
 into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins,  
 7 led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able  
 8 to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes  
 and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the  
 truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the  
 9 faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly  
 shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

This passage is modelled on O.T. prophecy, opening with the formula, "in the last days." The list of twenty varieties of decadents in the coming times does not seem to be arranged in any logical order. There are pairs, such as "self-lovers, money-lovers"; "pleasure-lovers, God-lovers"; and

studied assonances which can scarcely be reproduced in English, like our "haughty, naughty"; "unthinking, unthanking." These degenerates are Christians only in name; their godliness is an outward show, not an inward power. They prey on the credulity of weak-minded women; they resist the truth; they are corrupt and reprobate.

4. **pleasure . . . God.** Alford quotes an interesting parallel in Philo about "people who are pleasure-lovers and passion-lovers rather than virtue-lovers and God-lovers."

5. **form . . . power.** "Form" has here its worst meaning; it is what Carlyle politely calls a simulacrum, and more rudely a sham.

6. **creep into houses.** Evidently the houses of ladies of society. "One has not to look far around in order to see feature after feature of this sharply-etched picture confirmed to-day, and that not only among the Jesuits" (Köhler). The word for "take captive," or **captivate**, is different from that in ii. 26. Unhappily there is not only the fascination of the Lord's servant, but that of the devil's.

8. **Jannes and Jambres.** These are the traditional names of the Egyptian magicians who by their enchantments imitated the miracles wrought by Moses before Pharaoh (Ex. vii. 11). They are found in some of the Targums, in Pliny, Polybius, and many other ancient authors. It is not like our Lord or Paul to quote such traditions.

9. **theirs also** refers to the same enchanters. The idea is that as much as Israel's wonder-worker was greater than Egypt's, so much is orthodoxy greater than heterodoxy. The illustration has now lost some of its force.

2 Tim. iii. 10-17.

## PAUL'S TEACHING AND EXAMPLE.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life,  
 11 purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecu-  
 tions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at  
 Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured. But  
 12 out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that  
 13 will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But  
 evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiv-  
 14 ing, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things  
 which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing  
 15 of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child  
 thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to  
 make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in  
 16 Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God,  
 and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for  
 17 instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may  
 be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Timothy has rightly resolved to walk in the footsteps of Paul, teaching, acting, suffering like his master. Every pious Christian must be ready for persecution, and while things are getting worse in the Church, Timothy must stand in the old paths, believing and expounding the inspired scriptures, which alone can give men saving wisdom, and equip the servant of God for every duty.

11. **what things befell me.** It seems to be implied that Timothy was a witness, if not a partaker, of those sufferings. But they were really experiences of the First Missionary Journey, before he became Paul's companion.

15. **the sacred writings.** The Hebrew Bible, or the Septuagint version of it. Timothy knew it

from a babe. To this day every Jewish boy has to commit long passages of the O.T. in the original language. By the time the Pastorals were written, portions of the N.T. were also probably regarded as holy scripture. **wise unto salvation.** An extremely suggestive phrase. There is no wisdom for wisdom's sake, any more than there is art for art's sake, in the Bible. It is all wisdom with an end—the salvation of sinners from their sin. It all counts for little or nothing till it is wisdom **up to** this consummation.

16. **Every scripture.** The R.V. gives the true rendering of this important passage. **inspired-of-God** means “filled with the breath of God.” Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and their great conceptions were enshrined in their books. Every writing that is thus inspired has abiding power to **teach** the ignorant, **reprove** the wrong-doing, **correct** the erring, and **train** in righteousness all men. The **man of God** who knows his Bible thoroughly is **complete** himself, and **completely equipped** for work among others.

#### 2 Tim. iv. 1-8.

#### LAST CHARGE TO TIMOTHY.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his  
 2 appearing and his kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant  
 in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all  
 3 longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when  
 they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own  
 lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching  
 4 ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and

5 shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full  
6 proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and  
7 the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith :  
8 henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

A last passionate appeal to Timothy to strain every nerve as a preacher and evangelist. Errors increase in the Church, religious fables find ready credence, and the truth needs a new champion to do and dare all things for her sake. Paul himself is about to quit the arena ; his days of fighting and running are over ; in his Lord's hand he sees the crown of life, and he goes to receive it.

1. **Christ . . . shall judge.** See John v. 27 ; Acts xvii. 31. **his appearing.** The word *epiphany*, used here, is almost confined to the Pastorals. "His coming" (*parousia*, presence) is the term used in the earlier epistles.

3. **itching ears.** Here the R.V. removes an ambiguity. It is not the teachers but the hearers whose ears itch. It is the business of the teachers to tickle such ears, and "heaps" of them are willing to do it. The hearers are delighted beyond measure ; they have found teachers after their own hearts. "After their own lusts," says the stern censor.

6. **being offered.** The Greek means, "I am being poured out as a libation." Seneca when dying a Roman death took water and poured out a libation "to Jupiter the Deliverer." Paul thinks of his own blood as the drink-offering presented to his



God (see Phil. ii. 17). **my departure.** Compare King Arthur's "I pass but shall not die." The Greek word suggests one or other of two ideas: "It is time that I move my tent," or, "It is time that I put out to sea." See Phil. i. 23.

7. **fight . . . course.** Life is an arena, where men try their strength with stout combatants, and their speed with swift runners. Paul loved such language; the idea of conflict stirred his blood; he carried the very spirit of the arena into far greater combats. Like Browning: "I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more, the last and the best!" **the faith.** This need not mean here—as in so many parts of the Pastorals—the Christian creed. It is rather the subjective personal faith by which Paul was first saved long ago in Damascus.

8. **the crown of righteousness.** It will be Paul's crown—his wreath of victory—to be acknowledged as righteous by **the righteous judge.** The beautiful phrase does not mean the reward of right conduct among men, but God's free gift of celestial righteousness. Here, as always in the N.T., **the Lord** means Jesus Christ.

#### 2 Tim. iv. 9-22.

#### PERSONAL DETAILS, AND SALUTATIONS.

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas  
10 hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is  
departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus  
11 unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark,  
and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for  
12 the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.  
13 The cloke that I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou

comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the  
 14 parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil :  
 15 the Lord reward him according to his works : of whom be  
 16 thou ware also ; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At  
 my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook  
 17 me : I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Not-  
 withstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me ;  
 that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all  
 the Gentiles might hear : and I was delivered out of the  
 18 mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every  
 evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom :  
 19 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Salute Prisca  
 20 and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus  
 abode at Corinth : but Trophimus have I left at Miletum  
 21 sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus  
 greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all  
 22 the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.  
 Grace be with you. Amen.

Some of these sentences bear on the face of them the stamp of authenticity. "It would be incomprehensible," as Köhler says, "that a later writer should make Paul express anxiety about books which he had left behind. Historical sense must acknowledge that we have here to do with a genuine epistolary fragment."

10. **forsook me.** Demas was one of Paul's companions in the earlier part of the Roman imprisonment. He is mentioned in Col. iv. 14, but without a word of praise, while others receive something like a distinguished service order. Now he is named as a deserter. He has gone over to the ranks of the enemy. He has followed his heart, which was already in the world. "Forsook" is very strong in the Greek. It is the word that is used in Matt. xxvii. 46, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

11. **Only Luke.** This sounds as if Luke's company did not amount to much. Read, "Luke alone." Nothing is farther from Paul's thoughts than to depreciate "the beloved physician." **Take Mark.** One can imagine how great an influence Paul exercised upon both of these men, who afterwards wrote the Second and Third Gospels.

13. **The cloke.** "Others translate the rare Greek word as 'book-holder,' and think of a case or bag in which Paul kept his precious rolls. That he had left such a piece of baggage behind him would be more easily understood than that he should after so long a time ask for his cloke" (Köhler). The books and parchments would then be the contents of the portfolio, but what the much-prized "books" themselves were we can only conjecture.

14. **will render.** The change of tense (R.V.) saves the writer from the appearance of vindictiveness. The malicious coppersmith may be the same Alexander who is mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20, or the one in Acts xix. 33. Paul had more than one thorn in the flesh.

16, 17. **no one . . . But the Lord.** This intensely pathetic passage recalls our Lord's own words when His end drew near: "Alone . . . yet . . . not alone" (John xvi. 32). **that all . . . might hear.** This implies that a profound impression was made in Rome by Paul's magnificent self-defence, which was at the same time a proclamation of **the message** of salvation in Jesus Christ. **the lion's mouth.** Are the words literal or figurative? Many Christians were flung by Nero to the lions of the amphitheatre. But Paul as a Roman citizen would not be in danger

of that ignominious death. Perhaps "the lion" was Nero himself.

18. **will deliver.** Death, before which so many shudder as the greatest of all evils, is welcomed by the apostle as the deliverance from **every evil work. kingdom . . . glory . . . for ever. Amen.** Just the same sequence of ideas is found in the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer.

19. **Prisca and Aquila.** Often mentioned as friends of the apostle; now settled at Ephesus. Prisca (or Priscilla) is usually named before her husband, and for this there was probably an obvious reason. **Onesiphorus.** See i. 16, 17.

20, 21. **Trophimus.** The Ephesian who was unwittingly the cause of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (Acts xx. 4, xxi. 29). The four Roman Christians who send Timothy greetings are otherwise unknown, except that Irenæus calls **Linus** the Bishop of Rome. Harnack dates his episcopate 64-78 A.D.

22. **with thy spirit . . . with you.** First a special greeting for Timothy alone; then a general one to all who are with him.

Tit. i. 1-4.

### GREETING.

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

This greeting is distinguished from those of all the other letters by its wealth of dogmatic statements. While it magnifies faith, knowledge, and godliness, it looks backward and forward to two eternities; it bases the gospel on an immemorial promise made by the God of truth; it rejoices in the time of fulfilment and in the Divine message to mankind.

1. **according to the faith** (R.V.). This rendering is very vague. If we read "with a view to," we at once obtain a definite meaning. Paul's apostleship is for the building up of the faith of God's people, and for the spreading of a full knowledge of the truth. **God's elect** are those whose very faith is the sign and seal of His purpose of grace.

2. **before times eternal.** Or, before times age-long; from time immemorial. "Before the world was" (A.V.) imports an idea more definite than the original contains. The language merely suggests the dim and distant past. It is popular, not philosophical. "From of old" and "from everlasting" are used in Scripture as synonymous (see Ps. xciii. 2; Mic. v. 2).

3. **manifested the word** (R.V.). To Jewish-Christian ears this could scarcely fail to suggest not only the spoken and written word, but the living incarnate **Word**. So Jerome and others have rendered here. If the suggestion were accepted, there would of course be a link between the Pastorals and the writings of John. **our Saviour.** Here the words are applied to God the Father, in the next verse to Christ the Son. As regards the singular vacillation of usage see p. 28.

4. **a common faith.** Not "the," as in A.V. The faith thus designated is not the common faith of the Church, but a faith which is common to the writer and Titus. This may be either subjective or objective.

Tit. i. 5-9.

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set  
 in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in  
 6 every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless,  
 the husband of one wife, having faithful children not  
 7 accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless,  
 as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not  
 8 given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a  
 lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy,

9 temperate ; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

The qualifications are much the same as those enumerated to Timothy. It is usually maintained that this paragraph proves the terms "elder" and "bishop" to be synonymous. Hatch declared a generation ago that this matter had been practically removed from the list of disputed questions. But it is not so certain that he was right. It is strange if two official designations were given to the same person. "Either it may be said that the word 'bishop' is not titular, but expresses function, describing the whole body of presbyters generally as 'overseers' of the flock of God ; or that the 'overseers' regarded as officers are represented as belonging to the class of presbyters and appointed from their number, which does not imply the identification of the official titles" (Vincent).

5. **things wanting.** That is, church organisation. **in every city :** of Crete. Homer calls this the island of a hundred cities. It was therefore a great task that was set for Titus. He had need to be a splendid organiser. **ordain** is too specific ; "appoint" is the meaning.

6. **faithful children.** In the old sense of "faith-full," "believing." This is an addition to the qualifications given in 1 Tim. iii. **riot.** The adverb "riotously" is found in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 13).

7. **the bishop.** On the whole it seems best to regard this term as still unofficial. We might read, "For he who has the oversight of others must be

blameless.” **greedy of filthy lucre.** Or, “given to unfair gain.” Polybius writes that “greed and avarice are so native to the soil of Crete, that they are the only people among whom no stigma attaches to any sort of gain whatever.” Titus’ mission to appoint elders in every city seems harder than ever. A tremendous revival is needed first.

9. **according to the teaching.** Here the word for teaching is *Didache*. One of the most important documents of the early Church is *The Didache of the Twelve Apostles*, written about 100–110 A.D., the manuscript of which was only recently discovered. In the sub-apostolic age there were evidently many attempts to fix a standard of doctrine and practice. **able to exhort.** Of whom is this spoken? It is evident that not every Cretan elder would be able to exhort assemblies and convict gainsayers. But how easy it is to deduce from this paragraph the idea that it is the elder *as bishop* who is alone sufficient for these things! And how natural to give the capable man power, to magnify his office, to honour him as the bulwark of Christianity! That is the way to Ignatius, the ardent advocate of episcopacy, and to Catholicism.

Tit. i. 10–16.

### THE FALSE TEACHERS.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers,  
 11 specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must  
 be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things  
 12 which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of  
 themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The  
 13 Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This



witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that  
14 they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to  
Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from  
15 the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto  
them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure;  
16 but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They  
profess that they know God; but in works they deny him,  
being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good  
work reprobate.

The heretics with whom Titus has to contend are mostly Jewish Christians. They practise circumcision, they love Jewish fables, they distinguish between clean and unclean meats. Yet it is assumed that they are Cretans, with the notorious characteristics of the race. They are Cretanised Jews! They pervert whole families, and extract money from their dupes. Such men are to be dealt with sharply and summarily. Their mouths must be shut, for their lives deny the God their lips confess.

10. **unruly men.** More accurately, "insubordinate." The Church is regarded as a kind of army of salvation, in which there are superior officers to whom obedience is due. Heretics are to be treated as insubordinate. Their mouths must be stopped to prevent their doing further mischief—making more rebels like themselves. Still there is no thought of persecution. As yet the Church's only weapon of repression is the sword of the Spirit. If the preacher cannot touch the heart and reach the conscience, he has no short and easy method to fall back upon. **vain talkers.** One word in the Greek—"chatterers."

11. **they ought not.** Men sometimes teach error with the conviction that they have a message

from God which they **ought** to deliver. However far they have gone astray, they are perfectly honest and sincere. Apparently, however, Titus has not to deal with this nobler kind of aberration. He is to assume that all heresy is rooted in some moral baseness.

12. **a prophet.** The poet Epimenides was the author of the hexameter here quoted. He lived in Crete about 600 B.C. Köhler says: "The author calls him a prophet because he is such in the opinion of his own admirers, not because he personally believes him to be one." As if he merely meant to say "a so-called prophet of theirs." But this is not enough. The writer has the mysterious feeling that this stern censor of morals *was* in some sense a prophet speaking for God, who, as Paul said at Lystra, "left not Himself without witness" (Acts xiv. 17). **Cretians . . . liars.** "To talk like a Cretan" was a popular saying that was always received with amusement or contempt. Every one knew what it meant.

13. **This testimony is true.** Namely, the testimony that Cretans are always liars. No politician who cared for his reputation would dare to quote and confirm such an utterance. A much milder censure from his lips or pen would be keenly resented and never forgiven. But it is by just such faithful dealing that the prophet gains his power. If he is a dumb dog that cannot bark, he has mistaken his calling. If only he speaks the truth in love, every allowance is made for his hyperboles.

14. **commandments of men.** These were condemned by our Lord (Matt. xv. 9). The

great moral laws of God are enough; they stand in no need of vexatious human additions.

15. **to the pure all things are pure.** The ascetics tried to make themselves inwardly clean by outward purity. They abjured pleasant foods, social joys, love, and such like. They felt that they ought to loathe all things agreeable to the flesh as being inimical to the soul. They began at the wrong end. Christianity starts by making the heart pure, the conscience clean; it restores the spirit to conscious harmony with God; then all the natural joys of life become pure and holy.

16. **They profess . . . they deny.** Is the testimony of their lips or their lives to be accepted? They hide their guilty secret from men, but not from God. Their words confess Him, their works deny Him. Their faith is sound, but their characters will not bear examination. Dante gives them a painted face and a cloak of lead—the intolerable burden of a false life.

#### Tit. ii. 1-15.

#### RELATIVE DUTIES.

- But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine :
- 2 that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in
  - 3 faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things ;
  - 4 that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love
  - 5 their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
  - 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works:  
 in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,  
 8 sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that  
 is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil  
 9 thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto  
 their own masters, and to please them well in all things;  
 10 not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all  
 good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God  
 11 our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that  
 12 bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching  
 us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we  
 should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this  
 13 present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the  
 glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour  
 14 Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might  
 redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a  
 15 peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things  
 speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let  
 no man despise thee.

Titus is to exhort aged and young men and women to fulfil their Christian duties, in all things showing a good example. He is to exhort slaves to be obedient and faithful. For the grace of God has come with a message for all men, offering a finished salvation, presenting a perfect ideal, fostering a blessed hope.

2. **sober, grave.** Wordsworth seemed to find this ideal realised in the kind of speech—

“Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,  
 Religious men, who give to God and Man their dues.”

**sound in faith.** Faith is here probably subjective, not objective—the faith which receives, not the faith which is accepted. For it is associated with the graces of love and patience.

3. **reverent in demeanour.** The word translated "reverent" (R.V.) is very expressive. It implies that the aged matron is to be a priestess in the sanctuary of the Home, having dedicated herself to the service of a God who really hallows the Hearth, as the old Penates (household gods) never could. **given to much wine.** The Greek verb is stronger—"enslaved." It is notoriously more difficult to save a female than a male drunkard. **teachers-of-the-good.** One word in Greek. "The good" means the morally beautiful. Matrons who have a fine morale of their own cannot fail to make it attractive to others.

5. **in subjection.** See Col. iii. 18; Eph. v. 22. **keepers at home.** The better reading is "workers at home." Home is regarded as woman's normal sphere, in which as a rule she can best glorify God. Christianity comes to emancipate women in many ways, but it begins by making the old perennial obligations of wifehood and motherhood more sacred than ever.

6, 7. **an ensample.** It is good to exhort young men, but far better to touch them by the influence of a pure and holy life. A single concrete instance is more convincing to them than a whole array of abstract principles. They like to see ideal virtue clothed in flesh and blood. They may resist all the arguments of logic and the appeals of rhetoric, but they yield to the fascination of a noble personality.

8. **may be ashamed.** Christian lives are the best "evidences of Christianity." High characters and holy lives have to be explained. Pure goodness has shamed many a caviller first into a silent respect for religion, and then into an enthusiastic profession of faith.

10. **adorn the doctrine.** One of the highest conceptions in the Bible. No archangel can do more, and no slave need do less, than fulfil it. By the life he leads and the spirit he breathes the meanest toiler may shed lustre on the doctrine of God his Saviour, may win *éclat* for the religion which has brought heavenly joy into his dark and cheerless lot. "God gets His highest praise from the lips of little children, His robes of glory from the faithfulness, honesty, and simplicity of slaves" (Chrysostom).

11. **salvation to all men** (R.V.). God loves all men, Christ has atoned for all men, salvation is offered to, and should be pressed upon, all men (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 4).

12. **soberly, righteously, and godly.** We are to live in these three ways—for ourselves, for others, and for God. The three words cover the whole range of Christian duties.

13. **the blessed hope.** "Hope" means here the thing hoped for, the hope laid up in the heavens—the Second Coming of Christ. So in common language we talk of looking and waiting for our hope—say a ship to appear in the offing bringing home to us a beloved friend. **our great God and Saviour.** Is there one subject here, or two? God and Christ, or Christ who is God? Grammatically either way is correct. The A.V. chooses the one reading, the R.V. the other. There are many passages in the O.T. which predict the personal appearing of the hitherto invisible God, but this is not a N.T. conception. Rather, "the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father" (Matt. xvi. 27). The revised reading is therefore in harmony with the

faith of the early Church. And how it emphasises the divinity of Christ—our great God!

14. **redeem . . . purify.** Two aspects of our Lord's saving work. He came to a race bound with the fetters, and stained with the defilement, of sin. He liberates and purifies them—makes them holy freemen—and then keeps them for ever as His special treasure, His priceless **possession**, zealous of **good works**. His "treasure-people" have a joyful sense of being called to labours of love. Idleness would be misery to them. And they devote themselves to "good works" which are really good. They are all zealots (literally, "boiling") for social beneficence, philanthropic service. Their enthusiasm for Christ means enthusiasm for humanity.

15. **authority.** This is the authority of personality, not of office; the moral influence of the man who feels that the truth which has gripped him is a thousand times greater than himself. He is endued with power from on high. He is the opposite of the man who is "dressed in a little brief authority."

### Tit. iii. 1-11.

#### THE PHILANTHROPY OF GOD.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good  
 2 work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but  
 3 gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and  
 4 envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man ap-

5 peared, not by works of righteousness which we have done,  
 6 but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing  
 7 of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which  
 8 he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our  
 9 Saviour ; that being justified by his grace, we should be  
 10 made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is  
 11 a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm  
 constantly, that they which have believed in God might  
 be careful to maintain good works. These things are  
 good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions,  
 and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the  
 law ; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is  
 an heretick after the first and second admonition reject ;  
 knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth,  
 being condemned of himself.

Christians are to be exhorted to be good, law-abiding citizens, ready to fulfil every obligation to the Government of the country. If they are maligned for their faith, they are to be gentle and meek. Let them humble themselves by keeping green the memory of their own past heathen life, and by ever fresh thoughts of the Divine mercy which alone has made them heirs of life eternal. Titus is instructed to give his mind to things practical and edifying, to avoid foolish questions, and to deal faithfully with heretics.

1. **subject to rulers.** Christians are to be good subjects, ready to do their duty to the State, giving the authorities no just cause of complaint (cf. Rom. xiii. 1).

2. **gentle.** "Sweetly reasonable." See Phil. iv. 5. **meekness.** See Matt. xi. 29. The words occur together in 2 Cor. x. 1.

3. **we . . . aforetime.** The author distinctly



includes himself among those who formerly led a life of heathenish vice. He remembers it with grief and shame; it moves him now to meekness and gentleness. But how difficult it is to think of Paul, the morally blameless Pharisee, looking back upon a time when he was "the slave of divers lusts and pleasures"! It is significant that neither of the words "divers" and "pleasures" ever occurs before the Pastorals.

4. **love toward man.** Literally, "philanthropy." The writer teaches, not that the Atonement purchased God's benevolence, but that God's love toward the human family **appeared** in the Atonement. All human philanthropy is put in the shade by the splendid philanthropy of God toward a world of sinners.

5. **saved through the font, or laver** (Vulgate, *lavacrum*). This is the true reading. "The font of regeneration" is a phrase which has done much harm. It stands parallel to "the renewing of the Holy Ghost"—a material and external means of salvation beside an inward and spiritual. If the one was really meant to be symbolical and the other literal, the ambiguity is scarcely less than tragic. For how great is the temptation to emphasise what seems primary at the expense of what is secondary. Regeneration by the font is so easy, regeneration by spiritual renewal so difficult. Here is the birthplace of Catholicism, Roman and Anglican.

8. **Faithful is the saying.** Probably here as elsewhere the phrase is not meant to clench what has just been said, but to prepare the mind for what is coming. Here it is the connection between faith in God and the maintenance of good works

that is emphasised. Instead of "to maintain good works" we might read "to be foremost in, to excel in, good works." To all believers the testing question is, "What do ye more than others?" Good works are not the ground of salvation, but a real salvation never stops short of them.

9. **genealogies.** Many Jewish Christians seem to have had an insane passion for pedigrees of men, which the Gnostic Christians changed into an equally fatuous fondness for the genealogies of angels.

10, 11. **heretical.** The word has two meanings—schismatic and heterodox. The heretic either rends the seamless garment of Christ, or else denies some part of the Church's system of sound doctrine. For a while the first meaning predominated (1 Cor. xi. 19; Gal. v. 20), then the other prevailed, and "the Roman Church has written the history of the word in blood" (Köhler).

Tit. iii. 12-15.

#### PERSONAL DIRECTIONS.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be  
diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have  
13 determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and  
Apollon on their journey diligently, that nothing be want-  
14 ing unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good  
15 works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All  
that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in  
the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

That these words are Pauline in the strict sense there is no reason to doubt. The Nicopolis (city of victory) referred to is probably the one in

Epirus, built to commemorate the decisive battle of Actium; not the city of that name either in Cilicia or in Thrace. This is the only reference to Paul's missionary activity in that quarter, and the date of his wintering there cannot be fixed.

12, 13. **Artemas** and **Zenas** are mentioned only here. Zenas was a lawyer in the sense that he had once been a teacher of the Jewish Law. His eminence as a Christian is indicated by the fact that his name is counted worthy to be coupled with that of Apollos the famous apostle. The two men may have been assisting Titus in the evangelisation of Crete. How much early Church history has passed into oblivion! The apocryphal "Acts of Titus" do not help us in the least.

14. **for necessary uses.** For the maintenance of Christian ordinances.



# INDEX

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Abbott's *Onesimus*, 10.  
Abounding, 53, 168, 198.  
Access, 125, 131.  
Adam and Eve, 214.  
Adoption, 107.  
Adorning the doctrine, 266.  
Æons, 8, 42, 44, 207, 211.  
Afflictions of Christ, 46.  
Alienated, 45, 142.  
Altruism, 114.  
Angel-worship, 42, 59, 61, 116.  
Anger, 145.  
Apostle, 32, 129, 139.  
Apphia, 88.  
Archippus, 85, 88.  
Aristarchus, 83.  
Armour of God, 160, 161.  
Arnold, Matthew, 38, 79, 171.  
Artemas, 271.  
Ascension, 138.  
Asceticism, 26, 64, 220, 263.  
Augustus, 17.  
Authority, 267.

Baptism, 111, 155, 269.  
Baxter, Richard, 80.  
Beloved, 88, 108, 193.  
Bengel, 21, 66.  
Biology, 141.  
Bishops, 25, 165, 215, 216,  
259.  
Blasphemy, 69, 229.  
Bodily exercise, 222.

Body, human, 64, 192.  
Body of Christ, 43, 45, 47,  
117, 141, 156.  
Boldness, 94, 131, 162.  
Bond of ordinances, 58.  
Bowels of mercy, 72.  
Branded in conscience, 220.  
Bride of Christ, 155.  
Brotherhood, 92, 98.  
Browning, 56, 172, 189.  
Bunyan, 206.

Cadmus, 6.  
Cæsarea, 5, 170.  
Cæsars, 2, 233.  
Cæsar's household, 199.  
Captive, 248, 249.  
Catholicism, 260, 269.  
Chief of sinners, 207.  
Children, 76, 140, 158.  
Children of God, 181.  
Children of light, 146, 150.  
Christology, 8, 22, 40, 176.  
Chrysostom, 266.  
Church, 16, 80, 116, 117, 131.  
Churchmanship, 223.  
Circular letter, 15, 103.  
Circumcision, 57, 122, 187.  
Citizenship, 13, 174, 192.  
Clement of Rome, 29, 30, 189.  
Clope, 255.  
Colossians, 5.  
Comfort, 50.

- Coming, second, 67, 167, 233.  
 Commandment with promise, 157.  
 Commandments of man, 262.  
 Complete, 57.  
 Concision, 187.  
 Contentment, 195, 196.  
 Corrupt speech, 145.  
 Course of the world, 119.  
 Covetousness, 68.  
 Creation in Christ, 42, 121.  
 Creeds, primitive, 218, 233, 244.  
 Cretans, 260, 262.  
 Cross, 44, 58, 125, 179, 191.  
 Crown, 193, 243.  
  
 Dante, 73, 139, 263.  
 Day of Jesus Christ, 167.  
 Dead in sin, 58, 118.  
 Death abolished, 239.  
 Death of Paul, 29.  
 Defence, 168.  
 Demas, 84, 254.  
 Denney, Prof., 42.  
 Departure, 173, 253.  
 Deposit, 234, 240, 242.  
 Didache, 27, 260.  
 Disobedience, 69.  
 Divine discontent, 37.  
 Dogs, 187.  
 Door, open, 79.  
 Drunkenness, 152.  
  
 Earnest, 112.  
 Eastern speculation, 7.  
*Ecce Homo*, 72.  
 Eclectics, 7.  
 Elders, 225, 227, 258, 260.  
 Elect, 72, 244, 257.  
 Election, 104, 107.  
 Empire, influence on Paul, 16, 110.  
  
 Emptied Himself, 178.  
 Empty words, 149.  
 Enemies of the Cross, 191.  
 Enlightenment, 112, 131.  
 Envy, 171.  
 Epaphras, 6, 35, 83, 102.  
 Epaphroditus, 185.  
 Ephesians, 13, 103.  
 Epimenides, 262.  
 Episcopacy, 25, 260.  
 Euodia and Syntyche, 193.  
 Evil day, 161.  
 Exaltation of Christ, 179.  
 Example, 265.  
  
 Fables, 28, 203, 222.  
 Faction, 177.  
 Faith, 27, 90, 175, 219, 223, 232.  
 Faithful, 33, 103.  
 Faithful sayings, 25, 207, 269.  
 Family, 133.  
 Farrar's *Darkness and Dawn*, 10.  
 Fear and trembling, 158, 180.  
 Fear of Christ, 153.  
 Fellowship, 91, 167, 197.  
 Fellow-soldiers, 88.  
 Fiery darts, 162.  
 Fight, good, 232.  
 Firstborn, 41, 43.  
 Flesh and blood, 161.  
 Flesh, confidence in, 188.  
 Font, 269.  
 Forbearance, 194.  
 Forefathers, 237.  
 Forgiveness, 39, 72, 109, 145, 146.  
 Form of God, 178.  
 Form of a servant, 178.  
 Forms of Church service, 25.  
 Foundation, 126, 246.

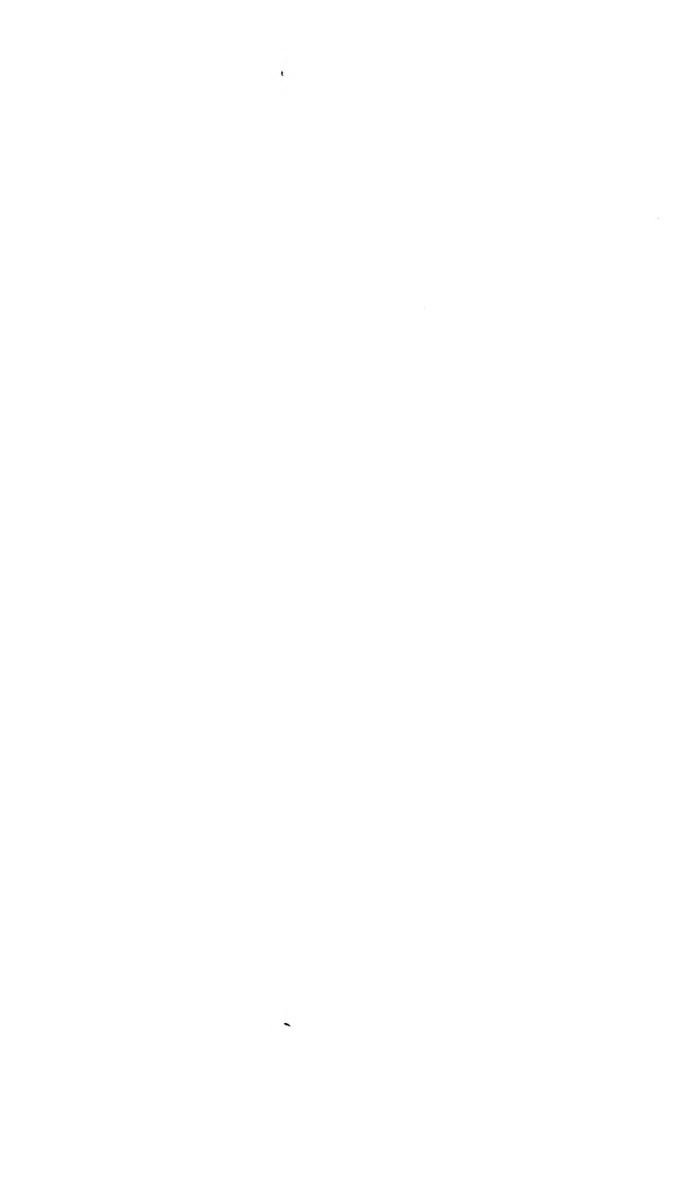
- Fulfilling the word of God, 47.  
 Fulness, 16, 44, 54, 56, 117, 140.  
 Gains, 173, 188, 230.  
 Gangrene, 246.  
 Genealogies, 203, 270.  
 Gentiles, 142.  
 Gibbon, 62.  
 Gifts, 24, 138, 223.  
 Giving and receiving, 196, 197.  
 Glory, 48, 199.  
 Gnosticism, 7, 8, 9, 42, 211, 235.  
 Godet, 13.  
 Godhead, 56.  
 Godliness, 210, 218.  
 Good works, 24, 121, 267.  
 Grace, 35, 108, 120, 206.  
 Gravity, 210, 264.  
 Greetings, Eastern and Western, 33.  
 Hands, laying on of, 25, 223, 238.  
 Hardening of the heart, 142.  
 Hardship, 239.  
 Harnack, 17, 29, 235.  
 Hazarding, 185.  
 Headship of Christ, 43, 57, 62, 116, 117.  
 Healthy-mindedness, 26, 220.  
 Heavenly places, 16, 106, 161.  
 Hellenism, 8, 33, 195.  
 Heretical, 270.  
 Heterodoxy, 203, 230.  
 Hidden life, 66.  
 Hierapolis, 6, 85.  
 Holiness, 45, 107.  
 Holy Spirit, 111, 112, 133, 146, 152.  
 Honour and dishonour, 247.  
 Hope, 34, 48, 115, 201, 266.  
 Horace, 173.  
 Hospitality, 101.  
 House of God, 218.  
 Humiliation of Christ, 22, 178.  
 Humility, voluntary, 61.  
 Husbands and wives, 75, 154.  
 Hymns, 74, 152.  
 Hypocrisy, 219, 263.  
 Ignatius, 216, 260.  
 Ignorance, 142.  
 Image of God, 41, 70.  
 Imitation of Christians, 191.  
 Imitation of God, 147.  
 In Christ, 33, 76, 103, 163, 170.  
 Inheritance, 110, 115.  
 Initiated, 70, 197.  
 Isaac Walton, 106.  
 Jannes and Jambres, 249.  
 Jesus Justus, 83.  
 Jowett, 21.  
 Joy, 21, 46, 91.  
 Jülicher, 9.  
 Justification of faith, 3, 189.  
 Keepers at home, 265.  
 King eternal, 207.  
 Kingdom of Christ, 39, 149.  
 Knowledge, 37, 51, 52, 134, 188, 235.  
 Labour, 49, 145, 243.  
 Laodicea, 14, 50, 84, 85, 103.  
 Larger hope, 44.  
 Law, 58, 59, 124, 204.  
 Learning Christ, 141, 143.  
 Less than the least, 130.  
 Libation, 181.  
 Liberty, 3, 59, 60, 63.  
 Life of God, 142.  
 Lightfoot, 13, 20, 35, 95, 106.

- Likeness of men, 178.  
 Lodging, 101.  
 Loss for Christ, 188.  
 Love, 12, 51, 73, 94, 132, 134,  
     148, 155, 168, 204.  
 Lowliness, 137, 177.  
 Luke, 30, 84.  
 Luther, 63, 89, 128.  
 Lycus valley, 6, 7.  
 Lying, 70, 145, 262.
- Mæander, 6.  
 Malefactor, 243.  
 Man of God, 232.  
 Man, old and new, 70.  
 Marcion, 14.  
 Margaret Wilson, 47.  
 Mark, 83.  
 Marriage, 156.  
 Martyr, 233.  
 Mediators, 57, 211.  
 Men-pleasers, 159.  
 Metaphors, mixed, 53.  
 Milton, 42, 55, 159.  
 Mind of Christ Jesus, 175.  
 Minister, good, 221.  
 Mommsen, 19, 171.  
 Money, 18, 196, 198.  
 Monod, 47.  
 Monogram, Paul's, 24, 33,  
     102.  
 Music, 74.  
 Mystery, 47, 48, 51, 79, 109,  
     156, 218.  
 Mystics, 8, 133.  
 Myths, 222.
- Name above every name, 176,  
     179.  
 Nero, 30, 199, 255.  
 Nicopolis, 270.  
 Nymphas, 85.
- Obedience, 157, 158.  
 Old age, 95.  
 Oneness in Christ, 70.  
 Onesimus, 11, 82, 95.  
 Onesiphorus, 241.  
 One thing I do, 189.  
 Oppositions of science, 235.  
 Optimism, 110, 189.  
 Ordinances, 63.  
 Ordination, 228, 238.  
 Orthodoxy, 23, 203, 230.
- Palace, 170.  
 Partition wall, 124.  
 Pastoral Epistles, 23.  
 Pastoral joy, 177.  
 Pastor's Charge, 203.  
 Pastors and teachers, 139.  
 Patience, 38.  
 Peace, 33, 121, 124, 125, 137.  
 Peace of God, 73, 194.  
 Perfect, 189, 191.  
 Perfecting, 139, 167.  
 Perhaps, 98.  
 Persuasiveness, 52.  
 Philanthropy, 269.  
 Philemon, 9, 10, 88, 90.  
 Philippi, 17.  
 Philippians, 17, 165.  
 Philo, 42.  
 Philosophy, 52, 55.  
 Piety, 24, 210, 222.  
 Plato, 239.  
 Political problems, 12, 76, 158.  
 Potentate, 233.  
 Prætorian Guard, 3, 171.  
 Prayer, perseverance in, 78.  
 Prayers for all men, 209, 210.  
 Prayers of Paul, 34, 114,  
     168.  
 Preaching Christ, 169, 171.  
 Predestination, 107.  
 Pre-cminence, 44, 172.



- Prince of power of air, 119.  
 Principalities, 56, 116.  
 Prisoner of Jesus Christ, 87,  
     128, 137.  
 Prize, 178.  
 Progress of the gospel, 170.  
 Prophecies on Timothy, 208.  
 Prophets, 25, 126, 139, 262.  
 Providence, 98.  
 Purity, 263.  
 Putting off and putting on,  
     143.  
 Quickening, 58, 125.  
 Raised with Christ, 57, 65.  
 Ramsay, Sir W., 29, 30, 80,  
     158, 171.  
 Ransom, 211.  
 Reading, 25, 223.  
 Reasonableness, sweet, 194,  
     268.  
 Reconciliation, 41, 44, 125.  
 Redemption, 108, 112, 267.  
 Regeneration, 269.  
 Rejoicing, 172, 186, 194.  
 Reproving sin, 149.  
 Resurrection, 115, 189, 246.  
 Revelation, 129.  
 Reverent, 265.  
 Riches, 73, 130, 133, 199,  
     234.  
 Righteousness, 189, 232, 253.  
 Rome, 1.  
 Rudiments, 55.  
 Rulers, 210, 268.  
 Running and labouring, 181.  
 Rutherford, 87, 128.  
 Sacrifice, 148, 198.  
 Saints, 32, 103, 148.  
 Salt, 80.  
 Salvation, 172, 180, 215, 266.  
 Saviour, 28, 154, 258, 266.  
 Scripture, 251.  
 Scythians, 71.  
 Sealed, 111.  
 Shadow and substance, 61.  
 Shamefastness, 213.  
 Shipwreck of faith, 208.  
 Sincerity, 164.  
 Slaves, 76, 96, 158, 159,  
     228.  
 Sobriety, 213, 264.  
 Social problems, 12, 76, 158.  
 Soldier, good, 243.  
 Sorrow upon sorrow, 184.  
 Sound doctrine, 24, 202, 205,  
     264.  
 Sound mind, 238.  
 Spain, 29, 30.  
 Spoiling, 54.  
 Steadfastness, 53.  
 Stealing, 145.  
 Stewardship, 47.  
 Stoicism, 28, 38, 196.  
 Strabo, 6.  
 Strait, 173.  
 Strife about words, 246.  
 Subjection of women, 75, 154,  
     213.  
 Subjection to rulers, 268.  
 Suffering, fellowship in, 189.  
 Summing up all things, 110.  
 Teaching, 24, 205, 260.  
 Tennyson, 194.  
 Thanksgiving, 74, 78, 89, 149,  
     153.  
 Theosophy, 7, 41.  
 Thessalonica, 198.  
 Thinking, 195.  
 Time redeemed, 80, 152.  
 Times eternal, 258.  
 Timothy, 32, 183, 250.  
 Toleration, 170.

- Truth, 111, 140, 161.  
Tychicus, 82, 163.
- Unity, 137, 140, 174, 177, 192.  
Universe, 110.  
Unruly men, 261.
- Van Manen, 22.
- Walk, 38, 53, 137, 151.  
Water-drinking, 228.  
Weeping, 191, 238.  
Widows, 224, 225.  
Will of God, 32, 108, 210.  
Will-worship, 64.  
Wine, 228, 265.
- Wisdom, 37, 52, 114, 131.  
Witness, 233.  
Wives, 75, 216.  
Woman's sphere, 212, 214.  
Word of Christ, 73.  
Wordsworth, 264.  
Workmanship of God, 117.  
World, 35, 63, 119.  
Wrath, 69, 119.
- Xenophon, 6.
- Yoke, 229.  
Yokefellow, 193.  
Youth, 222.
- Zenas, 271.







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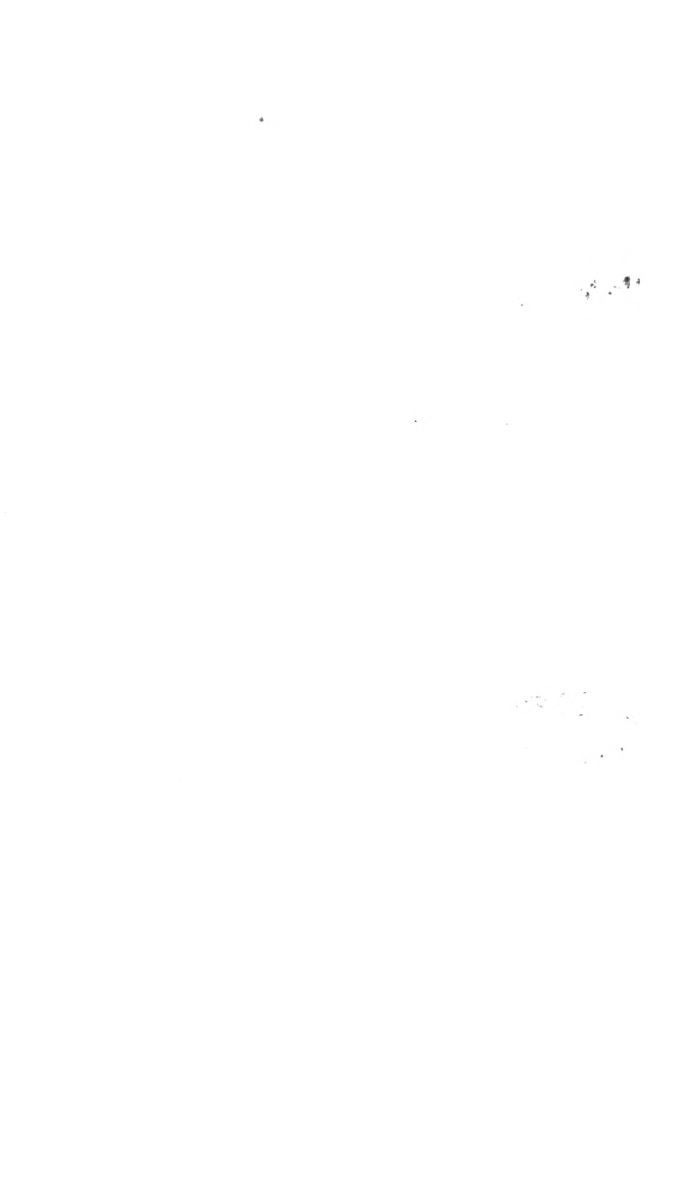
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