Notes on 1 Corinthians

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1 Corinthians 1-4

Notes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians with a new translation.

1 Corinthians 1.

The epistle on which we are about to enter gives us more than any other an inner view of the church or assembly of God. It does not, like the epistle to the Romans, lay the foundation of divine righteousness. But it is not at all contracted in its scope. It deals with the practical conduct of the Christian, as well as the public walk of the assembly. It maintains the authority of Paul's ministry as apostle. It denounces party spirit. It exposes worldly wisdom. It insists upon the power of the Spirit. It urges godly order both in the Lord's institution of the eucharist, and in the use of the gifts or spiritual manifestations. It commands holy discipline. It reproves litigiousness, — above all before the world. It presses personal purity; it counsels the saints as to social and family difficulties, as to their relations with the heathen, as to decorum, privately or publicly, in men or women. Finally, it meets their speculations as to the future state, and shows how an error as to this jeopards soundness of faith as to Christ Himself, holiness of walk meanwhile, and the brightness and strength of the Christian's hope. Nor does it withhold the light of God from a matter seemingly so trivial as the mode of collection for the poor saints, whilst it adjusts also the mutual relations of those who laboured on the spot and of those who might visit them.

From this sketch, slight as it is, one sees how varied and momentous are the topics handled in the first epistle to the Corinthians; and an examination in detail will manifest the holy wisdom, the burning zeal, the delicacy of affection, the admirable elasticity with which the apostle was enabled by the inspiring Spirit to throw himself, heart and mind and soul and strength yet always in the name of the Lord, into their most critical circumstances. For he writes from Ephesus, not far from the close of his three years' abode in that city, when, to any other man than Paul, it might have seemed that his labours for a year and a half at Corinth were fatally compromised. But not so: the Lord, who had cheered him on soon after his arrival at Corinth, strengthened his faith now so severely taxed at Ephesus. "I have much people in this city" were words then to stimulate, now to sustain his hope in God spite of many fears, and in the midst of the deepest exercises of heart. Of all this and more the epistle bears the impress, and every now and then lets out the expression.

"Paul, a called1 apostle of Jesus Christ2 by God's will, and Sosthenes the brother, to the assembly of God that is in Corinth,3 [persons] sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs4 and ours; grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ." (Ver. 1-3.)

To the Roman brethren Paul began by introducing himself as "a bondman of Jesus Christ." This he omits to the Corinthians to whom he speaks of himself at once as a "called apostle of Jesus Christ." The difference is due to the facts before him. There had been no undermining of his ministry at Rome, where indeed personally he was

a stranger. At Corinth it was well-known to the saints how truly he was a bondman of Jesus Christ. Had not his very hands borne witness to it, night and day caring spiritually for the saints with the Lord's glory before his eyes, even in that outward work by which he had refrained from being a burden to them? To both he writes formally as an "apostle," and this, not by birth, not by acquirement, not by election of man, but as "called," that is, by calling of God. Both he reminds that they themselves were saints, and this too by calling. It was grace which chose them as saints, grace that chose him not as a saint only but as an apostle. Such is the principle of Christian ministry, as well as of the salvation of souls or of Christianity itself. It is "by God's will," as he adds — "a called apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will," not by his own ability or merit, nor by other men's choice. God's sovereign goodness is the spring in every respect. What can be more blessed? We do well to ponder it, and to repudiate whatever is inconsistent with it. It is God then, it is grace which, as it calls saints, so also calls to His service. How different from the ecclesiastical thought and style of olden times! Paul is not what he was in the church "by divine providence" or "by divine permission," for this might be where the person was alien from His mind or will, God merely overruling for His own secret purpose. And it is not denied that such cases may be, as of old in Balaam, so under Christianity; but how awful for all these who intrude thus unbidden to speak in the name of the Lord! For many shall say to the Judge in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied through Thy name, and through Thy name cast out demons, and through Thy name done many wonderful works? But He will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Beyond controversy it is God, not man, who sets in the church, as we are expressly told in 1 Corinthians 12:28, and this applies to “teachers” as distinctly as to “apostles.” They never are in scripture called by man. The church never chose them, as it did those entrusted with its funds for the poor. Nor did apostles or their envoys choose teachers or preachers as they did elders; for these were a local charge, those are gifts set as members in the body of Christ as a whole. Such are the biblical facts, and the principle on which this distinction depends.

It is gross ignorance to confound ministry with priesthood, and to cite for the former what the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 5:4) says of the latter, as applied from Aaron to Christ. Yet if it did apply, it would go to prove, not men’s calling to the ministry, as they term it, but the exclusive call of God; for in priesthood God alone chose, though this after Aaron (and we may add perhaps Phinehas) by birth successionally, whilst the consecration was in view of all the congregation. In ministry as in the church, where the Holy Spirit dwells and acts, who is a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind, we are entitled to look for reality;5 in the flesh or in the world one must be often content to let the merest forms pass, bound to pay to each the honour owe, even where the object of it may be personally undeserving, as is laid down in Romans 13, 1 Peter 2. The church is, and is responsible to be, the pillar and ground of the truth, the epistle of Christ known and read of all men; and therein, by virtue of the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, is power and obligation to judge according to the word of God whatever is inconsistent with its profession corporately as well as individually.

We see next that the apostle associates with himself here “Sosthenes the brother,” as in the second epistle Timothy. If the Sosthenes just named were the chief of the synagogue who seems to have succeeded Crispus on his conversion, if he were himself converted after his ignominious failure to hurt Paul before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia, at Corinth, we can see with what propriety he, no longer the Jewish adversary but the brother in Christ, should thus accompany the apostle in this address to the Corinthian saints. But I affirm nothing, as there is no direct evidence, and the name was not uncommon. He was certainly known at Corinth and was then with the Apostle at Ephesus.

Notice now in what character the Corinthian believers are addressed: “to the assembly of God that is in Corinth.” It is in the strictest connection with the scope of the epistle, as this is of course according to the true wants there and then. It was not because of a godly few amongst a vast multitude of ungodly persons. What unacquaintance with the mind of God! It is not so that holy scripture speaks. They constituted God’s habitation there by the Spirit’s presence. This is the distinctive constituent and real character. No ungodly multitude could be the church or assembly of God; nor have a godly few as such any virtue to be themselves the assembly, still less to make others so by their own presence in their midst. Only the Spirit of God sent down from heaven makes those whom He gathers and with whom He dwells to be the assembly of God. The state of the Corinthians was frightfully bad, perilous to all, and such as to raise the gravest fears as to some. But we must recollect that, in commanding them to deal with the most scandalous case of all, the apostle goes on

the ground of the spirit being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; and that the second epistle exhorts the saints to confirm love by taking back the offender as one at length roused to deep self-judgment and in danger of being swallowed up with excessive sorrow. No; the assembly of God is liable to the inroad of the most serious evils through ignorance and unwatchfulness; but it does not forfeit its character, if duly constituted, till it renounces all holy discipline by refusing to judge according to the word when evil is brought before it. For it is responsible, if it have let in evil, to put it out in the Lord's name which it bears. And the second epistle is of the greatest value among other things in this also, that it proves how the apostle's confidence was justified in such a clearing of conscience, as led him to expect the work of vindicating the Lord to go on still farther, and thus maintain the character of the assembly of God which grace had given the brethren in Corinth.

But it is well also to observe that in apposition with that character stands more, "[persons] sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." The construction is peculiar, but the language is exact. The term ἡγιασμένοις ("sanctified") is in what is called a rational concord with ἐκκλησίᾳ. It would not be correct to speak of the assembly as ἡγιασμένη any more than as ἐκλεκτή, though those who compose it are both. But the fact that they were sanctified, and that the form of the word does not mean merely a process going on but their character as stamped with separation to God in Christ Jesus, and thus saints by calling, not merely called to be saints, was a most impressive appeal to their hearts and consciences, especially in the crisis at which things had then arrived in the Corinthian assembly.

It is incorrect to say that here, or anywhere else, justification is meant rather than sanctification. The fact is that, while almost all admit sanctification in the practical sense as a matter of growth and so allowing of degrees among those justified, it seems to be forgotten that scripture speaks of all those who are actually born of God as being sanctified from the beginning of the work of grace in their souls. Compare 1 Corinthians 6:11, and 1 Peter 1:2. And so far is it from being true that the call to holiness in practice is enfeebled by this primary and absolute sanctification of all real Christians, that contrariwise it is this setting apart to God which is the ground of, and a powerful support and a solemn motive to, consistency with Christ Jesus in whom we are thus sanctified. It is in virtue of God's will we are said (in Heb. 10:10) to be sanctified through the offering of Christ's body once for all, as elsewhere the Spirit is viewed as its agent. Thus all the Godhead take their part in this great work from the outset and indeed right through. And this is confirmed by its result from the first; for those who participate in this sanctification are saints, "called saints" (not a mere holy nation by birth like Israel), whilst they are exhorted to follow holiness no less than peace.

But there is an addition that claims our attention: "with all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, with theirs and ours."6 (Ver. 2.) It is of the deepest interest and value, as it connects the epistle with the entire field of Christian profession. There is no hint of limiting the address to the Christians in all Achaia, as we see in 2 Corinthians 1:1. And the difference is the more striking as God foresaw that men would ere long seek to tamper with the application of

this epistle beyond all others, and seek to limit it to the apostolic age when the gifts (χαρίσματα) were in full force. The unbelief that would make the Corinthian assembly an exception to the order in other places is still more strikingly provided against. Compare for this 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Cor. 7:17; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 14:36, 37; 1 Cor. 16:1. Further, the clause seems to me one of those which, while applying then to those who bore the name of the Lord truthfully, would acquire a meaning more distinct as the professing mass became more and more distant from the true character of the assembly of God, and Christianity will be well-nigh swamped in Christendom.

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ver. 3.) Such is the initiatory wish or prayer of the apostle here as in Romans 1:7, from God in His relation of Father to us, from Jesus Christ as Lord (compare 1 Cor. 8:6): an association however, impossible in an inspired writing, derogatory anywhere, if they were not one in the unity of the divine nature. True and sovereign favour was the spring, grace the result that would prove and magnify its source, shedding its light even on those too blind to see beyond the effect. Be it ours, enjoying the gift, to adore the Giver.

After his address and usual greeting, the first thing the apostle does is to let them know that he always thanks God for them. That he should write thus to the saints in Rome, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica, is not surprising; and the wonder to some may be increased when it is observed that he withholds it in writing to the assemblies in Galatia. But the wisdom and the propriety of his procedure are apparent to the spiritual eye. The Corinthians were suffering the consequences of fleshly

wisdom and worldliness; the Galatians had let in law, and thus fallen from grace, to the subversion of the truth of the gospel. Hence the reserve of the apostle's tone to the latter; whilst he begins to the former (far more grossly fallen) with the recognition of all he could thank God for in their case. Without some such assurance, where indeed would be the ground of appeal? What the standard by which to judge themselves? It was the more necessary because of their low and disorderly state, as well as of the reproofs that must follow.

On the other hand it is a grave misconception of their state and of the apostle's words that he alludes to any proof of maturity and richness of their spiritual life. He takes care to give prominence to the source which had so bountifully supplied the assembly in Corinth; but there is not a word that implies a spiritual state, much less maturity in it, such as could comfort his heart in thinking of them. He knew his God sufficiently to be sure that there had been no lack on His part.

"I thank my7 God always concerning you for the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all discourse and all knowledge, according as the testimony of Christ8 was confirmed in you, so that ye come not short in any gift, awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you until [the] end, unimpeachable in the day9 of our Lord Jesus Christ. God [is] faithful by whom ye were called into [the] fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Ver. 4-6.)

Thus the occasion of thanksgiving was the grace of God bestowed on them in virtue of Christ Jesus. But this is defined immediately after. They had been in everything

made rich in Him. In spiritual discernment of His glory and feeling of His grace? in enjoyment of Christ and devotedness to His name? In these respects alas! they were defective, as all that follows shows. He means, as he says, in every sort of expression of the truth, and all knowledge, in what was preached or taught, as well as in apprehension; for God had amply confirmed the testimony of Christ which Paul above all with others had rendered in their city. Many of the Corinthians, as we are told in Acts 18, heard, believed, and were baptized. But there was more than this: the power of the Spirit wrought largely and mightily among them. And this was the characteristic token of the assembly of God — not more truly, but far more sensibly, then than now. The issue was that they came behind in no gift, clearly not in what is called the inward grace of the spiritual life, but in communication to others and manifestation of power, as in 1 Corinthians 12.

This is strengthened by the way the saints at Corinth are next characterized: “awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is not that aspect of our Lord’s return which will unfold and express His grace to His own,10 but rather that which deals with conscience now, as it by and by will display their faithful or unfaithful employment of all entrusted to their charge. Every saint who walks with God meanwhile and judges intelligently of the growing miseries of Christendom, not to speak of the world at large and of man, has love for the appearing of the Lord, as the time when He shall be exalted and we are to reign with Him, the power of Satan being publicly and effectually expelled from the earth. But our proper hope is that Christ will come and fetch us to the Father’s house; and so shall we be for

ever with the Lord. The Corinthians however are hereby reminded of Him who will judge of every one's work; when each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. They needed to be exercised in self-judgment whether they were serving the Lord with the manifestations of the Spirit distributed to each. And hence also the repeated and striking way in which the name of "our Lord Jesus Christ" is brought before them here.

Not that a word is said to induce a doubt of His goodness or love to them. Never does a soul more need to hold fast grace than when it is probed and searched by the unsparing and all-detecting word of God. Hence the apostle does not hesitate to say that the Lord should also confirm them to the last unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. How sad then that a Christian should be to Christ's reproach now! When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. But this to the apostle becomes by the Spirit only one cogent motive more for urging us to mortify our members that are on the earth. It is the day of our Lord which here again calls our responsibility into play. And as this does and must act on conscience, being in truth intended to do this, so it makes the saint feel the need and value of what the apostle adds as closing his introduction — "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Ver. 9.) If He has called, will He not also perform? Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:24. But His calling to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord is not more sure in His grace than serious in its present claim on us that we cast no shade of unfaithfulness on both, sullying His name that is named on us, to which

the very world binds us, loose as may be its sense of what is due to Him whom it knows not. How did the Corinthians answer to that call then? How do we now?

The apostle begins next to touch one of the evils which particularly dishonoured the Lord and injured the saints at Corinth. Their party spirit was a sore grief to his heart. Not only did it hinder mutual comfort of love in their midst but the testimony they owed His name before the world.

Compared with what has followed since, or even what the New Testament elsewhere discloses, it might seem but a little beginning, but it was the beginning of a great evil. For the allowance of such fleshly preferences and the consequent formation of parties lets loose the activities of the natural mind and feeling, goes onward into passionate zeal or dislike, and well if it end not in helpless heterodoxy and open insubjection to the Lord.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,11 that ye all say the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you,. but that ye be made perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been shown to me concerning you, my brethren, by those [of the house] of Chloe, that there are strifes among you.12 But I say this, that each of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized unto the name of Paul? I thank God13 that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, that no one should say that ye were baptized14 unto my name. And I baptized15 also the household of Stephanas; further I know not whether I baptized any other.” (Ver. 10-16.)

Apostle though he was, and the one who had not only instructed them in Christ but begotten them through the gospel, he appeals to them here by that name which most intimately deals with the believer, and most solemnly even with the professor, the centre of unity, as the Holy Spirit is its bond. By that name, if by any means, would his exhortation come home to their souls. He is jealous of the honour of Him, their Lord, whom their discords compromised. Where was the witness, of men in these rival schools with their misguided chiefs, to the fellowship of God's Son? He exhorts them therefore that they should "all say the same thing." For the Philippian saints he earnestly desired that they might "think the same thing," and this by thinking one thing; of whom, as being more experienced and in a more spiritual state, he could not but expect more. Nor is it the like-mindedness one toward another pressed on the Roman saints?

Would the apostle then have been satisfied with the same uniform confession outwardly? By no means. With this he begins, according to the wisdom of the Spirit which directed him; for it is surely unbecoming, in reformers, or men who can easily follow reformers in what was wrong, to criticise an inspired writer or presume that they can draw nicer distinctions or arrange the truth better, than Paul.16 Then he adds "that there be no divisions among you," of which, their party-cries were the expression; and lastly he beseeches that they may be "made perfect" (see Eph. 4:12 as well as 2 Cor. 13:9) or "wholly united," in the same mind and in the same judgment." Not that he means by this exactly the will, so that there should be a complete division of the soul, the first referring to faith and the

second to love,17 however important all this may be in its place; for nou'" signifies mind viewed as intelligent faculty, as γνώμη is the opinion or judgment it forms. He wanted them to have a nicety of intelligent thought. They were defective where they were proud or vain, as men generally are.

Nor does the apostle hesitate to write on the information which he had received (and indeed it was too plain and precise in its character to doubt its accuracy), nor to tell them its trustworthy source. A godly woman's household might be a particularly good means of ascertaining; as it also gives warrant for another day. It is the same apostle who, if he reprobates silly women laden with divers lusts, shows how a Phoebe or a Persis, a Prisca and a Mary, an Evodia and a Syntyche, should be valued and cared for. He can here write with full confidence of what he had learnt from Chloe's household.

The divisions were as yet within the assembly, not rents from it, but they tended to this end, as we are expressly told in 1 Corinthians 11:18, 19. No conclusion can be less well founded than that the separation into denominations is lawful, while an evil spirit within is the sin; for this schismatic working is evil most of all because it leads those who are heady and unsubject to that worst result. It is assumed here that the assembly has not compromised Christ by unholy tolerance of false doctrine or any such evil as would make it a duty to disown those who would retain the title when they have forfeited its true character.

Alas! at Corinth the saints seem to have been largely infected with party spirit. "But I say this that one saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of

Christ:" this last to my mind as intelligible as any of the others;18 for the wrong was not in any of those named, but in such as set up their names out of their own vanity and love of opposition. And the worst of all, I doubt not, was that party which plumed itself on its superior spirituality. They had done with men.19 Paul, Apollos, Cephas, were beneath their aspirations. Not the servants, but the Master was their watchword. They disliked the high claims, especially of Paul. For their part they would cleave to the Lord's own precept: one is your teacher, one your leader, and all ye are brethren. Thus not infrequently does self-exaltation among Christians disguise itself unconsciously (and unconsciously, because the state is bad, and the heart too long away from the Lord in practice); whereas it is evident that he who really loves and bows to the Lord does for this very reason honour His servants for their work's sake, and according to the place He has set them in. The corruption of the best thing is truly said to be the worst; and so it was here where the specious plea of such as abjured all but Christ might seem to be the only thing right and spiritual in Corinth, divided as the assembly was. How important it is, and now as then, to judge righteous judgment, not according to appearances!

It is well to note that the evil at Corinth was the converse of what the apostle meant in his address to the Ephesian elders. (Acts 20:30) For in the one it was the sin of the disciples, in the other of the rulers. Our only security is in that subjection of heart to Christ, which estimates what is of Him wherever it may be, and walks in dependence on Him, come what will. I had made the reflection before noticing that Calvin fell into this very

confusion.20 Perhaps in his own system, as being of a democratic character, it is harder to see that the mass of the disciples have their snares no less than those who guide. It is however as sure from scripture as it is evident in experience. No thing, nor person, escapes the vigilance of the enemy. How blessed that all are under the eye of perfect love in our Lord: may we be guided by it!

"' Is Christ divided?" asks the indignant apostle. Is He not the Head of that one body the church to which they all belonged? It is a whole Christ to whom all His own belong and who Himself belongs to all. To think of dividing Him would be as irrelevant as absurd. They might divide, not He: what an inconsistency if they valued Him! But this is followed up by the further query, "Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized unto the name of Paul?" To state the question was to render the true answer certain and necessary to the Christian; yet how many since have overlooked both! But One is worthy of imprinting His name on us.

So blinding is the influence where the first man is allowed to take the place of the Second. Apostles and others have died, yea, been crucified, but Christ alone for us, as it is to Him we have been baptized, not to the twelve, still less to other men.

Far different was the loyalty of the apostle to Christ. Therefore does he not scruple to express his gratitude to God that he had baptized so few personally at Corinth: an impossible subject for thanksgiving, if baptism be the means of new birth, for in this case he who loved God and man must rejoice the more, the more he baptized. On the other hand there is no real slight put on christian

baptism as our burial with Christ unto death, the appointed outward sign of subjection to Him who died for us and rose again.

Its solemn import is derived from the objective truth signified by it, not from the position or power of the baptizer, nor from any qualities of the baptized, whatever be the Lord's will as to either. But the apostle owns the good hand of the Lord in ordering things so that in fact Paul had baptized only a very few out of the many Corinthians who, on hearing the gospel, believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8): had he actually baptized the mass, it might have given a more tangible excuse to those who affected his name at Corinth. But there can be little doubt that those he did baptize were among such as had stood comparatively faithful to the Lord there.

It may be mentioned here that Professor Olshausen notices it as a surprising circumstance that the apostle should not have reasoned on the import of baptism itself in order to cherish his argument, but rather on the providential history of the facts as to it, so far as he was concerned. Dean Alford also urges the last clause of verse 16 as important against those who maintain the absolute omniscience of the inspired writers on every topic which they handle.

Do the two divines seem to write with enough of reverence? Both forgot, if they seriously knew what it is to believe, that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul. Does He not know better than any when to urge this topic, when that? And as to the inspired writers, I know of no sober believer who holds their omniscience, but that of Him who employed them to communicate the truth. It is

common, but incorrect, to speak of their infallibility; whereas evidently none can be said to be infallible but God.

The true statement of inspiration is not that the writer became omniscient or infallible, but that the Holy Ghost so controlled his writing as to convey the truth without admixture of error and perfectly for His own design. Hence He might with perfect consistency withhold absolute recollection on a given point here, or a distinct command from the Lord on another point, as in chapter 7.

But all this leaves unimpaired the divine authority of what He does convey or command as from the Lord. Those orthodox as to inspiration may be incorrect in phrase or a shade of thought; but this in no way lessens the seriousness — indeed sin — of enfeebling inspiration, especially in these perilous times, when God's word is the grand resource of the faithful. For the simple but grave fact that it is His word is not only a truth in itself clearly revealed, but it is the basis and support of every other. Weaken inspiration, and you jeopard all else that concerns God and man, and you may end with nothing better than human ideas.

It is not that the apostle Paul slights baptism: who could that accepts it as Christ's institution? Impossible that he could have used such language if baptism be the means of life to the soul, as so many falsely teach. Yet we can hardly conceive any of the twelve speaking as he does here. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not in wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ should be made vain." (Ver. 17.) The rest were expressly sent to baptize, which they did either

personally or using others for the purpose. Paul too was baptized and did baptize; and no apostle unfolds the observance in so profound a way as we find in Romans 6, Galatians 3, and Colossians 2. But 1 Corinthians 11 shows us that the Lord's supper was revealed directly, not merely accepted as he found like baptism. And v Len we reflect, we perceive that the rite is not the seal of union with Christ, but the individual owning of Him who died and rose again, buried with Christ into death, as the former sets forth the communion of His body, for which we need His ascension and the sending down of the Holy Ghost, with which is bound up all the doctrine of the church, of which Paul pre-eminently became minister. (Col. 1:25)

But Paul as emphatically became "minister of the gospel" (Col. 1:23); and so he was sent by Christ to preach it, as he tells us here, "not in wisdom of word," as the Corinthians liked to hear, "lest the cross of Christ should be made vain." It seems to be philosophic speculation and not rhetoric only which he denounces thus strongly. And philosophy leaves no room for divine love on the one side, or for man's utter ruin on the other: the cross of Christ maintains both in the highest degree.

By the cross of Christ is meant much more than the means of pardon for the sinner. To treat it only as the great remedy for man's need, however true as far as it goes, is to rob it of an immense deal of its importance as well as to obscure the truth and shut out God's glory. For in that most stupendous of all facts, what has not come to issue? God's holy hatred and judgment of sin; His amazing love of the sinner; the infinite grace, humiliation, and suffering of the Saviour; the audacity

and craft of Satan; the abominable wickedness of man, under the best possible circumstances and, spite of the greatest benefits, without cause to justify or excuse to palliate: all met, as nowhere else, in the cross. There are the pretensions of man crushed; sin condemned and put away; Satan defeated and vanquished; judgment borne; and God glorified in Christ who knew no sin made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. There only indeed divine attributes and; ways, which our sin had otherwise seemed to set aside or at variance, are now conciliated for ever on behalf of those that believe, and a firm basis laid for the ruined creation, as well as the people of God, to be made new and shine unto eternal ages to the glory of God. Yet all this would be rendered vain by that wisdom of speech which some in the Corinthian church were ignorantly affecting and blaming Paul because it was far from him.

But the Corinthians were in danger who shrank from the facts of the gospel and desired to hear the philosophy of the christian scheme. "For the word of the cross is to those that perish foolishness, but to us that are to be saved it is God's power." (Ver. 18.) The cross bespeaks the lowest extreme of human shame and suffering. It was the severest penalty for a slave. That the Son of God should stoop not merely to the nature of man but to the death of the cross, and this in atonement for man to God as well as in rejection of God by man, seems the depth of folly to those who, ignorant of their own sinfulness and of the holiness of God, must needs perish, living and dying as they are. That He must suffer in order to save supposes the hopeless ruin of the race.

But it is also irreconcilable with every feeling of the natural heart that He would stoop so low to suffer for

His enemies, and that God would give Him up to do so. For philosophy knows nothing truly of love in God, any more than of total ruin in man: the cross proclaims both, and that He who hung there in grace, suffering for our sin, that God might deliver us righteously, was Himself God over all as surely as He was man without sin. For the gospel was no effort or device of man's wit. Yea, the word of the cross is the deepest offence and the sheerest foolishness to him; but it is God's power, not wisdom only, to believers, "to us that are to be saved," for here, to bring it the more home, the apostle treats it as a personal fact instead of continuing his abstract statement. Salvation here, as elsewhere in this Epistle, is regarded as not complete till the Lord comes; it takes in the whole work of bringing us through till we are conformed to Christ in resurrection glory.

In fact the seeking for thoughts and words palatable to the world argues a mind at issue with God, who had fully pronounced on its best wisdom as folly in divine things. It is worthy of note that the apostle quotes in proof God's sentence on Israel by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 29:14). I cannot agree with those who fail to see the pertinency of this testimony, for it would be impossible to find, out of the many scriptures which declare the insufficiency of human resources, one more to the purpose which the apostle had in view, and therefore serving better to warn the Corinthian saints. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and put away the prudence of the prudent. Where [is the] wise, and where scribe, and where disputer of this age? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the21 world." (Vers. 19, 20.) In the last words are seen not more than an illustrative allusion to Isaiah 33, where there is a burst

of surprise at the deliverance from the scornful power of the enemy, as here a triumphant challenge over the failure of its proud pretensions against God.

It is well to remember that the digression here begun but carried on much farther, in which the world's wisdom is shown to slight and oppose but to be judged by the cross of Christ, is none the less really connected with the party spirit and divisions of the saints at Corinth which the apostle has been denouncing, as he will be found to do yet more in 1 Cor. 3. Indeed it was their value for what the world esteems as wisdom which had wrought to the depreciation of Paul and to the advantage of those whom he afterwards designates "false apostles." (2 Cor. 11)

Men had dared to call the preaching of the cross of Christ foolishness. But who and what were they? Those that perish! Was it wise to follow such? They might vaunt of their wisdom, but this would not save them from perdition; and Jews at least, yea all who feared God and heard His ancient but living oracles, should remember that it is His way to stain the pride of human wisdom no less than human power. So it is written: God had already judged it in His word. And so experience confirms. For what has been the moral history of man?

Tremendous is the blow which the apostle here deals the wisdom of the world. The proof that God made it foolish follows in a few pregnant and unanswerable words. "For since in the wisdom of God the world through22 wisdom knew not God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the preaching to save those that believe; since both Jews ask for signs23 and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling-block and to

Gentiles24 foolishness, but to those that [are] called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ God's power and God's wisdom; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (Ver. 21-25.)

When man fell and got the knowledge of good and evil, it was the wisdom of God to leave him to himself, though not without a plain revelation which from the first held out to the eye of faith the Seed of the woman, who, bruised Himself, should bruise the serpent's head. But this did not suit the fallen child of Adam who assumed his own competency for worship or anything else without grace from God or the sense of his own ruin which would have made him feel its necessity. And the world grew up till its corruption and violence were so unbearable that it became morally imperative to sweep off the guilty race in the deluge. Even after this solemn intervention of God in judgment the world only became more subtly evil. It ceased to retain God in knowledge; it set up the powers of nature in heaven and earth, deifying them, and degrading themselves into whatever the demons behind those objects might drag their votaries. Thus Satan's triumph over the nations now heathen was complete; for their religion itself most of all corrupted them, its symbols being also identified with every moral iniquity, and their wisdom bound them fast in that debasing slavery, seeking at best to explain, or explain away, all that misrepresented and supplanted the true God.

The Corinthians too of all men should have known how powerless is the wisdom of the world to deliver man from the grossest self-pleasing and the lusts which, while shunning the light, usurped the name of a god,

and only proved how completely God Himself was unknown. For evil is too serious and fatal to be overlooked, and the creature would fain roll it off from himself on God, and is thus necessitated to attenuate its moral consequences as well as its contrariety to the Creator. To this effort, resisted by conscience till it is utterly seared, it is philosophy lends its baleful torch, but thus, as man is unjudged, so is God lost for the soul. Were His holy nature and His righteous judgment bowed to, man must own his iniquity and humbly seek a door of escape through divine mercy. But such was not the course of the world. Nothing is a man so slow to acknowledge as his own badness; and in such a state religion is only a blind for the soul and a sop for God, of all vanities the greatest and most pernicious.

It appears to me that Calvin25 has mistaken the force of the reasoning, as if by the wisdom of the world was meant the workmanship of the universe, an illustrious token and clear manifestation of His wisdom. This is one of the two witnesses adduced for God to heathen conscience in Romans i., the other being that knowledge of God which they possessed till the flood and after it, when first they fell into creature worship. One must not be surprised that not a few adopt the rendering “by the revelation of God’s wisdom,” that is, in His works with or without His law. I believe it to be simply a question of God’s wise ordering of things that the folly of idolatrous man should be apparent, and so the need of His salvation by the cross of Christ be the more felt when it was preached. By διὰ τῆς σ. is meant “by wisdom” in the abstract or “by its wisdom,” either of which would require the article in Greek. I do not think that Stanley and Alford are right in taking the phrase as “through the

wisdom [of God]" just mentioned, though of course the article there too would be proper. The latter wisdom seems to me contradistinguished from the former, the one self-exalting and destructive, the other real and righteous altogether.

Thus in God's wisdom ends the world's wisdom: He is unknown, the knowledge of whom in Christ is eternal life. And what did God in presence of this pretentious wisdom which was thus the guiltiest folly? "It pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." The world had either adopted the most degrading notions of polytheism, or it had tried to escape superstition by the dreary blank of pantheism and even atheism. Man being now fallen was not prevented (at least after the food) from thus in his presumption proving his ignorance of God; but God showed His grace as matchless as His wisdom; for when the world's wisdom had spent itself weary and worn in its idolatrous devices or in the waste of scepticism which those abominations provoked, God was pleased, not to close the revolting theatre of man's rebellion, whether religious or irreligious, by judgment, but contrariwise to save. And as salvation to be open and effectual for sinners must be by grace, so could it only be by faith. (Compare the reasoning of Rom. 4.) In this way alone could it be sure to all that believe; for the essence of faith is that the worth is found in the object believed, the efficacy lies in what He, the Saviour, has wrought for us, not we for Him, however truly we do, when believers, seek to please and serve Him. Thus is God glorified in this as in all things by Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever.

Accordingly it will be noticed by the careful reader that the apostle here speaks not exactly of preaching as a mere instrument, but of the thing preached. Such is the force resulting from the form of the word, which with others I have translated “the preaching.” This the Jews derided, as well as the Greeks. It was to them foolishness; nor need we wonder, if they saw not the glory of the person of Christ given to die in God’s love to sinners. For what could seem less reasonable to the natural mind, than for a crucified man to be the only Saviour from sins and the wrath of God? Yet this is the truth preached, τὸ κήρυγμα, and salvation is the fruit of believing it. Grace not only gave the Son of God thus to suffer, but it takes care to send out everywhere the proclamation, that souls may hear, believe, and be saved.

Men naturally despise the cross, who do not believe either that their sins deserve divine judgment or that He in grace bore that judgment thereon. Their depth of need is unfelt, and hence other and lesser objects occupy them. The world is pre-occupied or turns elsewhere: “since both Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek wisdom.” Visible tokens were vouchsafed of God when He sent the Lord Jesus to the land of Israel. Never since the world began had there been such a cloud of witnesses in this kind; but what can satisfy the heart where all is alienated from God? The Jews overlooked all He gave and asked for a sign as if none had appeared. Greeks expected nothing from God; but, if the object of their search was wisdom, they never learnt its first lesson in the fear of Jehovah.

This obstinacy or levity of unbelief did not dishearten the apostle, but rather stimulated him in the work near

to his heart. “But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling-block and to Gentiles foolishness.” It is not here simply the blood shed that makes atonement; and it is more to say “crucified” than dead; for though both declare the end of man in the flesh, there is the extreme of shame and weakness in the cross beyond elsewhere. That God then should save by virtue of the cross, where the world saw the worst of human suffering and humiliation, was to silence that wisdom, proving it to be folly which dared so to think and speak of His wisdom. Over the stone of stumbling fell the Jews who would only have a Messiah in power and glory. So will He come shortly, but where then will those Jews find themselves who were offended by His stooping to the cross in order to save those that believe? Where the Gentiles who preferred their own ideas and vaunted reasonings to the mighty work then wrought at infinite cost? Like the lightning shall the Son of man shine in His day; but first must He suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. For it was morally impossible for God’s kingdom to be till sin was judged in the cross. How senseless and slow of heart were even disciples to see that so it must be if God was to be glorified and man righteously blessed and saved! But “to the called Christ,” and Christ thus crucified, “is God’s power and God’s wisdom; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (Vers. 24, 25) Any other way had compromised sin or made salvation impossible. The cross of Christ is the fullest display of God’s judgment of sin and of His love to the sinner. What men taunted as foolishness and weakness, the incarnate Word suffering on a gibbet, equally proves man’s utter ruin and God’s saving mercy. So did the Saviour endure the judgment of sin that the

believer might be saved. Is it not then wiser and stronger than men? Did not the resurrection prove, does not the gospel proclaim, it to be so?

The apostle pursues his theme — the annihilation by Christ's cross of every object flesh would cherish and vaunt. His first proof was drawn from the utter and evident infatuation which was most foolish where most it affected wisdom without God; his second from the ways of God in those brought to Himself by the gospel. As to the latter he appeals to themselves.

"For look at your calling, brethren, that not many [are] wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many highborn. But the foolish things of the world God chose that he might put to shame the wise; and the weak things of the world God chose that he might put to shame the strong things; and the lowborn things of the world and those despised God chose, [and]26 the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are, so that no flesh might boast before God.27 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made wisdom to us from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that boasteth, let him boast in [the] Lord." (Ver. 26-31.)

Thus the reproach which infidelity loves to cast on the gospel the apostle avows and puts forward as a fact which brings glory to God. For the gospel is the revelation of the grace which calls man from the world to Himself. Hence every ground of worldly distinction and of human merit disappears. He who alone is good and great would act in His own love and display His supreme excellence above the faults and the ruin of mankind. Yet so stubborn is the pride of guilty man that

he parries the consequence of his misery and rejects the proof of his sin and danger, rather than accept the free mercy of God in Christ the Lord: and thus it becomes a question of God's love in electing sinners to eternal life in His own sovereignty, unless He would either save or condemn the race indiscriminately and thereby destroy all testimony to His holy judgment on the one hued, or to His counsels of grace on the other. If neither can be, He must choose: else none could be saved, for all have sinned, and not one sinner would trust His love in Christ for eternal life, such goodness being above all his own feelings and contrary to all experience of others. The more man reasons, the less can he believe and rest on salvation in Christ for one who, if God's word be true, deserves condemnation. He prefers to trust his own efforts with or without Christ, manifesting how little he accepts the testimony of God to the glory of Christ and to the infinite value of His work. If he is an unbeliever and dost, still more plainly is the man who defies the truth of God and despises His grace, at open war with the God who now bears with but will surely judge him. If a man values his advantages and disdains those around, he is the surer to fight against that grace which makes nothing of all that is precious in his eyes.

The Corinthians then, who were not weaned from their old admiration of man's wisdom and power and rank, the apostle bids to consider their calling. In the assembly of God before their eyes was the clearest evidence that not many were wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many highborn. And they could not but know enough by report of Christians in other parts to be satisfied that the same features were true everywhere else. But the apostle goes farther and shows

that it is not only a fact among men (ver. 26) but a purpose on God's part. (Ver. 27-29.) He chose the foolish things of the world to put shame on the wise men; He chose the weak things of the world to put shame on the strong things. So clear is His judgment pronounced on what is ever apt to captivate the heart of Christians, for they love to be able to count up the wise and the world's grandeur in their own ranks, as if aught of the sort could add lustre to Christ. Did not God choose the mean things of the world, and the disdained things, the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are, so that no flesh might boast in the sight of God? It is no question of what they or their circumstances seemed, but of what these really were for most when God chose them. Few of the saints had been among the wise, most knew what it was to have been arrested by the gospel from obscurity and of no influence or account among men. If God called such to the fellowship of His Son, to be one with Him now, to reign with Him soon and for ever, if the wise and powerful and nobly born were for the most part left in their possession or pursuit of all which blinded them to the glory of Christ on the one hand and to judgment on the other, whose sin was this? whose grace that? But how unworthy and inconsistent that the Christian should yearn after or glory in flesh and its advantages! Looking within and without, what believer could fail to learn that no flesh should boast before God?

Yet such a negative conclusion, important as it may be, is not enough for the Spirit of God. He would lead the heart from the emptiness of man's vanity or pride to real moral worth, to the provision of divine grace and holiness, and to that glory which shall not pass away;

and all this and more he shows to be the portion of the Christian, with pointed emphasis affirming it of those he was addressing. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus.” How vast the change of nature, position, and relations for any! How blessed for those whose wretchedness in the world and according to flesh he had just set forth without disguise! Nor is the stability of the source a whit less than the character of the blessedness “of Him,” of God whose grace has given us to have our being in “Christ Jesus” “who was made to us wisdom from God.” Here is the reality, and this of blessings incalculably precious.

Christ has been made wisdom to us from God, for wisdom is the first question here; and it is now answered for the Christian in Christ, and Christ crucified, who alone thus put everyone and everything in its true place; and this it is the part of wisdom to see, as folly disarranges and misunderstands all. If philosophy left God out, it was necessarily all wrong; if it essayed to bring Him in, it subjected Him to man’s mind, and this made matters, if possible, worse. Christ revealed God and blessed man, and this not by glossing over his state and sins but by suffering for them on the cross, so that God was glorified as much about evil in His death as about good in His life. He was thus made unto us wisdom from God. Not merely was the world’s wisdom, flesh’s wisdom set aside, but God’s wisdom shown and given us in Him.

Nevertheless wisdom was not our sole want, greatly as it was needed — wisdom to its end, and not its beginning only in God’s fear. The sinner has no righteousness for God; but God has for him, and this in Christ, yea, Christ Himself, for He it is who was so made to us, not wisdom

alone from God, but righteousness. Man is thus set aside root and branch; God takes His place and gives all we lack in Christ. He had amply tested man's efforts under His law, which the Jew twisted to make up a hollow appearance, instead of submitting to learn by it his own insufficiency and sin. But Christ is not more surely God's wisdom than He is God's righteousness, and made this to us; for by His death God is just and can justify the believer in Jesus. Man — the believer alone truly and fully — owns himself as a sinner. The righteousness is God's, though it is Christ's work alone which could have made it not condemn but justify as. In virtue of the cross God is consistent with Himself in justifying us both freely and righteously.

Further, Christ was made to us "sanctification." The Greek wallowed in sin, however he might sentimentalize; the Jew boasted in the law, but broke it. Christ is the measure and means and pattern of holiness to the Christian; no doubt the Spirit is the agent, and He works by keeping not Himself but Christ before us. So we read elsewhere that, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, as there is bondage where the law rules. But we are not under law but under grace. Nor is this all; but we all beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are changed according to the same image from glory unto glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

Finally, He was made to us "redemption," by which, as the order clearly shows, is meant not the forgiveness of sins which we have, but that complete deliverance from the effects of sin in our bodies which we await at the coming of our Lord Jesus. See Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:14; Ephesians 4:30.

How complete the blessing Christ has been made to us I And what a joy that we not only may but ought to boast in Him who has so ordered and given to us! Do pious souls call on us to beware of presumption? It is the apostle, and this on the strength of Jeremiah the prophet, who calls on him that boasts to boast in Jehovah. It is therefore not rash nor wrong, but a hallowed boast. We owe it to Him, and He deserves it of us.

1 Corinthians 2.

The apostle now touches on that which had been made a matter of reproach against his preaching at Corinth. He had not sought to avoid the scandal of the cross here any more than elsewhere. On the contrary it was this precisely to which he had given undisguised prominence in that city of intellectual culture and of moral corruption. Even here however there was a guard against narrow one-sidedness, as well as care to bring forward Christ personally, not a point of doctrine only, were it even that deepest and most justly absorbing point of the cross. It was Jesus Christ he preached, and Him crucified. He eschewed the pompous phrases and the subtle speculations which Corinth then affected.

Thus the brethren there might see the consistency, first and last, of that which unbelief stumbled at in Paul, and which the flesh in saints would rather shroud in silence. Is the cross God’s power to those that are saved? Is Christ crucified foolishness to the Gentiles and an offence to the Jew? Does wisdom of word make the cross vain? The apostle was led of God to present the truth in a way not palatable but truly wholesome and withal most for God’s glory when he went to Corinth. It was not

Jesus and the resurrection (as at Athens), nor was it His return to reign (as at Thessalonica), though no doubt none of these elements was wanting; but at Corinth the Spirit directed to that which was in due season. And as he says to the. law-affecting Galatians, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world;” so here he could look back with satisfaction on the pre-eminence given to Jesus Christ and Him crucified in his first visit to Corinth; and this too with decision and conviction on his own part. It is not merely that so it was, but he judged it best. Nor does it mean, as some have thought, that with all the abasement of the cross he nevertheless preached Christ. No such uncertain sound came from the apostle as from his commentators. It was not Christ, crucified though He was, but emphatically Christ and Him crucified. Well he knew and deeply felt that there is nothing like that cross which stands alone apart from all before and after: yea, nothing in time, nothing in eternity, similar or second to it. For there sin in man rose up to slay the Son of God, yet was in slaying Him itself slain as well as judged, that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life for every believer.

“And I, when I came unto you, brethren, came not in excellency of word or wisdom announcing to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified: And I in weakness and in fear and in much trembling was with you; and my word and my preaching, not in persuasive words of28 wisdom but in demonstration of [the] Spirit and of power; that your faith might not be in man’s wisdom but in God’s power.” (Ver. 1-5.)

There can be no doubt in my judgment that the various reading in the first verse μυστήριον, though given in the Sinaitic (first hand), Alexandrian and Palimpsest of Paris (C), with some good cursives and very ancient versions (Pesch. and Cop.), etc., is not correct, but the common text. It is not only erroneous but an error which destroys the beauty and indeed the sense of the passage. For the apostle is contrasting his use of revealed truth in dealing with such souls as those in Corinth when he first carried them the gospel, and that which he would do with those who simply and thoroughly submitted to Christ. The mystery in all its hidden depths and all its heavenly glory he sets before those he calls “the perfect,” that is, the full-grown who were established in Christianity; but not so with babes unformed in the truth of the gospel.

Hence the introductory words. The apostle came not in excellency of word or wisdom when announcing at Corinth the testimony of God, who was calling them as all men to repent, and to this end testifying of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To this Paul judged it right to confine himself at the beginning of the gospel in that voluptuous city. Maturer souls need Christ every way, risen, at God’s right hand, and coming again in glory. Here he presented His person, and especially Him crucified. It is not a philosophy but a divine person and work. “The perfect” need much more, and have no stint; and there it is that God’s hidden wisdom in the mystery hidden from ages and generations becomes so important: not that there is reserve on God’s part, but that the state of souls is such that some want milk as being babes, others solid food as being settled in Christ; and they are welcomed into all the truth of God, as indeed they need it all.

But further there was in the apostle's tone and way a suitability to the message he brought. He repudiated all artificial method whether in thought or in the language which clothed it, that the truth of God should address itself directly to man's heart. So also he was with the Corinthians in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. This is not the ideal that men in their imagination frame of the great apostle! But such a deep sense of weakness was by grace his strength, as the Corinthians' straining after power was their weakness. His one desire was to exalt God, owning the nothingness as well as the guilt of man; with an anxious dread lest any word on his part should obscure His true glory, that it might be God's testimony to and in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Hence his word and his preaching (the thing preached, not merely his manner in it) was not after the rhetoric of the schools, but such as gave scope to God's Spirit.

Did the saints then loathe the bread of heaven? Did they pine after the leeks and onions and flesh-pots of Egypt? The apostle was not the one to gratify their natural tastes. He at least was true to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He sought not to win by the display of his own extraordinary ability; nor would he exhibit the wonders of the divine word which he could easily have presented so as to dazzle the Corinthian mind; nor did he condescend to set out these precious truths in a diction attractive to refined ears. The matter and the manner he judged most for God's glory was that which poured contempt on man and looked only to the Spirit's demonstration and power, that their faith might not be in man's wisdom but in God's power. For just so far as preachers fill men with admiration for their peculiar

style of thought or language, is it evident that they are weak in the Spirit, and attract to themselves instead of clearing and establishing souls in the truth whereby the Spirit works in power. Another indication of unwholesome teaching (too abundant at Corinth) is that which produces a distaste for all but the favourite or his line. It is not that the heart does not bless God for the instrument; but the effect of such a course as Paul's is to maintain the Lord's glory and His truth unimpaired, to avoid the natural tendency to a school or clique with its leader, and to keep the saints in full liberty and holy confidence before God by faith. May our decision be like his whose words (and they are God's) have occupied us here!

The apostle next explains his attitude towards those established in Christian truth, "the perfect" as they are designated here and elsewhere. To these he brought out far more than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. There is no limit or reserve. Had there been truth undisclosed in the Old Testament, secret things which belonged to Jehovah, in contrast with those revealed which had to do with Israel and their children? They are, none of them, hidden now, but shared by the Father with His children to the glory of Christ His Son. They are our proper and needed portion.

Hence says he "But we speak wisdom among the perfect, but wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age that come to nought. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden [wisdom] which God predetermined before the ages for our glory; which none of the rulers of the age knew (for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, but according as it is written, Things which eye hath not seen and ear

not heard, and into man's heart have not come, all that29 God prepared for those that love him, butt God revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God." (Ver. 6-10.)

It is not then that "wisdom" is wanting to the christian scheme; nor could this be, for Christ who is all therein is God's wisdom which has a character, height, depth, and extent proper to God. For this reason it suits His children, at least such as are weaned from the first man and the world in which he seeks activity and exaltation; it suits in a word "the perfect" or full-grown, not the babes that are absorbed in their personal wants and care at best for milk, not for the meat which a riper condition needs for its due nourishment. Wholly apart from such wisdom as Paul spoke of is "this age," the course of the world that now is, and this not in the lower strata only but in its "rulers" "that come to nought," little as they themselves expect it, or those who covet their place. Blessed be the grace that has revealed the mind of heaven to man on earth! It is "God's wisdom" the apostle spoke habitually and characteristically, where it was proper to be spoken, and this "in a mystery;" not meaning by this aught that was unintelligible or vague or obscure, but truth which could not be discovered by the wit of man, and was never before made known in the living oracles of God. The faithful who were settled on the great foundations of Christianity the apostle would initiate into it. All that ignore or oppose Christ come to nought: He is God's power no less than His wisdom.

† The Vatican MS., and some cursives, the Cop. Sah., etc., read γάρ "for," which seems to me not to suit the context like δέ which the other authorities support.

But if Christ be God's wisdom, as He surely is, it is not His personal glory simply, but this "in a mystery." It is not Christ as He was here presented to the responsibility of man, especially of the Jews; nor is it Christ when He returns again as the Son of man in His universal kingdom which shall not pass away. It is Christ exalted on high and invested with a new glory, outside all the old revelations, and founded on the cross where the world, led on by its prince, rejected Him, but thereon glorified in God, and given as head over all things to the church which is His body. This therefore the apostle adds was "the hidden" wisdom, "which God predetermined before the ages for our glory." It formed no part of His ways either in creation or in providence. The law never touched it, nor did the chosen people under law look for it Nay, not only did the prophets ignore it altogether, but the Spirit did not speak of it in His ancient communications, though, when it was revealed, it could be seen, from hints here and there from the beginning and all through, that He of course knew all and said enough to justify its principles even where most differing from all that kind been meanwhile carried on.

But when the patient and full trial of man's responsibility closed in the cross which showed alike his own sin and ruin, Satan's guile and folly, and God's perfect goodness and wisdom, then was the suited moment to bring out those counsels of God in Christ for our glory, which were predetermined before all the sorrowful history of man, before even the world was created as the sphere in which his responsibility was tested. Of this man is still as then wholly ignorant, and none more than, if so much as, "the rulers of this age."

None of them knew it when Jesus was here; and just as those that dwelt in Jerusalem and their rulers, not having known Him, fulfilled the voices of the prophets which were and are read on every sabbath by judging and slaying Him, so “none of the rulers of this age knew; for, had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;” yet thus it was that they too instrumentally laid a basis for it. For the cross of Christ on earth answers to and is answered by the glory of God in heaven Wondrous fact — a man exalted over all the universe, risen and glorified with all things set under His feet at God’s right hand! Not only a matter of faith, but the revelation of it is also made known, as indeed only now since the cross and the ascension is it a fact. But it is a fact, and a fact revealed to the Christian, totally distinct from all Old Testament hopes, or that which shall be realised when the kingdom comes in the displayed power and glory of the millennial days.

Strikingly does the apostle proceed to set out the newness of this work and word of God in terms too often perverted through misapprehension to a mere confession of such ignorance as could not but be in the times before Christ rose and the Spirit was given. It is an application of Isaiah 64:4, yet for the purpose not of direct illustration but of full contrast. The Jewish prophet most consistently was inspired to stop with the acknowledged inability of man to pierce the veil that hides the future blessedness that God has prepared for him that waits for Him. Not so the christian apostle; for the veil is rent, and we are invited to draw near now emboldened by the blood of Jesus. Thus all things are ours, coming no less than present. We look at the things that are not seen and eternal; we seek and have our

mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth. It is in vain to say that they are hidden from man. They were so, but assuredly are now revealed to the children of God. They are revealed that we may not doubt or remain in the dark but believe. This is the emphatic statement of the apostle. What God has prepared for those that love Him He has revealed to us by the Spirit.

Do you limit His competency or question His willingness to show us all the truth, yea, things to come, in divine love? Expressly is it added, as if to meet our hesitation, “for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God.” Such a declaration may well silence every argument of unbelief, as disposed alas! to trust in the ability of man as to distrust the gracious power of God on our behalf. The Spirit who searches all, and knows all, is now in the believer to whom all is revealed in the written word of God. He who sounds the depths of God is able to instruct His children; and He is as ready as able, being here for this as for other loving purposes worthy of God and in virtue of Christ’s redemption.

It is the Holy Spirit then by whom God has revealed to us what of old was hidden; and He is thoroughly able to do so, seeing that He searches the very depths of God, as indeed He is God. This the apostle illustrates by an analogy drawn from human nature. “For who of men30 knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man that [is] in him? So also the things of God knoweth31 no one save the Spirit of God. But we received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that [is] from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.” (Vers. 11, 12.)

No man knows what is in another's mind. He may conjecture more or less accurately, but none of men can know inwardly what is in another's mind and has not been communicated to him. The spirit of the man himself knows, and no one else. It is shut out not only from animals inferior to man in the scale of creation, but from his fellows. So, but with incomparably greater force, no one can come to know the things of God, unless they be revealed: only the Spirit of God knows them. But here is the inestimable privilege of the Christian. It was not the spirit of the world we received, but the Spirit that is from God, and this expressly that we might know, inwardly know, the things freely given to us by God.

We are in the conscious relationship of children, and have not merely an acquired objective knowledge, but realize what God has vouchsafed in our own minds. Were any courting the spirit of the world? What a descent for a Christian! What a forgetfulness of our new and divine and eternal associations through our Lord Jesus! Here then it is a question of knowing through the Holy Ghost the things freely given us by God, and to this end is the Spirit given to the believer now that Christ was come and had wrought redemption. Where the blood has been put, the oil can follow, that unction from the Holy One whereby the very babe in Christ knows all things. For the grace that has freely given him all with God's own Son would put him in the conscious knowledge of all and in the joy of communion; and this can only be by the Holy Spirit of God, who accordingly anoints us when established in Christ, that is, when firmly attached to Him.

But the apostle tells us of more than this supernatural Spirit-given knowledge. In order that they may be enjoyed, the things of God had to be communicated divinely; and here the chosen instruments had to be made, not infallible of course, which is the quality of God alone, but perfectly guided in giving out the truth and guarded from all error for their task. This is inspiration, its permanent fruit being the scriptures we possess in the goodness of God. The principle is stated in verse 13, “which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in [those] taught by [the] Spirit,32 communicating spiritual things by spiritual33 [words].”

It is well known that the last clause has been variously interpreted, through a different sense given, now to συνκρίνοντες, now to πνευματικοῖς, and even to πνευματικά. Thus Chrysostom, Theodoret, etc., take it to mean, “explaining spiritual truths [of the New Testament] by [Old Testament] spiritual testimonies.” Only less far-fetched is the counter-view of Theophylact, H. Grotius, and others, “explaining what the Spirit-led prophets said by what Christ has opened to us by His Spirit” But Theophylact proposed a way too, which as it prevailed in medieval times, so also it has been common up to our day, of taking πνευματικοῖς as masculine, which the late Dean Alford treated as “clearly wrong” in several editions of his Greek Testament, but gave as right in his New Testament revised (1870), as Wiclif had done in 1380.

Again our Authorized Translation preferred, with all the other early English versions except that of Geneva, the sense of “comparing” as in the Syriac, Vulgate, etc., rather of “explaining” for συνκρίνοντες. And doubtless it

is a natural impulse to use a meaning which is unquestionable in 2 Corinthians 10:12 for the same word in 1 Corinthians 2:13: so Tyndale's (1534), Cranmer's (1539), and perhaps that of Rheims (1582), though I am not quite sure what was meant by "comparing spiritual things to the spiritual," as the latter might be understood as masculine (so the Arabic) no less than as neuter. The Genera Version (1557) gave "joining spiritual things with spiritual things," I presume after Calvin, Beza, Piscator, etc.

There are two elements for gathering the mind of God in the clause which have not been in general borne in mind adequately. First, the context as elsewhere helps to the sense of a. here demanded. Now it is certain that the apostle is describing, in verse 13, neither the revelation of divine things which the Spirit of God alone knows and can give (vers. 10-12), nor the reception of what is revealed, which is due to the power of the Spirit (vers. 14, 15), but the intermediate process of conveying in words spiritual things when disclosed that they may be received by the spiritual man. Secondly, as συνκρίνοντες appears to be a carrying on the thought of speaking the things of God to others in verse 13, so is ἀνακρίνεται equally characteristic of the manner and means of reception. As the one aptly expresses the putting together (συνκρίνοντες) spiritual things with spiritual words so as to furnish that concrete whole, the word of God, so the spiritual man ἀνακρίνει π., the converse sifting and examining accurately — a sense common to the New Testament and the LXX. (1 Sam. 20:12; Acts 17:11.) Ἀνακρ. was a word used technically in ordinary Greek of the preliminary investigation to ascertain whether an action would lie.

Hence in my judgment the meaning of “comparing” or even of “explaining” is here shut out; and, when we examine the present passage along with that in the Second Epistle, we may readily see with certainty that the construction wholly differs, though Parkhurst is rash enough to say the contrary. For in the latter it is a question of persons only, and hence “comparing” gives the sense justly. So Wahl in his second edition rightly, though from Rose’s note to Parkhurst it would seem that in his first with Schleusner he explained it as “we cannot endure to enrol or mix ourselves with” etc. — a poor sense assuredly.

Here, in one phrase, if not in both, it is a question of things, and hence the analogy disappears. In the LXX, which so constantly furnishes the true source of the Greek New Testament language, we find the verb and its derivatives used in senses more suitable to the requirement of our text, as has been often noticed. Compare Genesis 40:8, 12, 16, 18, 22; 51?: 12 (twice), 15 (twice); Daniel 2:4-45 (thirteen times); Daniel 4 (seven times); Daniel 5 (eight times), where “interpret” or “interpretation” is meant. Again we have Numbers 15:32, where it means “to determine;” also Numbers 9:3, Numbers 29 six times in the sense of “ordinance,” etc.

It is certain then that the most common meaning in the Septuagint, so familiar to the writers and earlier” readers of the New Testament, is that of making known the previously hidden mind of God couched in a dream or vision; and that the word was also applied to a determination through a judge or law-giver speaking for God. By an easy transition thence the apostle was inspired to use it here in the sense of

“communicating” (or, in a similar usage, of “expounding”) spiritual things by spiritual words. “Communicating” however seems to me better, because less ambiguous than “expounding,” as the point here is the fact and appropriate form of conveying spiritual troths rather than of “expounding” or explaining it when conveyed in words, which is the function of the teacher and not really in the passage at all. It is plain to him who weighs all that, though in some cases σύνκρισις may seem to mean pretty much the same as ἐξήγησις applied to such subjects, it goes really farther. For instance, Joseph’s or Daniel’s task went much beyond that of an ordinary expounder of scripture; and the word which duly described it might easily pass into the sense of communicating the previously unknown things of God in language suited to them. This I feel assured is the idea in the verse under consideration.

The apostle then shows that not human wisdom but the Spirit taught the words to convey the truth of Christ now. How null then in divine things is that wisdom! Why did Corinthian eyes see differently?

There was another lesson in its place of no less weight — the incapacity of man without the Holy Spirit not merely to know or convey, but even to receive the truth of God. “But [the] natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he cannot know [them] because they are spiritually discerned; but the spiritual [man] discerneth all things while he himself is discerned by no one. For who hath known [the] Lord’s mind that he should instruct him? But we have [the] mind of Christ.” (Ver. 14-16.)

This is a momentous declaration in all its parts. For the apostle by the “natural man” means man as he is born and grows up, without being born of God or the Holy Ghost given to him. He might be ever so learned, scientific, intellectual and refined; still, till quickened of the Spirit, he is ψυχικός. He does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly; nor can he learn them, so as to appropriate them, apprehending their truth, because they are spiritually discerned, and the Spirit of God he has not as unbelieving in Christ. The spiritual man on the other hand is one who is not only renewed but in the power of the Spirit. He accordingly has a divine spring of discerning while he is beyond the ken of all who are destitute of the Spirit.

It is in virtue of the Spirit of God that the believer now stands in so astonishing a place, capable of discerning all things, yet himself outside the discernment of man. How great the folly of any saint in Corinth or elsewhere yearning after human wisdom! What makes it even more striking is the application the apostle appends from Isaiah 40:13. For there the prophet insists on the supremacy of Jehovah’s intelligence, as before of His infinite goodness and power. Unsearchable Himself yet searching all, “who hath measured the Spirit of Jehovah, and, the man of his counsel, will teach him?” As independent of man’s measuring and instruction is the Christian in divine things, and this through the Spirit of God dwelling in him. Thus the use of Isaiah 64 bears witness that, as man’s heart had not conceived the purpose of God before the world for our glory (not merely the nations, as Kimchi would have it, but man generally, Israel included), so God has revealed it now that Christ is crucified and received up in glory, and this

by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven to be in and with us. But the use of Isaiah 40 goes farther; for the apostle ascribes to the Christian the mind (νοῦν) or intelligence of Christ, in whom God's wisdom is, and thus appropriates to us now by grace, as possessing the Holy Spirit, that which, belonging characteristically to God, is wholly independent of man and undiscoverable by him.

In short, as the revelation of God's hidden wisdom is of the Holy Spirit, so is the inspiration that conveys it, and no less truly though of a more general character is the reception of it. In the gospel as Paul knew and made it known, in the mystery of the gospel, was brought positively new truth, of which not Gentiles only but Israel or men universally were ignorant; but now it was revealed, communicated, and received in the Spirit. As He only could make it known, so He gave the words which were the due medium of conveying it, and He enables us to receive it.

How infinite then is the Christian's debt not only to the Father and the Son but to the Holy Ghost! Paul's gospel was pure truth to man, and pure truth through man: may we have self judged so as to receive it in like purity. It is the flesh — man's nature — which ever opposes the Spirit of God. There are those who count what the apostle insists on as supernatural; and they labour, some in this way, some in that, to reduce the gospel to the level of common sense. But let me warn them that if they succeed in their scheme for themselves or other men, they have lost the truth for God, who will not, to please man, give up His purpose of thus glorifying Christ by the Holy Spirit.

To naturalize Christianity is simply to ruin it. Only scripture draws a deep and marked distinction between the revelation and inspiration of the truth on the one hand and the reception of it on the other, though all be of the Spirit, and of Him only to be of true spiritual profit. And indeed it is evident that, if the communication had not been perfect by those employed as instruments of His inspiration, the revelation of God had not been any more perfect; and consequently the authority of God attached to their writings had been not only a delusion but a deception; for Christ and the apostles treat it as no less the word of God than what He uttered without human intervention. If it be not the infinite brought into the finite, we should have nothing to trust to as divine truth; we should have the finite and nothing else. Whereas the word of God, like Christ Himself, is God's entering into our circumstances, and this to give us His own grace and truth in perfection. Our use of it is another thing; and for this we are wholly dependent on the Spirit of God. But He is given to us; and we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3.

Such then is the ample complete and perfect provision of God for the blessing of His children by the truth to His own glory. His Spirit is everywhere the agent and power, as Christ is the object presented, and His work the efficacious ground and means, which His own sovereign counsels are the spring of all. Expressly is it the Holy Ghost who, as He reveals, and communicates in suited words, so enables the believer to receive, the things of God. And this led to a contrast between him that is spiritual, who discerns all things, and the natural

man who does not receive and cannot know the things of the Spirit.

It is not however that the Corinthian saints were “natural” men, for this would imply that they were not born of God. This the apostle does not say or mean, but that they were “carnal,” or “fleshly:” that is, flesh had still attractions for them. It was not judged, detected in principle, or hated in all forms and degrees. They still valued what was of man, wisdom, ability, or eloquence, as such. They had no adequate sense of nature’s worthlessness in divine things. “Carnal,” or “fleshly” describes not those dead in their sins, but those who, though quickened of the Spirit, are either not yet set free (as in Rom. 7) or still swayed by the influence of men, and nature unjudged — I do not say in its immorality, but in its estimate of itself. This last is before the apostle’s mind here. The Corinthians might be babes in Christ, but they were not spiritual.

“And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as spiritual, but as fleshly,34 as babes in Christ. With milk I gave you drink, not meat; for ye were not set able, nor indeed are ye now able, for ye are yet carnal. For whereas emulation and strife35 [are] among you, are ye not carnal and walk according to man? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not men?”36 (Ver. 1-4.)

Thus the reason now given by the apostle for having urged on the Corinthians the elementary truths of Christ is their own state. They were not spiritual but fleshly. What a blow to their self-complacency! If they were but babes in Christ, what else would be suited food? That hankering after, or admiration of, the world’s wisdom

was its sure evidence: for flesh delights in what is of man, as the Spirit gives to enjoy what is of God.

It is quite an error however to suppose that all Christians are “spiritual” in the sense in which that term is used in chapter 2, which differs not at all from its use in chapter 3. In both it means those not merely quickened but walking, feeling, judging in the Spirit. To say in 1 Cor. 2 that one discerns all things but is oneself discerned by none conveys quite as much as the contrast with fleshliness in 1 Cor. 3. The mistake is in supposing that the apostle looks only at but two classes, whereas in truth he speaks of three: the natural man, the carnal, and the spiritual, the last two being Christians, but the state different. For “babes in Christ” does not refer to the recency of their conversion, but to their lack of growth. As the Hebrews were kept back by their religious prejudices (Heb. 5), so were these Greeks by their philosophising. In either way souls may be arrested, or misled, and stunted in growth. In one of the cases indeed it was from no want of time; for on this score they ought to have been teachers when they had need to be taught the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, as the apostle put it to their great humiliation. So here: he gave them milk to drink. Meat was of no use in their actual state, nay, it might help on the mischief.

But there are other mistakes to guard against. Some in opposing the absurdity of reserve, Arcani Disciplina, etc., have laboured to prove that the same doctrine is in one aspect milk, in another meat. It is true that the Christ in whom the babes rested is more and more enjoyed of the fathers, but it remains certain that there is a whole range of truth as to Him which a carnal or

even immature state. in the believer would render unseasonable. The mystery of Christ and the church in Ephesians and Colossians is more than the priesthood of Christ in Hebrews. It was not that the apostle could not have communicated the depths of God; but could they then profit by such teaching? Would it be of God to give meat beyond them or injurious to them? “Ye were not yet able, nor indeed are ye yet able.” Nor was it from lack of natural ability, but on the contrary because they valued and trusted it to the hindrance of the Holy Spirit: “for ye are yet carnal.” And this he proves from their state by incontestable evidence. “For whereas emulation and strife [are] among you, are ye not carnal and walk according to man? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not men?” Emulation and strife were works of the flesh, not fruits of the Spirit. Their existence in their midst showed how little they walked in self-judgment. It was the party work they were used to in the schools of men. Certainly party zeal for Paul or Apollos was no better than for Plato or Aristotle; it had all the same root. Nor is there any difficulty in conciliating such a reproof of not a few of the Corinthian saints with his thanksgiving for the church in the introduction of the epistle? For as already seen, this was for the privileges bestowed on them by the goodness of God, not for their actual state. Whatever their gifts, they were in fact grievously lacking in practical grace, and this, as it exposes to fresh or revived forms in which human nature works, so it would effectually hinder growth through the truth. The Holy Spirit in such circumstances must take of their things to show them their faults, not of Christ’s things to glorify Him and comfort their hearts.

It is important, moreover, to see that it is a question not of morality according to the law, but of what suits, pleases, and magnifies Christ — the very object of the presence and action of the Spirit here below. Hence the apostle reproves them for walking, not as bad men merely, but “according to man.” They ranged themselves under their new favourites in forgetfulness of Christ, and in abuse of their own mercies through His servants. “Are ye not men?” says he, indignantly protesting against such a state of things. They were saints and ought to walk as such.

Glorying in men, be they ever so blessed, is carnal, no less than self-assertion; they are indeed off-shoots of the same tree. How could those who are thus erected into heads of schools tolerate so false a position for themselves or their followers if indeed they have the eye single to Christ: if not, can they be trusted? Far different is our apostle who asks, “What37 then is Apollos? and what38 is Paul? “Ministers by whom ye believed, and as the Lord gave to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So that neither he that planteth is anything nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. And he that planteth and he that watereth are one thing; but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” (Ver. 5-8.)

‡ The common text inserts

ἀλλ᾽ ἤ, and so read Ds.m. L P, and most cursives, contrary to A B C Dp.m. E F G, a few cursives, several of the oldest versions, etc. It is hard to think what Calvin means, save that he is mistaken, in saying that in some copies καί is wanting, for this is not so. The Cod. Rescr. Ephr. of Paris leaves out ὡς, but I am aware of no

support for this but a Latin copy. No Greek MS omits καί. He may confound ἀλλ᾽ ἤ with it, as to which we have already seen the evidence for and against. Calvin's critical remarks here, as often, are not to he trusted. His division of the verse is every way wrong, especially in making the last clause a further query.

Thus does God's wisdom correct the workings of unjudged nature, and this by a simple statement of the truth. For what are any? Servants at best in the proclamation of the gospel and the truth in general — servants by whom the Corinthian saints believed. Was there then no difference between Paul and Apollos? As the Lord gave to each. What room for boasting of men? Why not of the Lord who gave to each? Of this they had thought little. Grace unites. Flesh divides and scatters — flesh pre-occupied with this man or that, sometimes as here unable to find anything save in its favourites, sometimes heaping to itself teachers as at a later day. In either way there may be ever learning, but really no coming to the knowledge of the truth. The fact is that the Lord gives variously, nothing that is not good for the use of edifying, nothing in vain. It is not His way to form a class of labourers all alike, but to work differently by each. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." As it is in the work of the field where labour is expended in one form or another, but God alone can cause to grow, so it is in spiritual things. "So that neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." How insignificant is any instrument! God it is who works efficiently. "And he that planteth and he that watereth is one thing." Here he sets ministry, or ministers, together as "one thing." The consequence is that God alone is

seen to be of moment. But this very consideration, that they are “one thing,” rebukes the party work of their flatterers; as his own reward for his own work to be received by-and-by is a serious suggestion for ministers who like or allow the unwise zeal of those who cry them up and depreciate others. Their differences vanish into nothingness before God who graciously deigns to use each for blessing; even as “each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour:” not according to his personal qualities, however cried up by his partisans, nor even according to the particular gift bestowed of the Lord, nor yet according to present results before the eyes of men often deceived and in no case able to discern as He does and will manifest by-and-by, but “according to his own labour.”

How cheering to the despised but faithful and self-denying and gracious labourers; how humbling to Corinthian vanity which never took into account the one principle the Spirit here gives for the divine and enduring recompense! “For we are God’s fellow-workmen; ye are God’s husbandry, God’s building.” (Ver. 9.) This is the transition which justifies the foregoing, and prepares for the expansion of the last figure into the applications that follow. Whoever the servants may be, they are God’s in direct responsibility, not in this sense the church’s, still less of a party. Not that for this reason they do not serve the saints, for the more they preach not themselves but Jesus Christ, the more are they bondmen of the saints for His sake. But they are God’s fellow-labourers, given of Him, doing His work, responsible in everything to Him, and finally to give Him an account. The phrase in no way means “workers together with God.” This is not the gist of the argument

in the context; it is a thought and language foreign to scripture; and also, in my judgment, unbecoming and presumptuous. The emphasis rests on “God’s.” They were “God’s fellow-workmen, workers together,” not rivals (as flesh in others or themselves might make them) but companions in work under God who employed them as such.

Nor is this all. The saints are God’s husbandry, God’s building, as emphatically. Were they producing what was suitable for Him who had the field tilled? Was the building as God’s should be? I am surprised that any should think the meaning to be “with a view to your being God’s husbandry and God’s building;” for the apostle in saying “ye are” goes much farther. And duty is ever grounded on and shaped and measured by relationship.

We now come to language and application still more precise and solemn. “According to the grace of God that was given to me as a wise architect I laid the foundation and another buildeth on [it]. But let each see how he buildeth on [it]. For other foundation can none lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare [it], because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try the work of each of what sort it is. If the work of any shall abide which he hath built on [it], he shall receive reward; if the work of any one shall be burnt up, he shall suffer loss, but himself shall be saved but so as through fire.” Ver. 10-15.)

Even the apostle loved to connect his work and office with the grace of God rather than with abstract

authority. It is this feeling which has so evaporated from Christendom, so that ministry has humanized and assumed even a worldly character, to the unspeakable loss of the church and the most serious dishonour to the Lord. Here he is careful to speak plainly; “according to the grace of God that was given me as a wise master-builder [or architect] I have laid a foundation, and another buildeth upon [it], but let each see how he buildeth on [it].” Here we have the responsibility of him who ministers. Apostolic place is maintained, but responsible service is affirmed, and it is a serious thing. “For other foundation can none lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any one buildeth upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed by fire; and the work of each, of what sort it is, the fire itself shall prove.”

Here all is in due proportion, and the revelation of God in Christ is laid as the foundation of all; but we see how man’s responsibility remains. On that foundation very different material might be built up — not only what is precious, like the great and costly stones, etc., of the temple, but also what is worthless and vile. And here man’s judgment is at fault; for doubtless many a Corinthian saint had prized the hay and straw of man’s wisdom, and slighted the gold and silver of apostolic truth. Hence the need of another day and of the Lord’s discernment. Therefore are they told that much may only be disclosed in the day that is coming. None but this day is to be revealed in fire. Then will the consuming judgment of God deal with each one’s work. Even now there may be manifestations; but they are

necessarily partial. The fire itself of that day will prove of what sort is the work of each. It is good to weigh this now. All that lets in the light of God's future on present occupation is wholesome not only for His servant, but for all concerned. There will be no mistake then: all must be in the light of God. "If any one's work which he hath built up shall abide, he shall receive reward." For reward there is to cheer in the midst of present sorrow with the hope of the Lord's recompense in that day. Present reward is a danger for every soul, especially in divine things. There is however comfort of love, and the more real it is the more we rest on Christ rather than on Christians. He then takes care that we shall have it in good measure, even if the sphere seem small. And so it must be in a day of general departure from faith. It is His love which constrains the servant, and confidence in His grace too which serves as a constant spring of action.

When so labouring, the hope of future reward from the Lord acts both safely and powerfully: otherwise there is danger. But it is dangerous also to despise the future as naturally do those who are too much occupied with present results. Will their work stand? "If the work of any one shall be burnt up, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire." It is a powerful figure, and not hard to understand where the truth in general is held firm.

It is well known that Rome has founded on this passage one of its chief proofs of purgatory; but this is itself a sample of the refuse against which the apostle warns. For it is evident that not the faithful in general or their ways are in question, but ministers and their doctrine and again that a day of sifting judgment is meant and

not some intermediate state now after death. Fire is the figurative expression of His judicial action which consumes all dross, not punishment for the separate spirit or soul, nor even a process of purifying it. “Saved, yet so as through fire,” is to mark the difficulty of it; yet will God take care that so it shall be. So, as has been said, a builder might see his building ruined by fire, yet himself escape. Besides each one’s work is to be thus tested — the apostle’s work as certainly as that of his detractors, and gold, silver, and precious stones are subjected to the fire no less than the consumable material. Does all this apply to Romanist ideas of purgatory? The real point is the danger of introducing rubbish even where the true foundation is owned, not fundamental error or Antichristianism, but airy notions, lax maxims as to practice, etc., which the day of trial would detect and destroy. It was not so with his work whom some at Corinth had despised.

The figure of a building with its foundation, already used, furnishes the apostle with a yet fuller illustration. We have seen workmen wise or negligent, materials costly and durable or perishable and worthless, with a reward as the result on the one hand, or the workman suffering the loss of his work and his person only saved with difficulty. Now he develops on both sides, and contrasts the holiness of God’s temple in the saints with the enemy’s instruments in corrupting and destroying.

“Know ye not that ye are God’s temple, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any one destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which ye are. Let none deceive himself: if any one thinketh himself to be wise among you in this age, let him become foolish that he may be wise. For the

wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness; and again, [The] Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise that they are vain. Wherefore let none boast in men, for all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye Christ's, and Christ God's." (Ver. 16-23.)

Thus God has His temple on earth now as surely as of old in Israel. But this is often not seen by those who confess that the old Levitical order is judged and gone, and that the effort to imitate it since redemption is to fall away from the grace and truth of God now come in Christ, and proclaimed in the gospel, and to be displayed in the Christian and the church. It was the presence of God always which constituted God's temple. Not the costliness of stones, nor the splendour of gold or silver, but the cloud wherein Jehovah was pleased to come down was its true glory, when Israel could boast of a habitation in their midst for the mighty One of Jacob. So now it is not merely that there are Christians, but God has His house or temple. It is the assembly, not the individuals considered as such, but those builded together for the purpose in virtue of the Spirit. See Ephesians 2:22. The Spirit dwells in each believer doubtless; but this is another truth and equally certain from God's word. "Know ye not that ye are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you!" How solemn the fact that a divine person, the Holy Ghost, dwells where Christians are; and this, it may be added, because of redemption! For it was never so till the work of Christ was wrought, and He going on high sent the Holy Spirit down to be in the saints and abide with them

for ever. It is God's testimony to the efficacy of His sacrifice. Whatever the mercies and blessings and privileges before, this could not be till the blood that makes atonement for ever was shed. Now the Spirit of God comes where that blood-shedding is confessed; and there He dwells, making those who confess Christ and His work God's temple.

But it is much to be weighed that the apostle is here showing the danger not only of unreality but of defilement. There are those who build wisely and well; there are those who, confessing His name, build on the one and only foundation unfit materials. But there is worse still. There is the enemy at work using men that bear the Lord's name to corrupt or destroy (the same word, and one may say, the same thing). For God speaks of evil doctrine according to its own nature if it work unimpeded; and this is the only result of heterodoxy so left. He who teaches it corrupts and destroys; and him who destroys (or corrupts) the temple of God shall God destroy. Awful end! but is there not a cause? is it not sufficient? Could the holy God feel or do otherwise? It is in vain to plead love; for in truth the blow of love in caring for the objects beloved is beyond all to be feared. And how does not God resent that evil which defiles the holy temple where His Spirit dwells in virtue and honour of the work of Christ on the cross? He will surely destroy those whom Satan thus employs, under whatever disguise, to pollute the very streams of life and blessing for souls, yea, to dishonour the temple wherein He Himself dwells.

It is to deceive oneself where any reason is allowed in palliation of evil. Men who so weaken — I will not say christian feeling only, but — common conscience may be

found among those who bear the Lord's name; but, specious as they may seem and fine-spoken, it is not the wisdom of God in Christ, but of this age that comes to nought. How incomparably better and safer to become foolish that one may be wise! Such was the path the apostle took, obedient to the heavenly vision Did he not seem foolish in the eyes of all with whom he broke? Was he not wise, whatever a Festus might say? What and where is Festus now? and Agrippa and Bernice? and the high priest and the accusing chiefs of the Jews? They thought themselves wise; and so did others who in the Corinthian assembly brought in the wisdom of the schools to evade the cross and stand well with the men of the time.

But everywhere, without yet more than within, "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God;" yet nowhere is its character so exposed, nowhere its indulgence so perilous, as in the temple of God — the church. So it is written in Job 4:13, and Psalm 94:11. Whether one look back on past experience or forward to the kingdom, it makes no difference: feast of all can human craft or sage reasonings suit God's temple, or those who traffic in them there escape His judgment. And why should those boast who have with Christ all things? For so indeed it is in the grace of God. "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye Christ's, and Christ God's." We have all and abound, not only all those whom flesh would set up as rivals, but all circumstances present and future, ours now through the grace of Christ, and ourselves His as He is God's, for ever and to His glory. flow blessed and infinite the associations which flesh

overlooks and the world in its self-sufficient nothingness treats as nothing!

1 Corinthians 4.

The apostle had now shown the solemn responsibility of the workman, and the impropriety of all boast in men, seeing that all things were theirs as truly as they were Christ's and Christ God's. It was needful however to draw out still more fully the relations of ministers, and this he does in the beginning of our chapter. "So let a man account of us, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's39 mysteries." (Ver. 1.) The apostle is careful so to characterize himself as well as Apollos. They were Christ's official servants, not merely he and Cephas who were apostles, but he and Apollos, the latter of whom certainly had no such apostolic place.

Indeed nothing could be simpler than the manner in which this Alexandrian brother was led on in the work of the Lord, having begun it when possessed of the least possible light (the baptism of John) and afterwards indebted to no more formal instructors than the godly Priscilla and Aquila. But being an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, he contributed much to those who believed through grace, particularly in the controversies which sprang up with the Jews. From Ephesus he went to Corinth soon afterwards. We can thus understand how readily so distinguished a person fell in with the taste of not a few Christians in that city, whose party-spirit raised him up (with not the least allowance of it on his part) against Paul or Peter. On the other hand the apostle in the holy liberty of grace would in no way lower Apollos — rather the contrary, classing him with himself, and this not merely as bondmen

(δούλους) but as servants of Christ. They were therefore responsible to Him only. Thus they were also ὑπήρεται (official servants) and stewards of God's mysteries. This was their duty to the household of God — to furnish meat in due season, specially that truth which is most distinctively characteristic of the New Testament.

It is scarcely needful to prove here that "mysteries" never mean the sacraments or standing institutions of Christianity. God's mysteries mean those secret things which are now revealed in contrast with what Israel had of old (Deut. 29:29), not, as is vulgarly supposed, things unintelligible, but truths reserved by God in Old Testament times, now displayed in Christ on high and made known by the Spirit in the New Testament.

"Here40 moreover it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful, but to me it amounts to very little that I be inquired into by you or by man's day. Nay, I do not inquire even into myself, for I am conscious to myself of nothing, yet I am not justified by this, but he that inquireth into me is the Lord. So then judge nothing prematurely until the Lord shall have come, who shall both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall each have his praise from God." (Ver. 2-5.)

Thus the apostle reasons from the figure of a steward where fidelity was especially required. The critical reading is ὧδε instead of the common ὅ δέ, and there can be little doubt that the former, not the latter, is correct. Here (meaning on earth), he adds, it is required in the case of stewards, that one should be found faithful. Undoubtedly it is of still more consequence in

the steward of heavenly things; but the apostle is careful to place the personal responsibility of the steward in direct relation to Christ; “but to me it is a very little thing [or, “amounteth to very little”] that I should be,” not exactly, “judged” “by you.” The word properly signifies the preliminary inquiry before the trial. Not that this was said in contempt of the Corinthian saints; man’s day, or inquisition, was held equally cheap by him, whoever might essay to undertake a task which the Lord had never delegated to man. Not only is none competent, but the Spirit gives no sufficiency for this thing. It is reserved for the Lord whom alone it suits, even if the creature could conceivably be made fit for it. Here again it was no slight of others, nor self-complacency, for he particularly disclaims any pretension either to irresponsibility or to be his own judge.

Man is wholly incompetent for such an inquiry, were he even an apostle: yea, it would be an usurpation of the functions of the Lord. It is of the highest importance that this immediate sense of responsibility to Him be maintained always and everywhere. Whether it be a question of Paul or of Apollos, it is the same principle. Nor does it apply only to those whom God set first in the church, or in Christ’s service, but to the last or least no less than to the first. To the Lord alone it belongs to inquire into their service.

Again, it is of the utmost importance to see that the church has no such authority or duty. Christ’s servants according to their gift in His sovereign disposal may serve the church, or they may be debtors to all men in the gospel; but in their service, in all its details as well as in principle, they are accountable alone to Christ. For

He, and not the church, gave them the gift, the possession and exercise of which constitutes them His servants. As they are called to love and honour the assembly, so the assembly is bound to respect their direct allegiance to Christ the Lord, not to interpose itself between Him and them.

The servants no doubt are saints, and as such their conduct, if apparently so wrong, comes under discipline, and, if really evil, under holy censure. No person or office enjoys or ought to enjoy immunity. Nay, the doctrine of teachers if false, would expose them to the assembly's judgment, and more severely than in the case of others, because of their position, perhaps even to putting away. A clearly improper use of their gift for selfish purposes might bring them under similar dealing, were the doctrine ever so sound. Still in their service as such, apart from such evil, Christ's ministers are directly and exclusively accountable to Himself. They have not a lady over them in the church, but are subject only to the Lord. The abandonment of this truth, the assertion of the assembly's instead of Christ's authority over ministry, brought in catholicism and finally popery, though other and still more deadly ingredients might mingle with both and the last especially. But the substitution of the church for Christ in regulating ministry, as well as claiming to be its source, is assuredly an evil of the gravest nature; and Protestantism has by no means succeeded in exorcising completely this evil spirit. Do we not see it active in Presbyterianism, flourishing in Wesleyanism, gross and unblushing in Congregationalism? Truly we may say this kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting; for as the energy and self-importance not of ecclesiastics but of

men dearly loves it, it is only faith that can walk in constant dependence on the Lord, so as to dispense with it and make it an intrusion and offence.

It is of deep interest also to observe the apostle's choice of expression. Even in speaking of the Lord he does not say κρίνων, but ἀνακρίνων με. The truth is that the believer never comes into judgment (κρίσιν), as our Lord Himself laid down in John 5; if he did, he must be lost. Life and judgment are incompatible. He that refuses Christ and life in Him will assuredly be judged. He is lost, and it will be manifest then.

Thus is the honour of Christ vindicated by God on such as have spurned His Son. Those who believe in Him are called to no such compulsory and ruinous homage; they gladly bow even now to Him their Lord and life. They will give account to God; they will receive according to the things done in the body, as they will be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; but they will never come into judgment, having already faith and eternal life in Him. They exercise themselves, therefore, to have a good conscience now.

So the apostle says here (not speaking of his past life, though even there he had walked conscientiously, however blinded and so sinning with a high hand), "I am conscious to myself of nothing," yet, he adds, "I am not justified by this." A good conscience is a good thing; but it does not clear the person who may in this or that be blinded by self-love or other feelings. The Lord will decide at His coming; it is He who makes the only adequate inquiry. "Wherefore judge nothing prematurely [which the Corinthians were presuming to do], until the Lord shall have come, who will [not judge us but] both

bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God." At that epoch all that sought the dark to avoid detection will be exposed in the light of God, which will even manifest the counsels which the hearts themselves failed to see through. How fallacious often is the praise of men now where shams and shadows reign for most! Then shall each have the praise that is due and enduring and precious from God. Of this alone the apostle speaks here. He had already spoken of perdition, and of salvation where the work of the careless workman is burnt up.

The apostle had thus established both the dependence of the. servant on the Lord, and his independence of human scrutiny. Not, of course, that the church is denied its responsibility to judge conduct. Here it is a question of the counsels of the heart, which no man can scan duly, but the Lord will at His coming. "And then," he adds solemnly, "shall the praise be to each from God." He could thus speak freely and happily himself. It ought to have searched the conscience of many a Corinthian.

"And these things, brethren, I transferred to myself and Apollos on your account, that ye may in our case learn nothing above what is written,41 in order that ye be not puffed up one for one against another. For who distinguisheth thee? and what hast thou which thou didst not receive? But if thou didst even receive, why boastest thou as not having received? Already ye are filled, already ye have been enriched, apart from us ye reigned; and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you" (ver. 6-8). The apostle explains here what he has also done elsewhere — his applying a principle to himself, and, in this case, to Apollos also,

which he meant for others, in order that the saints might be profited. The misleaders at Corinth were really in his view, as the apostle here implies; but he lays down a standard, by which he does not hesitate to measure himself and Apollos, which the saints could easily use for others whose pretensions were as high and unfounded as the services of Paul and Apollos were real and of God. Of Him some had lost sight entirely; and each, choosing his leader, was puffed up with party feeling. What is written makes God everything, man at best an instrument, as he is alone rightly a servant. God only makes the difference between one and another, and this especially in divine things. And as it is He who makes a difference, what has anyone that he has not received? and if received, why boast as if it were not so? The folly of Corinthian vanity was evident in being puffed up for those they exalted as their respective chiefs.

But he proceeds to deal a further blow, and this of the keenest irony, as Isaiah scrupled not to do in exposing the folly of idol-worship. Trashy, if not corrupting, doctrine always lowers practice; and the Corinthians had insensibly relinquished or lost the place of sufferers with Christ. This the apostle notices witheringly. When Christ reigns, we shall indeed be at ease, and in the fullest satisfaction; and He will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of His Father — yea, He will gird Himself, and make us recline at table, and come and serve us as He in His grace deigned to assure us, when He will also set the faithful servant over all that He has, But now is the time to deny self, to take up one’s cross, and follow Him, who suffered many, all, things here below. But all was confusion for the Corinthians; their eye was not single, and their body therefore anything

but full of light. “Already [that is, before the time] ye are filled, already ye have become rich, apart from us ye reigned, and I would that ye did reign.” For they were deceiving themselves: the time was not yet come. False doctrine had made them false practically to the present object of God. Satan had succeeded in severing them, in walk at least and aims, from the Lord, who nevertheless waits for the time of glory, when He and they shall really reign together. The apostle proceeds to draw out the contrast seen in those to whom, if God had set them “first in the church,” He had given grace to become the greatest and most patient sufferers in the world.

“For, I think,42 God set us the apostles last as devoted to death, because we became a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men, we fools for Christ, but ye wise in Christ; we weak, but ye strong; ye illustrious, but we disgraced. Until the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted and homeless wanderers, and we toil, working with our own hands; reviled, we bless; persecuted, we suffer; slandered,” we beseech. We became as the world’s scum, offscouring of all, until now” (ver. 9-13). It is evident that those who misled the Corinthians, as well as the saints misled by them, had made the church their world, and that fleshly principles had supplanted the grace of Christ for their souls. They had schools and spectacles of their own, as well as the Greeks outside. In a burst of the finest feeling, not without sarcasm but with real love, which could use it for good, the apostle sets out the true path of Christ as one of suffering but victory over the world. Faith working by love can alone secure such victory. This was apostolic ambition, if ambition there can be of a saintly kind; and this God had given the apostles in

appointing them last, nearest to Christ, who had gone down into depths of suffering where none could follow. But there were sufferings of Christ which grace does share with the Christian, and these the apostles knew best, and of the apostles, we may perhaps add, none so much as Paul. Well could he then say, “God set us, the apostles, last, as devoted to death, a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men.” Did the Corinthians wish and claim to be prudent in Christ? The apostles at least were content to be fools for His sake. Were the Corinthians strong and glorious in their own desire and estimate? The apostles gloried in weakness and disgrace; even as Peter and John, on a well-known occasion, went their way rejoicing from before the Sanhedrim, because they had been counted worthy to be dishonoured in behalf of the name. Nor was it only the fervour of early zeal. “To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted and homeless wanderers, and labour working with our own hands.” Had not the Corinthians, or their misleaders, counted all this low and eccentric, ascetic and enthusiastic, in Paul? “Railed on, we bless; persecuted, we endure; slandered, we beseech: we became as the world’s scum, offscouring of all, until now:” an utter impossibility, of course, not in this or that particular which superstition can readily imitate, but as a whole, save through the constraining and assimilating love of Christ, who cheers those who set out and go on in such a path as this with the bright comfort of reigning along with Him. For I reckon, as the apostle says in Romans 8, that the sufferings of this present time are of no account in comparison of the glory that is to be revealed in regard to us. If there is a more energetic sketch of the suffering here, it is because apostles are in view rather

than the saints at large; but the principle is the same, and the Corinthians had slipped out of it to present ease and dignity, which they thought due to the truth of Christianity — an error which soon culminated, as it still does, in Christendom. Where are those that can expose it, not only in word but in deed and in truth?

† For blasf. (corr. B D E F G L, most cursives, and perhaps It. Vulg. etc. as in T. R.), p.m. A C P 17, 46, etc. give δυσφημούμενοι “defamed.”

The apostle, in accepting, yea, claiming, a place of present contempt in the world’s eyes for the chief emissaries of the Lord, in contrast with the ease and honour which the Corinthians lived in and valued, the fruit of the false teaching in their midst, had put the case in such a form as could not fail to appeal, and deeply, to every heart that loved Christ. He now, with the quick sensibility of genuine affection, seeks to reassure them. If he had wounded any, were not his wounds those of a friend? “Not to abash you do I write these things, but as my beloved children I admonish [you]; for if you should have ten thousand child-guides in Christ, yet not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus through the gospel I begot you. I beseech you then, become imitators of me.” (Ver. 14-16.) A false teacher flatters his party, and abuses those who oppose his aims. He who is faithful to the Lord loves the saints; but this very love makes him vigilant, and gives moral courage to deal with what is offensive to Him. Yet his reproof is for those ears who need it, not for others to lower in their eyes such as may be censured.

It is well to observe that there is no depreciation of christian teaching or teachers in comparison with gospel

work, such as the common version naturally insinuates. It is an appeal to the love which ought to bind specially the converted souls to him who was the means of bringing them to God; and not in any way a formal comparison of the relative value of this gift with that. Hence there is the avoidance of the word διδασκάλους, or teacher, and the use of the somewhat slighting term, παιδαγωγούς, as applied to those at Corinth who had done too much to occupy and turn away the saints there. Some of these might affect the law, others philosophy; but all Bought to keep the brethren who listened to them in their leading-strings. They had little enjoyment of, or confidence in, the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and hence sought to direct the thoughts and ways of their admirers, as do guardians, or παιδαγωγοί, with the young entrusted to their charge. But this savours more of Jewish or Gentile modes, than of the gospel or its liberty; and the apostle could not but remind them that he it was who begot them through the gospel. Only one could feel for them as a parent — himself; yet was it against him especially that these leaders of cliques had sought to alienate his “beloved children.” It is the interest of such a guardian to retain his charge in subjection as long-as possible; while a father’s joy is to see his children grow up intelligent as well as affectionate, maintaining the family character. Hence he adds, “I beseech you then, become imitators of me,” a word which he urges again at the beginning of 1 Cor. 11, with the beautiful proviso, “even as I also [am] of Christ.” Disinterested love is bold, and can speak freely. Certainly he sought not theirs but them, and the cross in practice, not earthly ease or honour or gain. Had they not lost their sense of what becomes the Christian? Let them follow him in self-renunciation for Christ.

“For this cause I sent to you Timotheus, who is my beloved and faithful child in [the] Lord, who will remind you of my ways that are in Christ [Jesus],43 even as everywhere in every assembly I teach.” (Ver. 17.) This young servant of the Lord was one who could speak the more intimately of the apostle’s ways in Christ; inasmuch as, on the one hand, he himself was his beloved and faithful child (which the apostle could not say of the Corinthians); on the other, the apostle never accommodated his doctrine to the assemblies, so as to falsify the testimony of the Lord. Whatever might be the elasticity of grace which dealt with individuals, seeking their blessing in Christ, he taught in every assembly just as he wrote to Corinth. The ways that are in Christ do not waver; they are straight, if painful to the flesh. Yet this was the man whom the perverse eyes of detractors charged with inconsistency and untrustworthiness! It is utterly false that a differing doctrine in discipline prevailed in the different assemblies. The apostle taught the same everywhere, and his writings insist on it where he did not go personally. It is the assembly of God, and His mind varies not. He had demanded nothing of the assembly in Corinth that he had not laid down elsewhere.

But some had drawn from the apostle’s not going to Corinth, and sending Timothy, that he shrank from visiting the assembly there. So had the false apostles insinuated in their own pride to his depreciation. “Now some were puffed up as though I were not coming unto you; but I shall come shortly unto you, if the Lord will, and will know not the word of those that are puffed up but the power; for the kingdom of God [is] not in word but in power. What will ye? that I come unto you with a

rod, or with love and a spirit of meekness?" (Ver. 18-21.) Indeed he was coming, and for this dependent on the Lord's will. But subjection to the Lord in no way enfeebles the conduct of His servants. So on coming the apostle tells them he will know, not pretentious talk, but reality — "the power." For this in truth is the essential characteristic of "the kingdom of God," in contradistinction from "the word," to which Greek ears had been ever used, and alas! the Jews for the most part. And this44 leads the apostle to remind the Corinthian saints that, if he had reminded them of the peculiar bond between them and him, as their father through the gospel, he had power and authority from God, however slow he might be to enforce it. It was for them indeed, as he puts it, to decide how he was to come, for this was the real question, not whether, nor when, but how: with a rod, or with love and a spirit of meekness? What he desired himself, as he says elsewhere, was their edification, not their destruction. In Acts 5 we see Peter using the rod; and the apostle Paul could do as much according to the Lord. But his heart sought other things for his beloved children: what did they wish?

1 I see no reason for doubting

κλητός with Lachmann (because of the omission in ADE etc.) The word is vouched for by BFGLP, all the cursives, and almost all the ancient versions and the Fathers that cite the verse.

2 Ἰ X. with ALP and all the cursives save five, all the versions save the Latin, and most of the Fathers save in the west, I prefer to X. Ἰ. as adopted by Lachmann and

Tischendorf on the authority of BDEFG 17, 37, 76, 115, 119, some copies of the It. and Vulg.

3 This order of inserting

τῃ οὔσῃ ἐν K. (AD and LP, perhaps all the cursives and the Fathers, as against BD and CFG and a few Latin copies which insert the clause between Ἰ and κλ.,) I believe correct.

4 The authorities are pretty evenly divided as to weight if not numbers for and against τε ("both"); I rather incline to its absence.

5 So Calvin (in loco, Comment. Halis Sax. 1831,) ed. Tholuck, I. pp. 213, 214. "Re ipsa talem se exhibeat necesse est.... Sed notandum est, non satis esse, siquis tam vocationis titulum, quam suam in exercendo officio fidelitatem obtendat, nisi utrumque de ipsa probet. Nam saepe contingit ut nulli fastuosius titulis superbiant quam qui veritate sunt destituti; quemadmodum olim alto supercilio pseudoprophetas se a Domino missos gloriabantur. Et hodie quid aliud crepant Romanenses, quam Dei ordinationem et sacrosanctam successionem ab ipsis usque Apostolis? sed postea apparet, inanes esse earum rerum quibus insolescunt. Hic ergo non iactantia, sed veritatis quaeritur." This is good and true. But it is utterly marred in the Institt. IV. iii, § 14, 15, where, not satisfied with affirming that the elders or bishops were designated by men authorised to choose them Calvin's republicanism leads him to say boldly that Paul was in Acts 13 subjected to the discipline of an ecclesiastical call, and that the same thing is seen in the election of Matthias. Who does not see on the contrary that the lot (which was not voting) decided as to the latter, and that Acts 13 was in no sense ordination, still

less election by man, but separation of men (already in the highest position) to a particular work which the Spirit was confiding to them, though engaging for them in it the solemn commendation of their brethren to the grace of God? Compare Acts 14:26.

6 I reject the notion of such as connect “theirs and ours” with “every place.” The Authorised Version gives the true sense, which does not render the first ἡμῶν superfluous but gives emphasis. It asserts the Lord’s relationship to all that call on Him wherever they may be.

7 The Sinai (original hand) and Vatican MSS, as well as the Aethiopic Version, omit μου, which all others read correctly.

8 Three uncials (B. F G) and ten cursives read

θεοῦ “of God;” but the received reading seems right.

9 Four Latin-Greek MSS, etc. read

παρουσία mistakenly. It was a. Western error. The Vulgate makes matters worse by uniting both “in die adventus.”

10 This would have been expressed by the

παρουσία, presence or coming of Christ, which the Authorized translators have wrongly confounded in their version here with ἀποκάλυψις, though the correction was given afterwards in the margin. They are not synonymous, but expressive of distinct facts which embody different principles as different as grace and judgment.

11 In the paragraph the MSS differ in the order of the Greek words repeatedly.

12 Ibid.

13 The Sinai, Vatican, and a few other witnesses, do not give τῳ θεῳ (or as A. etc.

μου also) like the rest.

14 The Sinai, Vat., Alex., Cod. Res. Par., some good cursives, ancient versions, with Greek and Latin Fathers, have ἐβαπτίσθητε, not ἐβάπτισα as in others.

15 The Clermont, Aug., and Boern. MSS read

βεβάπτικα, and the first again at the end of the verse — a mere error, for the perfect is only read when special aim interferes with the regular employment of the aorist in such cases.

16 Lachmann, following the opinion of some, punctuates this clause as affirmative, not as interrogative: “Christ has been divided.” And Meyer uses against the interrogative form the fee that there is no μή here as just afterwards But it has been justly replied that it was due to Christ that A difference should be thus made between a question relating to Him, and one that follows as to His servant.

17 There seems no ground whatever for the strange fancy of Estius and others that ἐγὼ δὲ χριστοῦ is the apostle’s own proper sentiment in contrast with the aberration of the Corinthians.

18 “Sed videamus, quid in Christiana unitate requirat. Siquis subtilius distingui singula cupiat, vult eos cohaerere primum in una mente, deinde in una sententia, tertio vult eos consensum verbis profiteri.” Calvini in Omnes Pauli Ap. Epp. Comm. i. 219, Halis Sax. 1831.

19 “Pro Sententia Paulus habet

γνώμην: sed ego hic pro Voluntate accipio, ut sit integra partitio animae, et prius quidem membrum ad fidem, alterum ad caritatem referatur.” Ibid. 219, 220.

20 Ibid. 220.

21 Many second-rate uncials and cursives, etc., insert

τούτου (“this”) here, answering to the clause before; but the better authorities omit it.

22 “Wisdom” here is preceded by the Greek article which seems to mean its wisdom, what it has as a fact, and not merely character.

23 The Text. Rec. has

σημεῖον: so L and most cursives; but the oldest and best uncials, some cursives, and almost au the ancient versions favour σημεῖα, the plural.

24 The Text. Rec. follows what I cannot but regard as the meddling of C3 Dc and most cursives to agree with the words before and after; but the best authorities give here ἔθνεσιν, Gentiles, not Ἕλλησιν, Greeks.

25 I. Calvini in omnes Pauli Ap. Epp. loc. cit. ed. Tholuck, I, 228. So the Institt. II. vi. 1.

26 The copulative (

καὶ) is not read by A B C D F G and various other authorities.

27 C is the only first-rate MS which joins many inferior copies, the Vulg. Syr. etc. in reading αὐτοῦ. All others give θεοῦ.

28 The common insertion of

ἀνθρωπίνης is supported by corr. A C L P, most cursives, and a few versions, with many Fathers Greek and Latin; but the great weight of authority rejects it; and in my opinion the unqualified phrase is right.

29 The most ancient witnesses give

ὅσα, the rest

ἅ.

30 A few witnesses, including the Alexandrian uncial and a Paris cursive (17), omit ἀνθρώπων, but it is surely right.

31 The received text, with one uncial and very many cursives, etc., reads oi[den instead of the true word ἔγνωκεν (ἔγνω F G 23, etc.) as in A B C D E P ten cursives, etc. With οὐδείς it was proper to say "cometh to know," rather than "consciously knoweth." The Spirit οἶδεν of course, and so do we when we have the Spirit of God in us.

32 The received text, with Dcorr E L P most cursives, etc., adds ἁγίος "holy," contrary to the best authorities.

33 The Vatican and a good cursive (17) read

πνευματικῶς, "spiritually;" as the Porphyrian has the Spirit communicating (συνκρίνοντες), not we. The Alexandrian omits αὐτῳ "to him."

34 The most ancient authorities (A B Cp.m. Dp.m. 17. 67s.m. 71. and some Greek fathers, who however vary elsewhere) here give σαρκίνοις, in verse 8 all but Dp.m. F G on the first occurrence, all on the second. The difference is that σάρκινος means physically of flesh (2 Cor. 3:8, Heb. 7:16); whereas σαρκικός supposes a fleshly will (1 Peter 2:11; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2 Cor.

10:4;), where it is not used generally as in Romans 15:27 and 1 Corinthians 9. In Romans 7:14 the best authorities (p.m. A B C D E F G and many cursives, etc.) give σάρκινος contrary to the reading of the common text. Here the importance dogmatically is great. The main question is which of the two should stand in 1 Corinthians 3:1. Tischendorf says on Hebrews 7:16, that in the apostolic age either form was undoubtedly applied in the same sense, and refers in proof to Romans 7:14 and 1 Corinthians 3:1; but these prove really that there is the difference in scripture which flows from the differing structure of each word.

35 The common text (T. R.) adds

καὶ διχοστασίαι on the authority of many MSS uncial and cursive, but contrary to the best copies (A B C P 23. 46. 67. 71. 74. etc., Vulg. Cop. Arm. Aeth. and many Greek and Latin fathers).

36 Instead of the vulgar reading

σαρκικοί at the end of verse 4, the weight of authority is decidedly in favour of ἄνθρωποι (A B C D E F G, etc., most ancient versions and fathers).

37 Τί is twice read by p.m. A B. 17. 46. 71. 121. Vulg. Aeth., etc.; τίς (“who”) is found in the great majority of MSS and Vv.

38 The order of P and A is thus given in A B C Dp.m. E F G P 17. 37. 46. 71. 116., etc. The best of these uncials (A B C P) and the same cursive add ἐστίν which is left out of the vulgar text.

39 Only F inserts

τοῦ before

θεοῦ.

40 Ἴδε in A B C Dp.m. F, Vulg. It. Syr. Copt. Aeth. Arm. etc.; whereas ὃ δέ has only Dcorr L., many cursive) and some Greek Fathers.

41 The MSS differ in trifles or slips, which do not affect a version of verve 6, save here, where p.m. B Dp.m. Ep.m. F G, old Latin, Vulg., etc., add nothing to γεγρ. But the Text. R. adds φρονεῖν, “to think,” supported not only by the later correctors of some of the older copies, but by L P, and most cursives, versions, and fathers.

42 T. R.* here inserts

ὅτι “that,” supported by the corr. of and D E L P, most cursives and versions and fathers, as against p.m. A B C D p.m. F G, 46, 116, some of the best and oldest Latin copies, and of the earliest fathers, Greek and Latin.

43 C Db, some fifteen cursives, some good Latin copies, Cop. later Syr. Arm. (Aeth. invertedly), etc., give X. Ἰ., but the latter is not in A B Dc E L P, most cursives, other good Latins, Pesch. Syr., etc. D F G (Gr. and Lat.) have Κυρίῳ X.

44 It seems to me, therefore, that Calvin did not duly see the connection with what the apostle had just pressed, or he would not have said that the person who divided the epistle into chapters ought to have made 4:21 the beginning of chapter 5. These chapters appear to be better divided as they are.

1 Corinthians 5-8

1 Corinthians 5.

Grave reason there was why the apostle should speak of such an alternative as “a rod.” For the assembly at Corinth had at present no happy name, if common rumour were true.

“Universal report is of fornication among you, and such fornication as [is] not even among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who hath done this deed might be taken out of the midst of you.” (Vers. 1, 2.) It was distressing enough that so monstrous an evil should have found an entrance in the assembly of God. But what grieved the apostle most — as well it might — was the tolerance of the offender in their midst. The assembly cannot hinder a Christian from falling into the worst scandal, but it is bound to deal with evil as identified with Christ before God and man. Here below this is the reason of its being. It is the temple of God, as he had urged in chapter 3 for a warning against trashy and corrupting theories; but if that holy habitation of God through the Spirit be inconsistent with false teaching, certainly and yet more manifestly with immorality. Now there was in their midst grossness beyond the heathen — a brother, so-called, living with his step-mother!

Granted that the Corinthian assembly was young in the knowledge of the Lord, and few, if any, men of spiritual experience were among them. Gifts they had abundantly; but elders are nowhere hinted at, as indeed

we know they were not, and could not be, in an infantine state of things. And divine wisdom, I doubt not, selected this state rather than one more mature and fully furnished, in order the better to provide for the exigencies of a day like ours.

But surely the youngest saints ought at least to have been appalled at such sin where God's Spirit dwelt. They might have had no special teaching on discipline, nor previous cases of evil, while the apostle was with them. But why did they not mourn that he who had wrought such evil in the assembly might be taken away? Humiliation and prayer are the resource of those who feel a wrong, and know not yet the remedy: and the Lord would have acted for them, or given them to act for Him. Instead of this they were "puffed up" — a grievous aggravation of the mischief. I will not go so far as to assume that the offender was one of those, of whom they were proud, and who helped the carnal multitude to carp at the apostle; but it seems plain enough that the self-exalting doctrine and the bad morality went together in his mind. Had they allowed into their hearts the germ of that unholy idea, so rife in modern and even evangelical circles, that the evil of another is not to be judged, but each is solely to judge himself? It is to the destruction of God's glory in the church. For what can more directly strike at all common union in good, all corporate responsibility for evil? Where such thoughts are suffered, it is plain that the presence of the Holy Ghost is either ignored or forgotten; for no believer will deliberately say that He can be a partner of iniquity, and this He must be if evil is known and unjudged where He dwells.

Seriously, as one familiar with the presence of God, and not like those whose self-esteem or vanity led them to evil in the assembly, does the apostle speak. It was that power of God in which he would have acted if present. “For I, absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as present, in the name of our Lord Jesus [Christ], ye and my spirit being gathered together with the power of our Lord Jesus [Christ], [concerning] him that so wrought this — to deliver such an one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (Ver. 3-5.)

It thoroughly fell within the province of the apostle to help the church at such an emergency, as indeed it was his joy at all times. For an apostle regulated and governed, and in this differed from such as were prophets without being apostles. But here was the assembly at Corinth, his own children in the faith, ensnared into the grossest dishonour on the Lord’s name, and withal puffed up, instead of mourning in order that the offender might be removed out of their midst. He proceeds therefore to pronounce the only judgment open to such a case. “For I,45 absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as present [concerning]46 him that so wrought this.” The best authorities thus give the sense. “As” comes in to modify the second “present,” not the first, which is sufficiently qualified by “in spirit,” contrasted with “absent in body.” In the second case the very reverse is intended, and “as” is indispensable (for he means as if actually there), whereas in the first it would be improper. He then shows the authority for, and manner of, dealing with the person: “in the name of our47 Lord Jesus (ye being gathered, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord

Jesus), to deliver such an one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

This has been confounded, especially since Calvin's time, with excommunication. But delivering to Satan is power here associated with the assembly, as the conferring of a gift is in 1 Timothy 4:14 with imposition of the hands of the elderhood. In both cases the result hinges on apostolic power. But the absence of this in no way enfeebles the duty of putting away the guilty professor, as is carefully laid down in verse 13 Our Lord indeed had Himself set forth the principle in Matthew 18, and provided for its maintenance in the worst of times. He had put the assembly as the last resort, even for a case which began with an individual trespass; for I do not doubt, spite of the omission of εἰς δέ, "against thee," in verse 15 (according to the Sinai and Vatican manuscripts, supported by three cursives, etc.), that they are genuine, resting as they do on most ample ancient authority, and falling in exactly with the context, which is embarrassed by the omission — an omission easily accounted for by the similarity of their sound in a Greek's mouth to the last two syllables of the preceding word. If the matter then were told to the assembly, and the offender should not heed it, "let him be to thee as the heathen and the tax-gatherer." But the Lord gives what is general and abiding: "Verily, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in heaven." This goes beyond the enforcement or removal of a sentence on evil to the more general authority of the assembly as acting for Christ. Next, He shows the efficacy of its united prayer, even if but two

agreed in asking: “Again, I say to you, that if two of you agree on the earth about whatever they may ask, it shall come to them from my Father that is in the heavens;” and this on a ground which takes in not merely a meeting for judicial decision or prayer but every assembly of the church as such: “for where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them.” For the authority of the assembly or the validity of its action in these matters of practice and conduct depends, not in any way on its numbers or the weight of the persons composing it, but on Christ who guarantees His presence where but two or three are gathered together to His name.

This is clearly urged by the apostle in verse 4. If Satan had sought to alienate the Corinthians from Paul, he at least joins himself in spirit with them, as gathered together with the power of our Lord Jesus, in His name to deliver the incestuous Corinthian to Satan. If flesh had been indulged shamelessly, flesh must be galled and broken to pieces under the adversary’s hand, but for good in the end at any rate — “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” In fact, as the second epistle shows, the discipline was blessed to him in this world also; but the end specified cannot fail for all born of God, whatever may be the hindrances here, or the particular shape of God’s dealing with the soul. For there is a sin unto death, and in such a case to make request of God would be an error. In the present instance it was not so; awful as the sin was: and the man not only did not fall asleep, but was brought to the deepest abasement and grief, and the apostle called on the saints to forgive, as doubtless they did.

As yet the Corinthians had no sense how they themselves were implicated in this frightful evil, and, what is more important, how the Lord's name was compromised by it. On the contrary they were high-minded, and levity prevailed. "Therefore," says the apostle, "your boasting [is] not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened. For also our passover, Christ, was sacrificed. Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth." (Ver. 6-8.)

There cannot be a more serious principle for the practical and public walk of the church. Evil is here presented under the symbol of leaven. Not only may it exist among saints, but its nature is to work, spread, and assimilate the mass to itself. The apostle insists that it shall never be tolerated. Here it is moral evil, in Galatians doctrinal; and of the two the latter is the more insidious, because more specious. It does not shock the conscience so immediately, or strongly, if at all. To the natural mind evil doctrine is but a difference of opinion, and the generous heart shrinks from proscribing a man for an opinion however erroneous. The church stands on wholly different ground, because it stands in Christ on high and has the Holy Ghost dwelling in it here below. No assembly can guarantee itself against the entrance of evil, but every assembly of God is bound not to tolerate it. When evil is known, the church is bound to put it away. Elsewhere we may find details in dealing with it. There are those who may be specially fitted not only to discern but to apply moral power, and they are

responsible to act faithfully to Christ whose the church is. It is no question, where known evil is persisted in, of exercising compassion, still less of cloaking it. This would be connivance with Satan against the Lord, and the ruin, not only of the individual already ensnared, but of the assembly. When the assembly knows evil, and either forbears to judge through indifference, or (still worse) refuses it when appealed to according to the word of God, it is playing false to the name of the Lord, and can no longer be regarded as God's assembly after adequate means to arouse have failed.

Bad as the state of things in Corinth was, the evil had arrived at no such footing as yet. It was humbling that their consciences were not yet wakened up beyond perhaps individuals, who communicated facts to the apostle or others who sympathised with their uneasiness. The mass, if they knew, acted as if they knew not, and were proud and puffed up instead of being abased in sorrow but in prayer to God. So early did the notion creep in that sin in the church belongs only to those directly guilty, that it does not involve all, and that the Lord Himself forbids others to judge, commanding tares and wheat to grow together till the harvest. Is it needful to expose such unholy and ignorant sophistry? "The field is the world," not the church.

Now comes the grave warning of the apostle in Christ's faithful love to the church. The tolerance of evil in any part vitiates the whole. It virtually commits the Holy Ghost to the sanction of what God hates. No interpretation can be more contrary to the spirit of the apostle's admonition than that which supposes that the whole is only leavened when every part is saturated with the leaven. It is really meant that a little leaven gives its

character to the whole lump. Even the late Dean Alford (though far from sound generally in doctrine, strict in ecclesiastical principle, or firm for the glory of Christ) speaks incomparably better than those brethren who debase the holy name of love to mean license for their friends or themselves. “That this is the meaning,” says he, “and not ‘that a little leaven will if not purged out leaven the whole lump,’ is manifest from the point in hand, namely, the inconsistency of their boasting: which would not appear by their danger of corruption hereafter, but by their character being actually lost. One of them was a fornicator of a fearfully depraved kind, tolerated and harboured: by this fact the character of the whole was tainted.”48 (Comment on 1 Cor. 5)

The apostle therefore charges them to purge out the old leaven, that they might be fresh dough, “according as ye are unleavened.” This is of high importance. The saints are unleavened, not merely ought to be. Their practical conduct is grounded on their standing. All efforts to deny the purity of the church are from the enemy. The apostle, writing even to the Corinthians, reminds them of this, and insists upon it. He recalls them to what God’s grace had done for them. He rouses their conscience to act consistently with and for Christ. Never does he think of allowing sin, because saints have the old man as well as the new. Was not the old man crucified with Christ? If God has already executed sentence upon it, there is no excuse for allowing it. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set every believer free. Not only has he a new nature, but the Holy Ghost to work in it by the word and grace of Christ. They were unleavened then and must purge out the old leaven. The very object of God was to form the church in

purity for Christ and according to Christ in this world, and the responsibility of the saints is to walk individually and corporately according to Him. His word makes His will plain.

But the figure of an unleavened lump at once recalls Christ as the true paschal lamb, and the consequent putting away of sin by His sacrifice. This deepens the ground on which the apostle demands that sin should be judged by the saints if through unwatchfulness any one had fallen into sin and repented not. The feast of unleavened bread was bound up with the passover, as every Israelite knew. This is turned to practical account here. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.” There might be new forms of evil besides those of old habits and associations. But as. all leaven had to be shut out by the Jew, so the Christian is solemnly called to deal unsparingly with evil in every shape.

Further, it seems to me of some importance to remark that this does not mean only at the table of the Lord on His day. The seven days of the Jewish institution represent the whole term of our stay on earth; and the celebration of the feast covers therefore the full time of each here below. Nothing inconsistent with Christ morally is tolerable in the Christian, and this not now and then but continuously. Such is the teaching of these types which the New Testament unveils and enforces. Beyond doubt the true light now shines. Redemption, far from allowing of sins in the redeemed, is the basis of holiness, and all evil was only then fully judged when Christ our passover was crucified. Before that how much was borne with because of the hardness of men’s hearts!

Now that it has been condemned in the cross of Christ and consequently in grace to the believer, we are told to yield our members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Freed from sin and become servants to God we have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. Anything short of this is not Christianity.

The apostle now lays down the direction of the Lord as to unworthy confessors of His name in the assembly. Those at Corinth did not know how such should be dealt with; but why did they not at least pray and mourn? Why were they puffed up?

“ I have written to you in the epistle not to mix with fornicators;49 not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or the covetous and50 rapacious, or idolatrous, since [in that case] ye must go out of the world. But now I have written to you, if any one called a brother be51 a fornicator, or covetous, or idolatrous, or abusive, or a drunkard, or rapacious, not to mix with [him], with such an one not even to eat. For what [is it] to me to judge those without?52 Do ye not judge those within? But those without God judgeth.53 Put54 out the wicked person from among your own selves.” (Vers. 9-18.)

There appears no sufficient reason a priori, why an inspired apostle might not have written an epistle which God meant to lapse after accomplishing its end, without filling a constant place in the scriptures. Hence there would be no difficulty, to my mind, if allusion were here made to an epistle of Paul which was never included in the canon. But where is the evidence that this is the fact, or that any other epistle is here intended than the one he is writing? In the latter case, the tense used would be what is called the epistolary aorist. It is in vain

then to say, “not this present epistle,” which the phrase means as naturally as a former letter which has not come down to us. (Compare Rom. 16:22; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:14.) Indeed 2 Corinthians 7:8 is the only instance that exemplifies a reference to a former letter, as the context necessitates, where the contrast is plain between the two letters. But there is nothing of the sort to determine here. As the usage the other way is far more frequent, so the sense is excellent, if we understand the actual epistle we have to be in view. The notion of a previous letter involves the inference that the present is a correction of their misunderstanding of a former command of his as regards keeping company with fornicators; but this appears gratuitous. So is the idea that there must be something in the preceding part of this epistle bearing on the point; for it is quite sufficient for the passage that he should be so instructing them now. That he must be referring to what went before is simply to deny the epistolary sense of the aorist. Again ἐν τῃ ἐπιστολῃ, far from being irrelevant and superfluous, if he meant the letter in which he was now engaged, is full of force and precision. “I have written to you in [not “an” but] the epistle not to keep company with fornicators.” He was exhorting to this effect now. This he proceeds to qualify: “not absolutely [or in all cases] with the fornicators of this world, or the covetous and rapacious, or idolatrous, since [in that case] ye must go out of the world. But now [or as the case stands] I have written to you not to keep company, if any one called a brother be,” etc. Here the same tense is used for what must be allowed to be what he is going to say in the present epistle; the νυνί only serving to distinguish the guarded sentence, a more

definite application of the principle in verse 11, from the general statement in verse 9.

In short the apostle is showing that brotherly intercourse is restricted to brethren, and so is discipline: to extend either to men of the world is false ground, and would make intercourse with people at large impossible. Christian companionship, on the other hand, demands purity of life on the part of those who enjoy it. If any one called a brother be impure, or covetous, or idolatrous, or abusive, or a drunkard, or rapacious, one is not to mix with him: “with such an one not even to eat.” The meaning is, not that we ought not to take the Lord’s supper, but not to eat the least meal with him. The corrupt or violent professor of Christ is to be avoided even in an ordinary social act, not merely on the most solemn occasion of christian worship.

The closing verses explain why this limitation ought to be. “For what [have] I [to] do with judging those without? Do not ye judge those within? But those without God judgeth. Put out the wicked person from among your own selves.” (Vers 12, 18.) The world is not the sphere of divine judgment as yet, but His children, whom the Father judges without respect of persons, as the church is bound to do. By-and-by the world will be not only judged but condemned. (1 Cor. 11) Therefore should the believer so much the more seek to judge himself: else grace would be of ill report, as if seeking to Bloke evil. But even if he fail, the Lord does not, who chastens by a divine judgment that he should not be condemned with the world.

Those without then are not the actual arena for apostolic or church judgment, but those within, as God deals with

the rest in due time. The church cannot evade their duty; strong or weak, they must stand clear in this respect before God. The saints may not be able to deliver to Satan, but are bound to put out from among themselves the wicked person. But they are not called on to put out any one who is not “wicked.” There are other steps in discipline which should never be forgotten, as rebuke in some cases, and withdrawment in others. It is false and mischievous that every offender should be thus removed; none should be but the wicked. In their case it is imperative, otherwise communion no longer exists according to Christ. It is not the entrance of the worst possible evil that destroys the character of the assembly, but the deliberate toleration of evil, were it even the least. Only we have to take care in judging that it be done in the word and Spirit of God. Unity that subsists by allowing known evil in its midst is of Satan, and directly opposed to God’s object in His assembly, which is responsible to reflect the character of Christ now in holiness, as it will by-and-by in glory.

1 Corinthians 6.

We have now to encounter a worldly evil among the Corinthian saints, as distinguished from the fleshly state and the corruption which have already passed before us.

“Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law [seek judgment] before the unjust and not before the saints?” (Ver. 1.) Here modern practice, or even thought, greatly differs from apostolic principle. Christians now-a-days have little conscience in appealing to a worldly tribunal. It is evident that the Holy Ghost felt it to be an outrage, nor could any Christian walking rightly think of prosecuting a suit

before the world against another however wrong. He must forget what God accounts each to be: the world, as having rejected His Son; the saints, as those that are by grace separated from it to God.

Here however the apostle grounds his reproof on the anomaly of seeking judgment at the hands of those whom we shall judge at Christ's coming. "55Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy of the least judgments? Do ye not know that we shall judge angels? Much more things of this life. If then ye have judgments in things of this life, set up those who are of no esteem in the church." (Ver. 2-4.) The apostle thus brings in the light of the coming day to bear upon present matters. This is certain from verse 8, if any one could question verse 2. In vain the efforts of ancients (Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, etc.) to make it moral, or of moderns (Mosheim, Rosenmüller, etc.) to make it political and worldly. The future judgment of the quick in the kingdom of our Lord is a reality that acts on the apostle now. He uses it to judge the conduct of every day. How can it be a living truth if it operate not thus? Even the Corinthians did not doubt the fact as to the future; but, like all unspiritual persons, they had let it slip now where they ought to have remembered it.

It is evident however that "that day" was a truth so familiar and admitted on all sides by the saints that Paul could reason from it as unquestionable. The saints have the same life now, and the same Spirit; they have also the word of God. How monstrous then thus to ignore the glory with Christ to which grace calls them, and to fall into the ways of men! To faith it was the grossest inconsistency; for if the world is judged by the saints,

are they unworthy of the “least judgments?” Such were and are the questions on which men usually go to law. Nor is it only the world but other beings the saints are to judge. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? Much more things in this life.”

The future judgment of the world and of angels has slipped away from Christians generally. They believe in the judgment of the dead, not of the living; and hence the ground of the apostle’s appeal no longer exists for them. Scriptures such as these become unreal to their minds. So far they are practically infidel; and necessarily their practice is worldly in this respect. Alas! it is only a sample, not an exception. The difficult times of the last days are come, when men are lovers of self and of money, boastful and arrogant, abusive and disobedient to parents, lovers of pleasure rather than of God, having a form of piety but denying its power. From these we are commanded to turn away. Scripture is the grand resource; and this, not forgetting the apostle’s conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecution, suffering, and the certainty that all who desire to live piously in Christ shall be persecuted, while wicked men and impostors grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. The time is come when men will not bear sound teaching, but according to their own lusts will heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears, turning away from the truth as decidedly as they have turned aside to fables. What more mischievous delusion than a millennium to be brought in by the church’s testimony and labours? It will really follow divine judgment when the Lord Himself comes, who, after executing it, will pour out the Spirit afresh on all flesh, when they see the salvation of God.

The Corinthians were not so far gone as the Christians of our day. They were well aware that the saints shall judge the world: only selfishness had dulled their remembrance of it. The Spirit of God now recalls the truth to them, and appeals to their sense of the evident incongruity that those who are to judge the world on the grandest scale were accounting themselves in feet unworthy of the smallest judgments. Such no doubt were those that could be then before the Corinthian brethren, whereas by-and-by the gravest will be held by them when glorified. And the apostle makes the inconsistency more pungently felt by characterising the world as the “unjust” and themselves as “the saints” — nay, by reminding them that we shall judge angels. Surely then things pertaining to this life between brethren ought not to go farther! Where was their faith and their love? Where their hope?

Some interpreters, as we know, take verse 4 interrogatively, others sarcastically. There seems no particular reason for the former, Matters of this life require no more than good sense and honesty; and surely the possession of these would not constitute a claim for honour in the church. Brethren might have both, and be little esteemed there, where the grace and power of Christ alone constitute such a claim. The decision of those matters in no way called for high spirituality. Indeed the apostle says, “I speak to your shame. Thus there is not among you one wise [man] who shall be able to decide between brethren” (literally, “brother [and brother]”). “But brother goeth to law with brother, and this before unbelievers. Already therefore56 it is altogether a fault in you that ye go to law among yourselves. Why are ye not rather wronged?

why are ye not rather defrauded? But ye do wrong and defraud, and this,57 brethren." (Ver. 5-8.)

It is clear that the apostle in no way wished such disputes to be brought, in the first instance at least, before the assembly. The gravest cases should be, not lighter ones. Had they not even one wise man to decide them? He is slighting such questions as well as reproving themselves for their worldliness; and their moral state was worse to him than their lack of wisdom. The Christian is called to suffer, even when he does well, and to take it patiently, not to go to law. The Corinthians were sadly forgetful of the true glory of the church; and when Christians thus forget their proper standing and the conduct that suite it, they cease to walk even as upright men should. "Ye do wrong and defraud, and this, brethren." Nor is it so surprising, when we consider that it never was intended that Christians should walk well except by faith, any more than Peter could walk on the waves without looking to Christ. When he ceased to look to Him, he begins to sink at once, less safe than those who had never ventured out of the ship.

Failure in faith and hope too, I must repeat, will soon be found to involve failure in love. "Ye do wrong and defraud, and this, brethren." All through from first to last, it was a direct dishonour to God, and a false testimony to their relationship to Him, if indeed they were born of God. His sense of their failure as Christians does not lessen his horror at the dishonesty or other wrong which provoked the law-suits. "Know ye not that unjust [men] shall not inherit God's kingdom? Do not err: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves as women, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor rapacious, nor covetous, nor

drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit God's kingdom." (Vers. 9, 10.) It is clear that the apostle, without confining himself to the actual case, is exposing severely the habits so common at Corinth — corruption much more than violence. He is speaking for profit and for solemn warning as the Holy Ghost always does, if He touches sin at all. He is not beating the air, nor denouncing sins only found elsewhere. Fleshly add worldly licence would surely end, if unjudged, in revolting excesses. Tampering with a little evil is the straight road to more and worse, and in none so certainly as the professing Christian. To indulge in any evil is in works to deny Christ. The business of a Christian is to manifest Him. The Corinthian saints were in danger of slipping back into the vilest ways of human corruption.

"And these things were some of you." This would give Satan an advantage if they looked away from Christ. Old habits then resume their power, and evil communications corrupt good manners. Then he adds, "But ye were washed" [literally, "had yourselves washed"], "but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus [Christ]58 and by the Spirit of our God." (Ver. 11.) He reminds them of the gracious power of God in Christ on whom they believed by the action of His Spirit; and will not allow that this could be all in vain. In ἀπελούσασθε there may be an allusion to the administrative sign, as in Acts 22:16; but the connection here points rather to the reality signified. The sanctification is clearly the setting apart of the Christian to God which the Holy Spirit effects in conversion, rather than the practical holiness which He afterwards works to make good, the former being

absolute as the latter is relative. This is shown conclusively by its preceding justification, which has here of course its regular sense, when the soul is not only born of God but stands acquitted of all charge before Him through the work of Christ, and is then sealed by the Spirit.

The apostle turns next to fleshly abuses: the first in respect of meats, the second and gravest in fornication. He had shown that, whatever the grace of God is in calling the vilest, all such are saved after a holy sort. This he now exemplifies in two instances where some pleaded liberty to deny practical purity. Of this he will not hear. He will not diminish liberty one jot, but he asserts its character to be Christian, as all our other privileges are. If not of Christ, it is sin. So is it with all we boast: life, righteousness, peace, and glory. In this liberty differs not from the rest. What Christian could wish any of these in or for the flesh? It would be to abandon the Second man for the first: to wish licence for sin proves utter lack of love and honour for the Saviour.

“All things are lawful to me, but all things do not profit; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God will bring to nought both it and them; but the body [is] not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us by his power. Know ye not, that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then taking the members of Christ make [them] members of a harlot? Let it not be. What!59 Know ye not that he that is joined to the harlot is one body? For, saith he, the two [shall be] one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin which a man may

practise is outside the body, but the fornicator sinneth against his own body. What! Know ye not that your body60 is a temple of the Holy Spirit that [is] in you, which ye have from God; and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price: do then glorify God in your body."61 (Ver. 12-20.)

If all things are lawful to the Christian, certainly all do not profit. As Christ never did what did not profit, so neither should the Christian. He is free, but it is only according to Christ for good, and this in love, the good of others. But there is another guard: if all things are lawful to the Christian, he refuses to be brought under the power of anything: were it not so, it would be bondage, not liberty. Thus to have regard for others' good must be kept up, as well the liberty itself intact. The Christian is called to serve others, never to be the slave of a habit in anything great or small.

The first application of the apostle is to meats, which he deals with in terms so curtly contemptuous as to decide the question for every godly soul. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God will bring to nought both it and them;" He then points out an analogy as forcible as it is surprising and withal no less true: they mutually suit one another, and both perish under God's dealing. They are but temporary. It was the more striking, as coming through one who had been a Jew to those who had been Gentiles; and all know the place meats had in Judaism. But Christianity brings in the light of God and of the future for our present guidance; as we see in the second case still more at length. For "the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." If the belly is put down to its true and passing use, the body is exalted to a place of which

philosophy knew nothing. As it was not formed for unhallowed or promiscuous indulgence, so it is for the Lord and the Lord is for it.

Never was the honour of the body set in its true light till Christ came and proved it not only in His own person as man but in ours as redeemed by His blood and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Compare Rom. 6:12, 13, 19; Rom. 8:10; Rom. 12:1; Col. 2:23; 1 Thess. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Tim. 4:3-5.) Even now the Lord disdains not this temple of the Spirit: how much less when changed into the likeness of His glory? (Rom. 8:11, 18-23; Phil. 3:21.) In this body we shall have the portion of our Lord. For "God both raised the Lord and will raise up us by his power." (See 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 4:14.)

It is not merely that our spirits go to be with the Lord in heaven; our bodies shall be raised like His at His coming, as many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves after His resurrection. For if death shows man's weakness, resurrection displays God's power. The actual spiritual effect of this is immense. Not our souls but our bodies are declared to be members of Christ. Those who descant on the soul only may claim a superior elevation. But it is never really so in practice or in theory. On the contrary the immortality of the soul is easily perverted to man's pride; not so the resurrection, which not only exalts God and humbles man but delivers from present ease and indulgence where it is held in faith. Of this the Holy Spirit is the earnest, who joins us to the Lord and constitutes our bodies members of Christ. Hence the enormity of fornication. (Vers. 15, 16.) How basely inconsistent with such intimacy, yea union, is impurity with a harlot! It was the more needful to urge this on a

city more than any other noted for this sort of licence, besides the broad fact that the heathen in general regarded fornication as an indifferent act like eating and not as in itself a sin. “The two, saith he, shall be one flesh; but he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” (Vers. 16, 17.)

But its incongruity with our relation to Christ is not all that the apostle urges. Fornication he would have avoided earnestly, because of its peculiar character, differing as it does from every other sin in this that it is against the body itself, while others are external to it. How dreadful then to think not merely of the body so misused, but the Christian’s body, temple of the Holy Spirit as it is! not from any mere consecration to Him but from His being in us, and this from God, on the ground of purchase by Christ’s blood. Therefore the apostle’s appeal to glorify God in their body.

It was only because of Christ’s work that the Holy Spirit could thus be given to us and dwell in us. He quickened souls before Christ shed His blood, but He never sealed them till after. Jesus, the Holy One of God, is the sole example of man so sealed without blood. But He is the exception that proves the rule. Adam was not, because, though innocent, he was not holy nor is ever said to have been; the Second man was, and only He apart from redemption; and therefore was He sealed by God the Father in virtue and witness of His intrinsic perfection. If we can be and are, it is solely in virtue of being perfected by His one offering, and we are therefore exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption (that is, of our bodies). The Spirit given is the expression of God’s love shed abroad in our hearts; He is also the measure by

which we should try our conduct, and the power of enjoying and representing Christ aright. Bought then so that we are not our own but God's, we are called accordingly to glorify God in our body. A wondrous fact to be assured of on divine authority that such as we by grace can and should glorify God!

These then are the motives for us. We are bought with a price, and we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that is in you, which ye have from God; and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price." It enhances the presence of the Spirit in us when we are told that we have Him from God. It could not be otherwise of course; but to have it thus stated is precious and solemn God would have us to remember and feel that it is from Him we have the Spirit thus given.

But let us not forget that it is in our body we are to glorify God. Many a one deceives himself in the thought that he is all right in spirit, though he dare not say that he keeps his body under and brings it into subjection. The Christian is bound to glorify God in his body.

So in the consecration of the priests under the law (Lev. 8) we may see that the washing of water preceded the putting on of blood, and the anointing of oil closed the matter. It is just the same order of truth which is discernible here, and which is true of the Christian in fact. Of old followed the duties of the priestly office according to the instructions of Jehovah; as we see the Christian here exhorted to glorify God. What a claim! How God values the spirit, ways, communion, and conduct of the Christian! How lowering to the standard when, like the Corinthians, we forget that we are no

longer men striving to walk with decency through the world, but our body the temple of the Holy Ghost and ourselves the purchase of Christ's blood, and with such an aim set before us as glorifying God! The unbelief of believers is the delight of the adversary and the saddest hindrance to His glory in and by us. It is the fertile source of every failure and of the most grievous sins in the saints. It is the main stumbling-block for every serious man in the world. It makes the glorifying of God an impossibility. May we be enabled then to meet the simplest matter of every-day propriety in the faith that is familiar with the richest and highest displays of God's grace in the redemption of Christ and the gift of the Spirit!

1 Corinthians 7.

We now enter on a fresh division of the Epistle, though the opening of it is naturally connected with (at least, so as to follow) the apostle's exhortation to personal purity, which he has just shown to be due to the Holy Ghost's presence, as well as the Lord's purchase of us: our consequent call is to glorify God in our body.

It seems that the saints in Corinth had written, among other topics, about marriage, and the various questions it naturally raised for the Christians as yet little versed in the truth. From the laxity of heathen, especially of the Greeks and above all the Corinthians, there was a reaction toward asceticism, that favourite resource of moralists and philosophers in the East, which had thence spread more or less into the West. The apostle urges holiness, but not at the expense of liberty in Christ.

“But concerning the things of which ye write to me, [it is] good for a man not to touch a woman; but on account of fornications, let each have his own wife, and each have her own husband. To the wife let the husband render his due, and likewise also the wife to the husband. The wife hath not authority over her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not authority over his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another, unless by consent for a time, that ye may have leisure for prayer, and again be together, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency.” (Ver. 1-5.)

When Adam was made, Jehovah said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him. And so He builded the woman out of the man. They were to be, and were, one flesh. The apostle was the last man to weaken the order of nature. It was he who still later wrote to the Hebrews, Let marriage be every way honourable, and the bed undefiled. Here he in no way contradicts it or differs. He is in full unison with his Master (in Matthew 19 and Mark 10) who vindicated God’s original institution from creation for man in the flesh, whatever the law might allow in view of the hardness of men’s hearts, though he maintained the superior excellence of the unmarried state, where there was power to be undividedly for the Lord and His things. But it is not so with every saint. All cannot receive it, but those to whom it has been given If any one is able, let him receive it: if he boast, he is in danger of dishonouring the Lord more than those he despises. The Lord and His apostle both caution souls. Grace may call and strengthen to live above what is not only lawful but

honourable every way; and surely, if kept thus in lowliness, the former is the better portion.

But there are snares through nature as it is; and nowhere was there reason to fear more from the habits and associations of the place than at Corinth. Heathenism in some cases consecrated fornication. Because of the licentious ways, there and then of the commonest occurrence but at all times a danger, let each have his own wife, and each have her own husband. Mutual consideration to the last degree becomes both in a relationship where they that were two are no longer so but one. Grace, if it lift above nature in certain cases for the Lord's glory, enforces the honour and duties of those who are in a natural relationship. It is the sure mark of the enemy, where grace is perverted to put contempt on the least or lowest ordering of God. If we are in the relationship, we are bound to be true to its claims. Hence the husband was to pay her due to the wife, and in like manner the wife to the husband. The married estate is inconsistent with independence of each other in all that pertains to it. The wife has not authority over her own body, but the husband; and in like manner also the husband has not authority over his own body, but the wife. Hence they were not to defraud or wrongfully deprive one another, unless by consent for a time, that they might be free for prayer and again be together, lest Satan should tempt them for their incontinency. The law made nothing perfect. Christ vindicated God's mind and will as to the first man, but Himself was the manifestation of God in man. So does the apostle speak of marriage in words far above the thoughts and ways of Israel. What is first was never so

fully stated before; but grace, as ever, presents a better thing.

“But this I say by way of permission, not by way of command. Now I wish all men to be even as myself; but each hath his own gift of God, one this way, and another that. But I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them that they remain even as I. But if they have not self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.” (Vers. 6-9.) Thus did the Holy Spirit lead the large-hearted apostle to write, in what he had laid down, declaring that it was not as a commandment, but a permission. His own wish for others was that all should be even as himself. But he does not overlook that each has as God gives him. Hence to the unmarried and to widows he says, it is good for them to remain even as he; yet even then not absolutely, but only in case they can without fear of sinning in this respect.

“But to the married, not I enjoin, but the Lord, that wife be not separated from husband (but if also she be separated, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband), and that husband leave: [or put away] not wife.” (Vers. 10, 11.) Here it was no fresh direction from apostolic authority, but the ruling of the Lord Himself, already known, the general duty of man and wife, grounded on the indissolubleness of the tie. Wife was not to be parted from husband, nor husband to dismiss wife: if parted, she was to abide unmarried, or be reconciled; for, even if she were without fault; separation is a reproach and might be a snare.

Next we have the apostle inspired to add light as to present difficulties, and this not at all a repetition of the principle for Israel, but in contrast with it. “But to the

rest I say, not the Lord, If any brother have an unbelieving wife, and she consent to dwell with him, let him not leave [or put away] her; and a woman which hath an unbelieving husband, and he consents to dwell with her, let her not leave [or put away] him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife,62 and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother;63 since then your children are unclean, but now are they holy." (Vers. 12-14.) Here it was the grave question of mixed marriages, where one of the parties already united, and not the other, had been won to Christ by the gospel. In this the grace of Christianity is strikingly contra-distinguished from the rigour of Judaism. (Compare Ezra 9:10.) One of the ways in which Israel abode a holy people was in refusing to mix with the heathen in marriage. Those who thus intermarried, or took strange wives, were polluted, and their children were unclean; when they felt and judged the sin, they proved it by not only offering a ram for the trespass but putting both away. The holiness of the Christian is not only intrinsic, instead of being fleshly and external, but there is a far more gracious consideration, and a largeness, of which the law knew little or nothing. Thus, if husband or wife were a believer, he or she was not defiled by union with the unbeliever, but contrariwise the unbeliever is sanctified, and the children are holy.

In this way does the Spirit of God comfort the believer whose wife or husband, as the case might be, still remained an unbeliever; for I presume it was as true of an Israelite as of a heathen. It was of course a grievous trial to be so united. If the believer were the wife, she might be suspected and thwarted at every turn by her unbelieving husband. He would naturally be vigilant that

the children should be kept from Christian truth and privileges of every kind, and would himself show his contempt for that which his wife valued, resenting above all the calm confidence of faith that counted idols nothing and confessed the Lord Jesus before men. But she is here instructed and strengthened by the apostolic injunction. If her husband consented to dwell with her, spite of that confession, she was not called to quit or put away her unbelieving husband, for he was sanctified in her, as the children were holy. What a relief this must have been to godly but scrupulous souls, who had been brought to God by the gospel, after being married to Gentiles or Jews, with children brought up in Judaism or idolatry! Were they troubled when they read in the scriptures that of old the requirement was to abandon the ill-assorted wife and the children so born? The grace of the gospel, as the apostle shows, delivers from all uncertainty as to God's mind, and pronounces the unbeliever, whether husband or wife, to be sanctified in the believing correlative, and the children holy, not profane.

We have seen then the striking contrast between the gracious power of the gospel and the weakness of the law: under the one, the unbeliever sanctified in the believing relation and the fruit of their union holy; under the other, the Jew defiled and the children unclean.

But it may be well here to notice the use made of verse 14 by both the parties to the baptismal dispute. Thus writes Dr. Wall in his "History of Infant Baptism" (I., 144, 5, Ed. 4,1819):

"Mr. Walker has taken the pains to produce quotations out of almost all the ancient writers, to show that this

was a common phrase with them to say, an infant or other person sanctified, when they mean baptized; and I do, for brevity's sake, refer the reader to his book. The scripture also uses it so (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26), which makes that explication of 1 Corinthians 7:14, 'Now are your children holy,' which is given by Tertullian, St. Austin, St. Hierom, Paulinus, Pelagius (chap. 19), and other ancients, and since by Dr. Hammond, Mr. Walker, etc., much the more probable; whereby they make the words (ἅγια) holy, and (ἡγίασται), has been sanctified, to refer to baptism. — Their explication is also the more probable, because there has no other sense of those words been yet given by expositors but what is liable to much contest; but especially that sense which some Antipaedo-baptists have endeavoured to affix to them (of legitimacy, in opposition to bastardy) seems the most forced and far-fetched of all. The words are ἡγίασται, κ. τ. λ. The grammatical translation of which words is, 'For the unbelieving husband [or an unbelieving husband] has been sanctified by the wife;'.... and our translators altered the tense, and put is sanctified instead of has been sanctified; because they thought, it seems, the sense required it; but without any such alteration, the paraphrase given by many learned men is to this purpose: — For it has ordinarily come to pass, that an unbelieving husband has been brought to the faith, and so to baptism, by his wife; and likewise an unbelieving wife by her husband. If it were not so, and if the wickedness or infidelity of the unbelieving party did usually prevail, the children of such would be generally kept unbaptized, and so be unclean; but now we see, by the grace of God, a contrary effect, for they are generally baptized, and so become holy, or sanctified."

The intelligent Christian will see that, the ancient fathers notwithstanding, scripture does not warrant this usage. 1 Corinthians 6:11, and Ephesians 5:26, teach a truth as different from the bearing of 1 Corinthians 7:14 as from 1 Timothy 4:4, 5, the cleansing power of the word as applied by the Spirit. The Christian, the assembly, is thus sanctified. It is a real divine work: cf. John 13, 15, and 1 John 5. Blood expiates, but water purifies; that is, the word, as the expression of the truth and the revelation of God in Christ, judges all contrary to God within and without. Thus are the saints, from first to last, formed morally to have part with Christ on high. His power will complete all at His return, as His first coming in love laid the foundation for all in the gift of Himself for us. It is ignorance of these scriptures to confound with them 1 Corinthians 7:14, as may yet be shown more fully. But the ancients, and those who build on them, are scarce darker as to this than the moderns, even if evangelical. Washing by the word is outside their traditions; it is perfectly certain in scripture, and most momentous for christian doctrine and practice.

But Dr. Wall's criticism is unsound. Our translators were far nearer the truth than he. His alteration of the tense not only is not required but falsifies the sense. The aorist would be the form, rather than the perfect, to convey his notion and bear his paraphrase. The perfect expresses a state consequent on an act, whether we say "is," or "has been, sanctified." But it means the permanent result of a completed action, and not what ordinarily comes to pass, a sense which the gnomic or iterative aorist may approach as in James 1:10, 23; 1 Peter 1:24. Hence the teaching deduced is all wrong. The apostle means a sanctified, or holy, state, actually and always true of the

husband and children of a believing wife, not of what generally becomes true. Not a hint is dropped in this verse of being converted or brought to baptism.

Must we then embrace the view which prevails among Baptists? Not so. Legitimacy is out of the question. The children are said to be ἅγια, not γνήσια, the danger was lest they should be ακάθαρτα, not νόθα. The marriage of believers is no more lawful than that of unbelievers. The question is as to God's sanction for the Christian's conscience of a mixed marriage, and its fruit; and, as to this, the apostle decides that the unbelieving partner is hallowed in the believing one, and the children holy, not unclean: the one being placed in that state of holiness by the faith of the other, and the children viewed as in it already. Of fitness for baptism, on the one hand, the text says nothing: if it did, it would be asserted for the unbelieving husband or wife, no less than for the children. On the other hand, it is a mean and untrue sense of ἡγίασται that it refers to the lawfulness or validity of the marriage, especially as all turns on the faith of at least one of the parties. So Mr. Booth's effort to render ἐν to, instead of "in," is futile. Luke 1:17, l Thessalonians 4:7, and 2 Peter 1:5, 6, 7, give not the least warrant for it, any more than 1 Corinthians 7:15. The first is elliptic, and has a pregnant force. John was to turn disobedient ones not merely to, but so as to abide in, thoughts of just men. (2) God called us, says the apostle to the Thessalonians, not for uncleanness, but in sanctification, which similarly is far stronger than εἰς, to. (8) Peter calls on the christian Jews, in their faith to supply or have also virtue, in virtue, knowledge, etc.; as Paul reminds the Corinthians, God hath called us in peace.

It remains clear then that the unbelieving husband is sanctified in virtue of the christian wife, and the children holy, to the relief of those that were troubled by scruples from God's judgment of such a state of things among the Jews. God's grace in the gospel reverses the sentence of the law, to the pure making pure what had hitherto been unclean. Otherwise it might have seemed the duty of the believing husband to have put away his unbelieving wife and their children, as Gentile admixture was abhorrent to the law. Hence the apostle keeps up the language of the Jewish ceremonial, even where he determines the question by God's gracious and holy sanction of such marriages and their offspring, in contrast with the obligation of the Jews as shown in Ezra and Nehemiah.

We have now the question raised of separation on the part of the unbeliever. "But if the unbelieving separateth himself, let him be separated. The brother or the sister64 is not in bondage in such [circumstances]: but God hath called us65 in peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, if thou shalt save thy husband? or what knowest thou, O husband, if thou shalt save thy wife? Only66 as the Lord67 divided68 to each, as God†† hath called each, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the assemblies." (Ver. 15-17.) Thus, if the unbelieving party in the relationship were to sever himself from the other, the believer is released from bondage, be it the brother or the sister in the case. Not that such an act on the unbeliever's side gives to the believer thus abandoned licence to marry, but that the believer is thereby left the more free to serve the Lord by the other's separation. Such a union after all is apt to involve strife, the natural man hating the life of the Spirit. Not that this would justify anything on the believer's part to break the

marriage tie: the unbeliever is supposed to have broken it of himself or even herself; and “in peace hath God called us,” (or “you,”) not to seek separation. On the contrary, whatever the trial involved in such a life, the brother or the sister must earnestly desire the salvation of the unbeliever; but this after all is in God’s disposal. “For what knowest thou, woman, if thou shalt save the husband? or what knowest thou, husband, if thou shalt save the wife?” If it were so, what a joy! We have to acquiesce therefore in the ordering of the Lord and as we should on no account take the initiative into our own hands, so also to save the unbeliever is a question, and should not swamp everything else. Thus the apostle even here cautions by pressing the rule, whatever the issue: “Only as the Lord divided to each, as God hath called each, so let him walk.” This was intended to guard against undue or excessive feeling. Our place is one of intelligent subjection, owning the Lord’s allotment and God’s call: the one at the time of conversion, the other the permanent condition. So was each to walk. If Judaism enfeebled, Christianity strengthened a sense of relationship, and meets every difficulty and complication in grace. Nor was the apostle laying down anything peculiar on the Corinthians because of their peculiar circumstances: “So I ordain in all the assemblies.” There may be ever so many assemblies, but the order of all is one, and apostolic authority is universal. Nothing is more opposed to its true idea than ecclesiastical independency. The notion of different bodies, each with a distinct regimen, is a modern invention, while the assumption of a continual power of regulation in or over the church may be ancient but is no better. Neither the one nor the other was “from the beginning,” when the foundation was laid

by the apostles and prophets. There is no authoritative regulation now outside the word of God, though the Lord raises up those that guide and take the lead, but they, as all, are bound by scripture to which the Spirit answers in power.

It will be seen that the authorised version following the common text inverts the true relationships here. It is God that has called, the Lord that divided, not the converse, as in what is known as the Received Text.

“Was any one called circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any one been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping God’s commandments. Let each abide in that calling in which he was called. Wast thou called [as] a bondman? Let it not be a care to thee; but if also thou canst be free, use [it] rather. For the bondman called in [the] Lord is [the] Lord’s freedman: likewise he that was called free is Christ’s bondman. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondmen of men. Brethren, wherein each was called, in this let him abide with God.” (Vers. 18-24.) Christ thus raises the Christian superior to all circumstances. Hence, when called of God, it is not worth while to change. Why should the circumcised man care to disguise or obliterate the fact of his circumcision? Why should the uncircumcised seek or submit to it? It is no longer a question of distinctions in the flesh. What God values, and what the Christian should, is keeping His commandments, not forms of truth or schools of doctrine, which are an unquestionable danger. The believer is sanctified to obedience, and this, the obedience of Christ, not that of a Jew, as the apostle of the circumcision himself insists.

(1 Peter 1:2.) So does the apostle of the uncircumcision here.

But we are led somewhat farther. “In the calling in which each was called, in this let him abide. Wast thou called a bondman? Let it” (that is, the bondage) “not be a care to thee. But if also thou canst be free, use it” (that is, the freedom) “rather.” I am aware that many in ancient (Chrysostom, Theodoret, Oecum., Phot., etc.,) and in modern times (Bengel, De Wette, Estius, Meyer, etc.) take this last verse (21) quite differently, supposing it to mean, Even if thou canst be free, use it rather (that is, the bondage). Prefer to be a slave rather than a freeman. This however appears not only to be extravagant, but to make the human circumstances of too much weight, as if slavery were more favourable for christian walk than freedom. Yet even the Syriac so construed the words; and such is the view taken in one of the most recent of English versions. The true sense is given in the authorised Bible; and such was the conviction of the Reformers and of most since the Reformation.

It may be well to notice here the grounds of the question. The Dean of Canterbury thus argues for the sense of remaining rather in slavery: “This rendering.... is required by the usage of the particles, εἰ καί — by which, see Hartung, Partikel-lehre, i. 139, the καί, ‘also’ or ‘even,’ does not belong to the εἰ, as in καὶ εἰ, but is spread over the whole contents of the concessive clause.... It is also required by the context: for the burden of the whole passage is, ‘Let each man remain in the state in which he was called.’“ It is remarkable that the same commentator, in his note on, Mark 14:29, seems to reverse this statement, and says that the καί

before εἰ intensifies the whole hypothesis; the καί after εἰ intensifies only that word which it introduces in the hypothesis, citing Klotz on Devar. p. 519 f. (I cite from the fifth edition of both vols.) Allowing however that the latter is incorrect, I maintain that the principle is quite consistent with the ordinary version and view. For the effect of καί following εἰ is in some cases simply to emphasize the verb that follows; whereas καὶ εἰ, were this the reading, would really be more in favour of the sense desired. For we should then translate it, Wert thou called, a slave? Let it not trouble thee; but even if thou canst become free, use it [that is, slavery] rather. But these very epistles to the Corinthians furnish plain instances, which prove what is just affirmed. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 4:7, the Dean gives (New Testament newly compared, 1870) “if thou didst receive.” As Madvig observes, the καί is often best rendered by the emphatic present or past (do, did), or emphatic auxiliary. So 2 Cor. 4:3, 16; 2 Cor. 5:16; 2 Cor. 7:8 (three times), 12; 2 Cor. 11:6, 15; 2 Cor. 12:11. In every case the right rendering is “if also” where an additional fact is intended; “if even” or “though” where it is not.

In the text under discussion then the apostle meets the question as to one called while a slave by the answer, Let it (that is, δουλεία, understood from the preceding δοῦλος) not be a care to thee; as he meets the added supposition, but if also thou canst be free, which of course might occasionally be, rather use it (that is, ἐλευθερία, understood from the preceding ἐλεύθερος). The context is in no way decisive against this; for as abiding in the marriage state has the exceptional provision for separation enforced by the unbeliever, so for the slave there is the analogous provision for the use

and even preference of freedom. Manifestly too if the unmarried have an advantage in being less divided in caring for the things of the Lord, a similar remark tells perhaps as much in favour of the freeman compared with the slave. (See vers. 32-85.) The objections urged are null. Thus καί is in its right position here, not after δύνασαι. Again, ἀλλ᾽ εἰ is required rather than εἰ δέ as one may see by comparing 2 Corinthians 4:16, and Philippians 2:17. Nor is a demonstrative needed after χρῆσαι more than before μελέτω. The imputation of inconsistency with the general context and with verse 22 in particular has been already disposed of; the depreciation of the prevalent view of the apostolic precept as “worldly wisdom” is as unjust, as it seems important to rescue his teaching from the total absence of sobriety implied in the preference of slavery to freedom. Galatians 3:28, and 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, are quite consistent, and with one equally as the other. Nor is there any weight in the argument as to χράομαι, the import of which suits the use of freedom as a new thing no less than slavery as an old. Besides, it was meant to express not the act of entrance on freedom, implied in ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, but of using it when given. Indeed it is evident that, as the other view of slavery, μ. χρῆσαι is a hard or vague phrase, and thus differently understood by Bengel, etc., of late, as compared with Chrysostom of old.

The apostle explains, “For the bondman that was called in [the] Lord is [the] Lord’s freedman.” Such is the correct force, “freedman” rather than freeman. ἀπελεύθερος means one who was made free, not who was free-born. It is the accurate term here, and it is the more emphatic, because freeman or free-born

(ἐλεύθερος) follows immediately. “Likewise he that was called [being] free is Christ’s bondman.” Christ alone puts every one in his place and true light: emancipation by human means cannot effect or approach it. The christian slave is the Lord’s freeman; the christian freeman is Christ’s slave. The Lord’s authority breaks the fetters of the one to his faith; the grace of Christ reduces the other to slavery for his heart. “Ye were bought with a price.” Whether it be the freeman or the bondman, all were bought. The saints are the purchase of Christ’s blood: so indeed is all the world; but believers alone acknowledge it, and they are called to act on it. “Be [or become] not slaves of men:” an exhortation as incumbent on the free as on the slave. A single eye alone secures true service, and yet is perfect liberty. They were already serving the Lord Christ: only so can the Christian serve aright in any case.69 Strange to say, none are so prone to slip into human bondage as those who profess the Lord’s name: so the second Epistle to the Corinthians shows. But this was real forgetfulness of Christ and unfaithfulness to Him. Christianity in its true power brings into responsibility no less than into liberty, and as this is true in doctrine, so it is of all consequence to be remembered in practice. “Wherein each was called, brethren, in this let him abide with God.” “The calling” appears to mean a man’s providential condition when called of God, as here we see it applied to circumcision or uncircumcision, freedom or slavery, not earthly occupations, commonly supposed, some of which might involve not a little that would clash with God’s word and offend a Christian’s conscience. Here all pleas for continuance in evil, because one was converted by God’s grace spite of them, is effectually cut off, for the believer is called to abide “with God.” If one cannot

continue with God, it is high time to ask His direction who assuredly never calls a saint to do evil but to cease from it at all cost.

The apostle had spoken of the married relation, Christians on both sides or mixed. Now he takes up the unmarried. “Now concerning virgins command of [the] Lord have I none, but I give an opinion as having received mercy of [the] Lord to be faithful. I think therefore that this is good because of the present necessity that [it is] good for a man to be so. Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But if even thou shouldest have married, thou didst not sin; and if the virgin should have married, she did not sin. But such shall have tribulation in the flesh; but I am sparing you.” (Vers. 25-28.)

In “virgins” or

οἱ παρθένοι we see an usage of the word not exactly unknown in classical Greek (see Jacob’s Index to the Anth. Gr.) but so unusual that most New Testament commentators seem indisposed to allow it. Of the ancients Theodore of Mopsuestia found no harshness in the language. “ Ὅτ᾽ ἂν οὖν εἴπη περὶ τῶν παρθένων, δῆλον ὅτι περὶ τῆς παρθενίας λέγει, τὰ ὅμοια καὶ ἐπὶ τούτου περί τε τῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν φθεγγόμενος. As to its contextual propriety there ought to be no doubt. That it should be rarely said of males in ordinary Greek authors no one acquainted with the morality of the heathen can be surprised at. If therefore it were absolutely strange among their productions, I should not consider this a valid objection to its extension in christian or apostolic hands. What believer would

limit ἀγάπη to its sense in classic Greek? We shall find a further use of the word, lower down, natural indeed yet uncommon, the admission of which appears to be essential to a due understanding of the closing verses, where it is used for a man's own state, not of his daughter; but of this more in its own place.

It is the general question of entering on the married relation by brother or sister; and this too the apostle solves, not on the Lord's authority as commanding, but by giving a judgment of his own grounded on the opposition of the age to Christianity. It is not the instant but the present necessity which makes it best to remain as one is: such is the force of the word everywhere else in the New Testament as in other writings. It was then existing, not impending merely; nor is there any reason that I know to think that it does not exist still, as it will till the Lord come. Men habitually deny, as Christians are too apt to forget, it; but the apostle had it ever before him and sets it before us. He never conceives of a truth, especially one so solemn, without a corresponding effect on practice. Till the day of the Lord the earth is a scene of wickedness, confusion, and misery: why act as one who likes a settled life there, if indeed you are a pilgrim and stranger? It is not the special time of tribulation or of apostasy before the Lord comes in judgment that he has before him, but that the gospel necessarily encounters enmity where in its purity the world discovers its own doom as unbelieving and already judged.

Yet the apostle guards the abuse of his commending a single life to the Christian ordinarily. The married should not seek its dissolution, any more than the single seek to be so bound; and again he would keep the conscience

free for such as might marry. Neither man nor woman sins in being married, whatever may be its inexpediency to the christian judgment. For trouble in the flesh is inevitable for such, and the apostle desired that they should be spared this.

Next he recurs to the topic of faith's estimate of present things, not more constantly before him than needed by the Christian. "But this I say, brethren:70 the season is straitened: henceforth71 that both those that have wives be as having none, and those that weep as weeping not, and those that rejoice as rejoicing not, and those that buy as possessing not, and those that use the world72 as not using [it] for themselves; for the fashion of the world passeth away." (Vers. 29-81.) It is no common-place on the brevity of time, but the solemn affirmation that the time is shortened henceforth (that is, as I suppose, since Christ's death and the call of the church) in order that the believer should hold all but Christ with a loose hand — all things in which men might rejoice, however sorrowful their lot may be. But the Saviour has changed all for the Christian, who looks on the earth as His place of rejection and follows Him in spirit into the heavens now opened, whence he in peace awaits Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This world has really no more permanence than the shifting scenes of a theatre.

The construction here given of the opening clause seems to me the true one; others involve us in harshness and break the connection.

"But I would have you to be without care. The unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he shall please the Lord; but he that hath married careth for the things of the world how he shall please his wife. Divided also73 is

both the wife and the virgin: the unmarried careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both74 in body and in spirit; but she that hath married careth for the things of the world how she shall please her husband. But this I say for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare [lit. a noose] over you, but for what [is] seemly and waiting on; the Lord undistractedly." (Vers. 32-35.) Here the apostle urges the greater exemption from earthly anxiety for serving and pleasing the Lord, which the single man or woman enjoys as compared with the married. There is less weight in the race and less distraction from the goal. Yet even here the apostle speaks with caution and delicacy. He would not entangle any, he sought their welfare with a view to seemliness and undistracted attendance on the Lord.

‡

εὐπάρεδρον all the most ancient uncials and many cursives, etc.

Here however I must take the opportunity of protesting against the remarks of a late commentator. "Since he [the apostle] wrote, the unfolding of God's providence has taught us more of the interval before the coming of the Lord than it was given even to an inspired apostle to see. And as it would be perfectly reasonable and proper to urge on an apparently dying man the duty of abstaining from contracting new worldly obligations — but both unreasonable and improper should the same person recover his health, to insist on his abstinence any longer: so now, when God has manifested His will that nations should rise up and live and decay, and long centuries elapse, before the day of the coming of Christ, it would be manifestly unreasonable to urge — except in

so far as every man's καιρός is συνεσταλμένος, and similar arguments are applicable — the considerations here enforced." This may sound plausible to men in Christendom who have let slip the view scripture gives of the total ruin of man and the world, and the imminence of that judgment of the quick on which all the inspired writings insist, just as truly as those of Paul. To my mind it is a lamentable pandering to unbelief and worldliness, as it springs from the lowest conception of the authority of God's word. Doubtless the truth was so revealed that none beforehand could know that God would lengthen out the interval which severs from us the coming of the Lord. But the moral grounds are increasingly strong, not weaker. The apparently dying man is now only a great deal nearer more evidently the moment of dissolution instead of his having recovered health and strength so as fittingly to enter on new obligations. The deepening darkness of Jew and Gentile, and not of Mahometanism only but of professing Christendom, warns every eye which can see that a crisis from God is at hand; while the bright hope of the Christian, independent though it be itself of all circumstances, and essentially of heaven with Christ, shines out but the more if possible as he sees the day approaching.

It is in the next section that we have

ἡ παρθένος employed as equivalent to

ἡ παρθενία. For there is no question here of a man's daughter but of his own state. The Lord deserves to have us wholly devoted to Himself. This is true christian reckoning. "But if any one thinketh that he is behaving unseemly to his virginity, if he be past his prime, and so

it ought to be, let him do what he will: he is not sinning: let them marry. But he who standeth firm in his heart, having no necessity, and hath authority over his own will, and hath judged this in his own75 heart to keep his own virginity shall do† well. So that he that marrieth‡ [his own virginity] doeth76 well, and he that marrieth77 not shall do better." (Vers. 86-38.) Apparently this, the plain key to the passage, was not seen before the well-known Locke observed it, and produced excellent reasons drawn from the context, which commend themselves to any dispassionate mind. The great emphasis given to the heart's purpose (for instance, "one's own will" and "one's own heart") suits perfectly if it be a question of one's own virginity, but how a daughter's? There they sound beyond measure arbitrary and inconsiderate. If it mean one's persevering unmarried himself, it is easy to see the force of all; as to a daughter or ward, it seems out of the way. The wonder is that Whitby should be among the few who follow Locke's interpretation. The phrase is no doubt peculiar; but the apostle may have been influenced by the Hebrew idiom which uses the plural for the abstract idea. The singular seems more suited to the Greek tongue, which allows sometimes of a secondary sense, as e.g. βίος life, and means of life.

"A wife is bound78 as long as her husband liveth; but should the husband79 have fallen asleep, she is free to be married to whom she will, only in [the] Lord. But she is happier if she so remain according to my opinion, and I also think that I have God's Spirit." (Vers. 39, 40.)

The close of the chapter takes up widows especially and is a remarkable instance of opposition between the apostle's mind and the church councils which dared to

treat a widow's marrying as so evil that the church had to refuse its sanction and prayers. The marriage tie of believers is for life. Death separates. Not only the widower but the widow becomes thus free to marry again. But the apostle gives his judgment against it: not on moral grounds, of which only superstition could raise a question, but as the happier state to abide in. Even here we have no such language as sprang up later when celibacy was cried up as the highest of christian virtues, and re-marriage was denounced as unchristian. On the contrary, even for the widow, the apostle qualifies her marrying again "only in the Lord:" a phrase which goes farther than the fact that both are Christians and demands that it be after a christian sort. Yet here again the apostle points out what he judged more expedient on spiritual grounds. Had others given a different opinion? He, if any man might, gives his judgment as one who thought he had God's Spirit. He was inspired to put it thus, not as if he were of doubtful mind, but as avoiding an express command from the Lord, and rather as a matter of apostolic counsel.

1 Corinthians 8.

The apostle now turns to another subject which presented dangers to the saints in Corinth.

"But concerning the things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If80 any one thinketh that he knoweth" anything, not yet81 knoweth82 he as he ought to know; but if any one loveth God, he is known by him. Concerning the eating, then, of the things sacrificed to idols, we know that [there is] no idol in [the] world, and that [there is] no83 God save one. For even if there are

[so]-called gods, whether in heaven, or on earth, as there are gods many and lords many; yet to us [there is] one God the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him. Howbeit not in all [is] the knowledge, but some with conscience of the idol until now eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat shall84 not commend us to God;85 neither if we eat have we the advantage, nor if we eat not do we come short. But see lest in anywise this your authority become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if any one see thee who hast knowledge sitting at table in an idol's temple, shall not his conscience, as he is weak, be emboldened to eat the things sacrificed to idols? And he that is weak perisheth86 by87 thy knowledge, the brother for whom Christ died? But thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat stumble my brother, I will in nowise eat flesh for ever, that I may not stumble my brother." (Chap. 8:1-18.)

†

ἐγνώκεναι A B D E F G P and several cursives, etc., but K L and most cursives εἰδέναι: the former, objective knowledge, the latter, inward conscious knowledge, as remarked by another.

The construction of the opening sentence has led to some difference of judgment and arrangement. Griesbach and Scholz, among editors, insert marks of parenthesis from after "we know," in verse 1, to the end of verse 8, which involves translating ὅτι "for," or "because." This was the view of Luther, Bengel,

Valcknaer, and others; but it is liable to the objection that in the resumed sentence " ὅτι," after the second οἴδαμεν, certainly means "that." I am therefore disposed to take it so in the former case. Mr. T. S. Green, etc., would begin the parenthesis with πάντες which necessitates singular abruptness in the structure. According to that which most commends itself to me, the apostle does not dispute that we Christians as such have knowledge; but he soon proceeds to show how empty it is without that love which brings in the consideration of others, and, above all, God Himself. This leads him to compare knowledge, in which they boasted, with love, which they overlooked, or ignored. The one puffs up, the other builds up. Love is only known in God's presence, where self is judged. Knowledge in one's own opinion is not love, which is inseparable from the new nature. For he who is born of God loves, having the nature of Him who is love. The apostle however says not that he who loves God knows Him, but that he is known by Him. The turn may be unexpected, and has embarrassed the critics, but its propriety is unquestionable. Not that the believer does not know Him, as indeed it is eternal life (cf. John 17:3; 1 John 4:6-18), but that it was seasonable for the consciences of the Corinthians to weigh that he is known of Him — a serious but blessed and blessing consideration. There is no sufficient or right ground therefore for taking ἔγνωσται in a Hophal sense — "hath been caused to know." It is really the converse (see Gal. 4:9). Nor is there need to give it the sense of approval. The best meaning is its ordinary one.

It would seem also that the parallelism in the last clause of verse 4 favours our translating οὐδὲν εἴδωλον ἐν κόρμῳ as "there is no idol," rather than, "an idol is

nothing in the world," though in itself equally legitimate. It is quite true, as the prophets assert, that the idols of the Gentiles are vanities and impotence; but here the apostle appears to affirm that they had no existence in the world. There were no such beings as they associated with their idols. Later on he shows there were demons behind, as indeed the law intimated. (Deut. 32:17.)

The apostle, as all can see, refers not to the decrees of the apostles, though we know that he and his companions instructed the assemblies they visited to observe them. He meets the question on intrinsic grounds, according to the principle of his own apostleship, in no way as leading men to think that the apostolic decrees were not binding on the whole church. It is monstrous to infer the competency of Christians, even then, or at any time, to open and question a matter thus decided. Such an idea could only lead to lawlessness and presumption, especially in presence of the solemn claims of what seemed good to the Holy Spirit and the apostles. Their determination however was not at all impaired, but confirmed, by the apostle's dealing with the question on its own merits, and settling it similarly. He allows then, that there was no such thing as the heathen conceived in an idol, and no God save one. He insists that, whatever the multiplicity of so-called gods and lords in heaven or on earth, to us there is but one God, the Father, source of the universe and object88 of our being and obedience, and one everything was absolutely indifferent and open. Love Lord, Jesus Christ, who has taken the place of administrator of all and mediator of redemption. But it would be rash and precarious to reason hence that takes account of things and beings as seen in the light of God; it seeks not its

own things but the things of others — of Jesus Christ above all.

But conscientious men are apt to be slow in apprehension, often much more so than those who are less exercised. For them the apostle would have us feel. Howbeit knowledge, or that knowledge, is not in all: but some, with conscience of the idol until now, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. They were not at all assured of the nonentity of these false gods. The Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian, and Porphyrian uncials, four or five cursives, and several of the most ancient versions, etc., read συνηθείᾳ, "through custom," not conscience, that is, from their habituation; and so Lachmann and Tischendorf. Doubting thus, they were condemned when they ate; and Satan thus took advantage of them through guilty fears. The apostle admits that food will not commend us to God. Those who pleaded their title should see that its exercise did not stumble the weak. What if the weak one imitated it with a conscience not free and emboldened or edified the wrong way, and the brother for whom Christ died perished? For scripture characterizes an act according to its tendency, without palliating it by the resources of grace in arresting the issue. To sin thus against the brethren, to wound their weak conscience, is to sin against Christ. The apostle closes this part of his subject by a fervid declaration of his refusal of a thing otherwise open to him, if it were the occasion of stumbling to his brother. Such is love according to Christ.

45 A B C Dp.m. six cursives, Pesch. Syr. Copt. Aeth. Vulg. with ancient Greek and Latin fathers, omit ὡς before "absent in body."

46 The grammar seems a little harsh, but it is in order to give special prominence to the guilty person, who follows παραδοῦναι as τ. τ.

47 A, etc., raise a question as to

ἡμῶν here.

48 The italics are the Dean's. I quote his words in no way as authoritative, but as a just rebuke of an unholy principle and aim by one who might be thought rather disposed to palliate evil. Much more guilty are those who should know and do better.

49 The best MSS. (p.m. A B C D E Fp.m. 17, 46, 93, vv. and father.) omit καί, which T. R. puts with L P, etc., some vv. and ff.

50 καί in A B C Dp.m. F G P and some cursives, for

ἤ, as in T. R

51 ῃ Elz.,

ἤ Steph. several uncials and vv.

52 A B C F, etc. VV. omit kaiv.

53 κρίνει L and many more,

κρινεῖ Bc. P, etc.

54 καί here D3 L, contrary to A B C Dp.m. F G P, etc.

55 A B C Dp.m. F G P, at least ten cursives, etc., read ἤ omitted in Tex, Rec. on the authority of two or three uncials and most cursives.

56 p m. Dp.m., several cursives, etc., omit

οὖν.

57 So it is,

τοῦτο, in A B C D E P, etc.;

ταῦτα in Tex. Rec., with L and most cursives, etc.

58 Χριστού is here read by B C D p.m. E P, some cursives, and almost all the ancient versions, etc.

59 ἥ is read by A B C F G P and other authorities.

60 to;

σῶμα Ap.m. B C D E F G K P, etc,;

τὰ σώματα Ap.m. L, many cursives, etc.

61 The common reading

καὶ ἐν τῳ πνεύματι ὑμῆν, ἅτινά ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ is absent from A B Cs.m. Dp.m. E F G, and many excellent witnesses.

62 The best MSS (A B C K L Q, etc.) do not give

τῃ πιστῃ as in D E F G and some ancient versions

63 ἀδελφῳ is read by p m. A B a D p.m. E F G P, etc.,

ἀνδρί by the mass, and by almost all the ancient versions.

64 ἡ is omitted by p.m. F G P, etc.

65 p.m. A C K, etc, have

ὑμᾶς, “you.”

66 εἰ μή is in some cursives and ancient commentators changed into ἢ μή and joined with the foregoing, evidently to escape a difficulty. It appears to be really an elliptic phrase to the effect that there is no more to say except that, etc.; which we turn briefly by “But,” or “Only”

67 In the first clause

ὁ κύριος A B C D E F G, many cursives, versions, etc.; in the second ὁ θεός A B C D E F, and many cursives, versions, etc.

68 p.m. B read

μεμέρικεν “hath divided.”

69 Whitby’s idea is very poor: that the exhortation was to slaves who had been freed not to sell themselves into slavery again. Not only is it a word for all Christians bond or free, but it is a warning against a more subtle bondage into which the free might slip as much as the bond.

70 ὅτι D E F G, many cursives, and versions (and so the Elzevir T. R., not R. S.), but A B K L P, thirty cursives, etc., reject it.

71 F G and other authorities read

ἐστίν λοιπόν ἐστιν. R. S. has

τὸ λοιπόν ἐστιν. Elz and Griesbach without the colon.

72 τὸυ κ. p.m. A B, Arm. Cop. Basm., changed into

τῳ κ. τούτῳ in most uncials and cursives, and so in T. R. to accord with usual grammar. Alford is wrong however in denying the ace. in Xen. Aγ. xi. x., Π. viii. i. 1.

73 καὶ μ. A B D P, many cursives and versions, omitted in T. R., following most authorities, as also before ἡ γ. which has overwhelming weight. Lachmann and Reiche point thus: γυναικί, καὶ μεμέρισται. καὶ ἡ γ.,., κ.τ.λ..

74 καὶ τῳ σ. B, F, G K L, etc.

75 αὐτοῦ supported by the best MSS is wanting in T. R. in the first case, ἰδίᾳ, in the second.

76 The fut. A B., etc.; the pres. most MSS, etc.; and so in the end of verse 38.

77 γαμίζων in both places is sustained by the best witnesses, as is the addition of τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον, though the order is not always the same, and it may have been inserted.

78 νόμῳ is added in Tex. Rec. with many excellent authorities, but the best omit it.

79 αὐτῆς is added in T. R. following many witnesses, but not the highest.

80 δέ in Text. Rec. is not in B P) several cursives, and ancient versions.

81 οὔπω A B P, six cursives, etc.,

οὐδέπω the mass. The best do not add

οὐδέν.

82 ἔγνω A B Dp.m. F G P, seven cursives, etc.

83 ἕτερος is not in p.m. A B D E F G P, many cursives, etc.

84 παραστήσει p.m. A B, several cursives, versions, etc., instead of παρίστησι (“commendeth”) corr D E L P, and most cursives, Ital., Vulg., etc.

85 γάρ, added in Text. Rec., is not in A B) etc., several ancient versions, but in most MSS and versions. There is a difference of order also in the copies as to the clauses.

86 For

καὶ ἀπολεῖται Text. Rec.. with most of the witnesses. B and a few other authorities read ἀπόλλυται γάρ many giving the present who read καί.

87 ἐν A B D E F G P, etc.

ἐπί (“for”) Text. Rec. L and most cursives, etc.

88 The text of the English Bible “in” is quite wrong, as are many commentators, such as Calvin, etc.; the marginal correction “for” is right.

1 Corinthians 9-12

1 Corinthians 9.

The apostle now enters on the vindication of his office which some in Corinth had sought to undermine and of ministry in general which they tended to corrupt. Title is asserted, but with full room for grace. For ministry is of Christ the Lord, not of the first man, and the spirit of the world if allowed is its ruin.

“Am I not free?89 am I not an apostle?* have I not seen Jesus90 our Lord? my work are not ye in [the] Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you; for the seal of my apostleship ye are in [the] Lord. My defence to those that examine me is this. Have we not authority to eat and drink? have we not authority to take about a sister wife, as also the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? or I alone and Barnabas, have we not authority to abstain from91 working [lit. not to work]?” (Vers. 1-6.)

Most strongly had he declared his readiness to give up anything for natural life rather than jeopard his brother. Yet does he affirm his independence of human yoke as distinctly as his apostleship. Liberty thus went hand in hand with the highest responsibility. Nor was his office vague or secondary. He had seen Jesus our Lord. His detractors were thus far right: he had derived no degree from the apostolic college, no mission from Jerusalem. From the twelve others might pretend to succession, and falsely: Paul had his authority immediately from the Lord seen on high. Were the Corinthians the men to question this? — the “much people” whom the Lord had

in that city? whom Paul had begotten through the gospel? Was this their love in the Spirit? If not an apostle to others, surely such should not deny it who were its seal in the Lord. But what may not the saint do or say who slips out of the Lord's presence? Too, too like Jeremiah's figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. In none is evil worse than in. the Christian. The corruption of the best thing is not the least corruption. Was it come to this, that Paul was put on his trial, on the preliminary inquiry at least, to see whether an action would lie against him, and that he had to make his plea or speech in defence to his own Corinthian children in the faith? He then asserts the title of an apostle, as we may say too in general of him who ministers in the word, and here in the gospel particularly. "Have we not authority to eat and drink?" that is, right to maintenance. "Have we not authority to take about a sister wife, as also the other apostles and the brethren in the Lord and Cephas?" that is, not only to marry a sister but to introduce her where he himself went, an object of loving care to the saints with himself. So it was with the apostles in general, notably with the Lord's brethren or kinsmen and above all with Peter. (See Matt. 8:14.) "Or I only and Barnabas, have we not authority not to work?" This is the alternative ordinarily where support is not given. But the saints should never take advantage of the grace that foregoes such a title to relax in their own plain and positive duty. To cut off the plausible self-seeking of false apostles who wished to ingratiate them. selves and to insinuate evil against the true, the apostle did not use his title, especially at Corinth, but wrought with his own hands, as it would seem Barnabas did also. But he is

careful to lay down as unquestionable the title of the spiritual workman to a living for himself and his family.

Very fittingly does this follow his exhortation in the preceding chapter, where he reproves such an use of liberty as might stumble the weak. It was certainly not so with him who did not even use his right to support when in their midst; so had he done as to marriage (1 Cor. 7),92 through all his career in order to serve the Lord the more undividedly; even as he could tell the Ephesian elders at a later day how they themselves knew that his hands had ministered to his wants and the wants of those who were with him, and had shown them every way that so toiling we ought to come in aid of the weak and call to mind the words of the Lord Jesus, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

But he proceeds to show that even nature teaches better than to neglect those who serve the Lord in His saints or gospel. “Whoever serveth in war at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of its fruit[93?]? or who tendeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Do I speak these things as a man, or doth not the law also say these things? For in the law of Moses it is written, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or doth he say it altogether on our account? For it was written on our account, because the plougher ought to plough in hope and the thresher [94?]in hope of partaking. If we sowed for you the spiritual things, [is it] a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of the authority over you, should not we more? But we used not this authority, but bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of the Christ. Know ye not that those that minister about the holy things eat of the

temple, and those that attend the altar share[95?] with the altar? So also the Lord ordained those that announce the gospel to live of the gospel." (Vers. 7-14.)

All live on the return of their work, soldier, husbandman, shepherd. The propriety of this, according to man, is unimpeachable: did the law of God speak otherwise? It is even stronger in the same direction; and if He spoke of not muzzling the ox when treading out corn, He had not cattle in view but His people, His servants in the word. The figure is kept up accurately. The plougher ought to plough in hope, and the thresher (ought to thresh) in hope of partaking, the last phrase being more appropriate when the time for a share was obviously near.

There is also, it may be well to notice, in verse 11 a guard against him who would object that the analogy fails, in that the labourer thus specified received in kind, whereas the spiritual labourer might need help in the things of this life. The apostle meets the senseless or selfish cavil by showing the duty of a recompense à fortiori, as what is of the Spirit transcends what is of flesh. "If we for you sowed the spiritual, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal?" He appeals in verse 12 to their own practice as owning the title of others. "If others partake of the authority over you, should not we more?" He takes care however to show that he was wholly above selfish aims in thus pleading for the spiritual labourer and his title to support: "Yet we used not this authority, but bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of the Christ." He would plead for others and their title, and the duty of the saints ministered to on a right consideration of the work done; but he used not the right for himself, on the contrary

bearing all sorts of trial in order to afford no hindrance to the gospel.

Lastly the apostle draws a testimony from the Levitical system contrasted, as it is in many respects, with the gospel, in that it identified the ministrants with what was brought into the temple and laid on the altar. Jehovah being the part and inheritance of the priestly name among the sons of Israel, He gave them a share in His offerings and sacrifices. So now under the gospel the Lord forgets not those who preach it but appoints them to derive their maintenance from it, though there may be exceptional cases as in his who has written the rule for us.

The apostle had now affirmed the principle. It was for others however, not for himself. He is careful to make this understood by the Corinthians. He had written in love for the glory of the Lord, “but,” says he, “I have used none of these things. And I have not written these things that it should be thus in my case, for [it were] good for me to die rather than that any one should make vain my boast. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast, for necessity is laid upon me, for woe is to me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this willingly, 1 have a reward; but if unwillingly, I have an administration entrusted to me.” (Vers. 15-17.) Divine love cares for others, and sacrifices self. The apostle was the living exemplification of the gospel he preached. There were rights, and grace does not forget them for others — does not avail itself of them. He is even warm in repudiating any such thought in the present case. It was living Christ so to feel and act, who taught that it was more blessed to give than to receive. His own life and death were the fulness of its truth; but the apostle was no

mean witness of it, though a man of like passions with us. Nor has he been without his imitators in this, even as he also was of Christ. He would not afford a handle to those who sought it at Corinth. Others have had grounds equally grave for a similar course.

It is important to see also that to preach is not a thing to boast of. It is an obligation — a duty to Him who has called one, and conferred a gift for this very purpose. It is thus a necessity laid on all such, not an office of honour to claim, nor a right to plead. Christ has the right to send, and He does send, labourers into His vineyard. This makes it truly a necessity laid on him who is sent. According to scripture, the church never sends any to preach the gospel. Relations are falsified by any such pretension. Again He who sends directs the labourer. It is of capital importance that this should be maintained with immediate responsibility to the Lord.,Therefore it is that the apostle adds, “For woe is to me if I preach not the gospel.” Undoubtedly he who does this voluntarily has a reward, and the heart goes with the blessed work, whatever the hardness and reproach which accompany it. But if not of one’s own will, an administration, or stewardship, is entrusted to one. Now of the steward it is sought that he be found faithful.

“What then is my reward? That in preaching the gospel I may make the gospel without charge. So that I use not for myself any authority in the gospel.” (Ver. 18.) It was meet that such an one as the apostle, extraordinarily called, should act in extraordinary grace; and this he does. He made the gospel without cost to others, at all cost to himself. He did not use his right to a support for himself. It is no question here of “abuse,” any more than in chapter 7:31. It is the giving up of one’s right for

special reasons of grace, and it is the more beautiful in one who had as deep a sense of righteousness as any man, perhaps, who ever lived. The plea for the rights of others was therefore so much the more unimpeachable, because it was absolutely unmixed with any desire for himself.

“For being free from all, I made myself bondman to all, that I might gain the most. And I became to the Jews as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; and to those under law, as under law, not being myself under law,96 that I might gain those under law; to those without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain those without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; to all I have become all things, that by all means I might save some. And all things I do for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow-partaker of it.” (Vers. 19-28.) How bright a reflection of the spirit of the gospel! The apostle was ready to yield at every side where Christ was not concerned. He was free, but free to be a bondman of any and everyone, in order that he might gain, not ends of his own, but the most possible for Christ. Hence among the Jews he raised no question about the law. His heart was set on their salvation; he would not be turned aside by legal questions. He became as a Jew; but while he declares that to those under law he was as under law, he carefully guards his own standing in grace by the clause left out in so many of the more modern copies, “not being myself under law,” that he might gain those under it. Such was the only gain he sought — not theirs, but them; and them for God, not to mould after any opinions or prejudices of his own.

He was just the same with the Gentiles. (Compare Gal. 4:12.) Such is the elasticity of grace. “To those without law, as without law,” while he carefully adds, not being without law to God, but duly or legitimately subject to Christ, that he might gain those without law. It is in vain to speak of natural character or education. If there ever was a soul rigidly bound by Pharisaic tradition within the straitest limits, it was Saul of Tarsus. But if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation. The old things passed; behold they are become new. Such was Paul the apostle; and so he lived, laboured, and speaks to us livingly. He would not wound the scruples of the feeblest; nay, to the weak he became weak, that he might gain the weak; in short, he could, and does, say, “to all I am become all things, that I may by all means save some.” It was not, as some basely misuse his words, to excuse tampering with the world, and so spare one’s own flesh, which is really to become the prey of Satan. His was self-sacrifice in a faith which had only Christ for its object, and the bringing of every soul within one’s reach into contact with His love.

“Know ye not that they who run in a race-course run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And everyone that contendeth is temperate in all things; they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly — so combat, as not beating air. But I buffet my body, and lead [it] captive, lest by any means, having preached to others, I myself should be reprobate.” (Vers. 24-27.) The figure from these games would be most striking to the Corinthians accustomed to those of the Isthmus. Indeed the use is plain to anyone. Spiritually, the prize is not for one, but for all, if all run well. But

even in the games the candidates must be temperate in all things, though theirs were but a fading crown, ours an everlasting.

The apostle then applies it with touching beauty, not to the faulty Corinthians, but to himself. His was no rhetoric of the schools or the law-courts, but the word of Christ for heaven. He therefore transfers the figures to himself for their sakes, if one may apply his own language in 1 Cor. 4. “I therefore so run as not uncertainly.” How was it with them? I “so combat, as not beating air.” To this alas! they were habitually prone, as the epistle shows throughout, especially 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Cor. 15. “But I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest by any means, having preached to others, I myself should be reprobate.”

Would that the Corinthians had so dealt with themselves! Alas! they were reigning as kings, while the apostles were, as it were, appointed to death. It is an utter mistake to suppose that the language of the apostle supposes any fear of perdition for his own soul. He had grave fears for those who were living at ease and carelessly. It is very possible for a man to preach to others, and be lost himself; but such an one does not buffet the body, nor bring it into subjection. Had the apostle lived without conscience, he must have assuredly been lost, as indeed one of the twelve was. Here we are shown the inseparable connection between a holy walk along the way, and eternal life at the end of it. Who can doubt it? and why should any man make a difficulty of the passage? There would be difficulty indeed, if the apostle spoke of having been born again and afterwards becoming a castaway: in this case life would not be eternal But he says nothing of the sort. He

only shows the solemn danger a” certain ruin of preaching without a practice according to it. This the Corinthians needed to hear then, as we to weigh now. Preaching or teaching truth to men without reality, self-judgment, and self-denial before God, is ruinous. It is to deceive ourselves, not Him who is not mocked. Nor do any Christians more deeply need to watch and pray than those who are much occupied with handling the word of God or guiding others in the ways ‘of the Lord. How easy for such to forget that doing the truth is the common responsibility of all, and that speaking it to others ever so earnestly is no substitute for their own obeying it as in the sight of God! A spiritual walk is a different thing from sincerity; but high discourse without an exercised conscience exposes to shipwreck ere long.

1 Corinthians 10.

The apostle had warned the Corinthians against carelessness and self-indulgence, instancing himself as one who must be a reprobate if he preached without keeping the body under. He now makes a pointed application of Israelitish history in scripture to clench the exhortation.

“For97 I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were98 baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they were drinking of a spiritual attendant rook (and the rock was Christ); but in the most of them God had no pleasure, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. But these things happened [as] types of us, that we

should not be lusters after evil things, even as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, even as some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, even as some of them committed, and there fell in99 one day twenty-three thousand. Neither let us tempt the Lord, 100 even as some of them tempted, and were perishing101 by the serpents. Neither murmur ye,102 according as103 some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now all104 these things happened to them typically,105 and were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have reached." (Vers. 1-11.)

Israel are adduced as a warning to those who professed Christ. Did the Corinthians boast of their privileges and endowments? They are here shown how little security such institutions as baptism and the Lord's supper confer on those who rest in them. "For [this is the true reading, γάρ, not δέ, now, or moreover] I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." It was not only that preachers were in danger, but professors — not some, but all. Witness the ancient people of God, who similarly trusted not in God but in His acts and ordinances, their own special favours; and this from the beginning, not in days of cold and dead formality. So ready is the heart of unbelief to depart from the living God. To presume on institutions of the Lord, initiatory or even continuous, is fatal. A recent commentator regarded this passage as an inspired protest against those who, whether as individuals or sects, would lower the dignity of sacraments, or deny their necessity. To my

mind the aim seems wholly different — to guard those who were baptized, and joined in the Lord's supper, from the illusion that all was therefore right and safe, that such might not grievously sin and miserably perish. The apostle solemnly disproves the superstitious and Antinomian error that men must have life because they partake of these rites. Not so; they were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, they might all therefore be said to be there and then baptized to Moses; but what was the end? It is impossible however to suppose here an outward professing mass, who had the initiatory privilege, and no more; for he takes particular pains to show that they "did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink [ἔπιον] the same spiritual drink; for they were drinking [ἔπινον] of a spiritual attendant rock (and the rock was Christ)."

Here we have figuratively the highest outward sign, that which answers to the Lord's supper, and not to baptism only. But the express point is to deny that there was necessarily life in the participants, still less efficacy in the signs. It is really the importance of the holy walk of faith in those who partook that the apostle is pressing, not at all to cry up the sacraments, still less to affirm the necessity of what nobody thought of denying.

But we must also beware of a mistaken notion which has misled most Protestants, some more partially, others completely, but all with inconsistency enough. They assume that by the expression, "all our fathers," the christian church is regarded as a continuation of the Jewish, and the believer as the true descendant of Abraham. Whatever is taught elsewhere under certain limits, it is plain that here the apostle teaches nothing of the sort. "For I would not have you ignorant, brethren,

that all our fathers," etc., maintains the distinction which is sought to be got rid of. There is no fusion of the Jews of the past with the Gentiles who now believed. The same distinction is maintained in Ephesians and in Galatians. Within the church and in Christ the difference vanishes. There is oneness in Him, and such is the effect of the Spirit's baptism, who forms the one body. But it is not true retrospectively, as is commonly supposed, and drawn unintelligently from such words as these.

Again, even so sensible a writer fell into the kindred but yet grosser view, that the apostle, by the words "the same," identifies the sacraments of the old and of the new economies. "It is a well-known dogma of the schoolmen, that the sacraments of the ancient law were emblems of grace, but ours confer it. This passage is admirably suited to refute that error, for it shows that the reality of the sacrament was presented to the ancient people of God no less than to us. It is therefore a base fancy of the Sorbonists, that the holy fathers under the law had the signs without the reality. I grant, indeed, that the efficacy of the signs is furnished to us at once more clearly and more abundantly from the time of Christ's manifestation in the flesh than it was possessed by the fathers. Some explain it to mean that the Israelites ate the same meat together among themselves, and do not wish us to understand that there is a comparison between us and them; but these do not consider Paul's object. For what does he mean to say here, but that the ancient people of God were honoured with the same benefits with us, and were partakers of the same sacraments, that we might not, from confiding in any peculiar privilege, imagine that we would be exempted from the punishment which they endured?"

106 That the apostle is drawing an analogy between Israel and Christians is plain; but the very language employed, that their things were “types” or figures of us, should have prevented the identification either of them and us, or of the facts that resemble baptism and the Lord’s supper more or less. Doubtless the doctors of the Sorbonne were wrong in virtually denying quickening faith to the fathers under the law; but Calvin is ever, more culpably wrong, if deluded by their error of saving sacraments now, he conceives that the signs under the law were thus efficacious also. Christ alone, received by faith, has quickening power, through the Holy Spirit, either of old or now; but now there is accomplishment, as then there was only promise. Saints of old had pretermission of sins; now remission, and life more abundantly, and the gift of the Spirit. This is a vast deal more than a difference in degree only, as so many Protestants dream, not to speak of Popish darkness; but their legalism, where they are not the victims of rationalism, deprives them of perception as well as power. The veil is on their eyes, though not on their hearts.

As a question of interpretation, it is evident that by all eating the same spiritual meat the apostle is speaking of the fathers, not of the Corinthians or other Christians, the point of warning and instruction being, that in the most of them God took no pleasure, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. He is speaking therefore in these verses solely of Israel, and in no way predicating the sameness of their manna and water with our signs of Christ’s death, or what men call the sacraments. The sense then is, not that they were in the very same condition with us, or had the same

sacraments with us, but that, though they all partook of the same spiritual meat and drink, in the most of them God had no pleasure. Title as God's people, and participation in sacred privileges, which are expressly made like to the two institutions so familiar to us in Christendom, did not save the mass from being overthrown, by divine judgments, in the wilderness.

Next the apostle shows us how the things that happened in their case are "types of us (ver. 6), that we should not be lusters after evil things, even as they also lusted." This is general; but those things are successively specified which were perilous to the Corinthians. "Neither be idolaters, even as some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." There was, in the first place, a yielding to fleshly gratification, then pleasurable excitement followed, which told the result one sees in the scripture cited — the judgment. Were not the Corinthians in danger? "Neither let us commit fornication, even as some of them committed fornication, and fell in one day twenty-three thousand." In the history (Num. 26), where twenty-four thousand are said to have died in the plague, it is not said "in one day," as here, where we hear of a thousand less. To me such a difference implies the greatest accuracy, nor have I named all the points of distinction which deserve the thoughtful reader's consideration, small as the matter may seem, and to some grave men only a question of general numbers on either side of the precise amount. "Neither let us tempt the Lord, even as some of them tempted, and were perishing by the serpents." To tempt was to doubt His presence and action on their behalf, as Israel, not only "ten times" (Num. 14), but also just before Jehovah sent

fiery serpents to cut them off. “Neither murmur, even as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer.” This, if it be not more general, seems to allude to the gainsaying of Korah and his company, which so excited the evil tongue in Israel.

“Now these things happened to them typically, and were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have reached.” There cannot be a more important canon for our intelligent and profitable reading of these Old Testament oracles. The facts happened to them, but they were divinely cast in systematical figures, or forms of truth, for admonishing us who find ourselves at so critical a juncture of the world’s history. They contain therefore far more than moral lessons, however weighty. They do disclose man’s heart, and let out God’s mind and affections but they have the larger and deeper instruction of events which illustrate immense principles, such as sovereign grace, on. the one hand, and pure law on the other, with a mingled system of government on legal ground, while mercy and goodness availed through a mediator, which came in when the people worshipped a calf at Horeb. There is thus an orderly, as well as prophetic, character in the mode these incidents are presented, which, when lit up with the light of Christ and His redemption and the truth now revealed, prove their inspiration in a self-evident way to him who has the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Israel only witnessed the facts, and the writer was enabled, by the Spirit of God, to record them in an order which was far beyond his own thoughts, or the intelligence of any before redemption; but now that this mighty work of God is accomplished, their figurative meaning stands out in the fulness of a wide system, and with a depth

which reveals God, not man, as the true Author. Be it our happiness not only to know but to do the truth!

The scriptural history of Israel is thus exceedingly solemn as well as instructive. It was so recounted by the Spirit as to be typical of us. “So then let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. No temptation hath taken you save a human one: but God [is] faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will make with the temptation also the issue that ye107 may be able to bear [it].” (Vers. 12, 13.)

On the one hand the self-confidence of the Corinthians, as of every one else, is precisely the source of danger. In the world as it is, and in man as he is, there must be constant exposure; for evil exists, and an enemy is not wanting to avail himself of it; and the people of God are the especial aim of his malicious activity to dishonour the Lord by their means. If others slumber in unremoved death, those that are alive to God in Christ need to watch and pray. On the other hand they had been tried by no temptation beyond the lot of man: Christ was tried beyond it in the days of His flesh, not only at the end of His service but at the beginning; not only in all things in like manner, apart from sin, but beyond what belongs to man, tempted as He was for forty days in the wilderness. But we can only overcome in our little trials as He in His great ones by dependence on God and obedience of His word which the Spirit clothes with might against Satan. We may and ought to confide in God. If He is faithful who called us to the fellowship of His Son, equally so is He in not permitting us to be tempted beyond measure. It is His power by which the saints are kept through faith, not by their perseverance. Hence with the trial He

makes also the issue or escape, and this not by removing the trial but by enabling His own to endure.

Now comes the special warning. “wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to prudent [men]: judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it108 not fellowship with the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not fellowship with the body of the Christ? Because we, the many, are one loaf, one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” (Vers. 14-17.) To count idolatry impossible for a Christian is to trifle. This the Corinthians were doing. They knew, said they, that the idol was a nullity, and therefore it was nothing to them to eat meet which had been offered to heathen idols; nay, they could go a step farther and sit and eat in the heathen temples. The apostle on the contrary maintains the principle of partaking in an evil which you may not yourself do, and especially in things sacred. The true wisdom in such Gases is to keep wholly aloof. It is a misuse of knowledge to participate, or even give the appearance of participating, in what is religiously false. It is in vain to plead that the heart is not in what one allows outwardly, not only on moral grounds but because it slights Christ and ignores Satan’s wiles. Is not the Christian redeemed from bondage to the enemy? Is he not bought with a price to glorify God? At once the apostle makes themselves judges by putting them in presence of the central and standing institution of church fellowship. Where was their practical understanding now? “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not fellowship with the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not fellowship with the body of the Christ?”

Clearly the apostle reasons from the public symbol of christian communion; he is not laying it down to correct any wrong observance: else he would not hays put the cup before the loaf here. He begins his appeal with that which had the deepest meaning as to Christ; he leaves for the next place what most impressively conveys the fellowship of the saints with Christ as one body. It is so viewed as to compare it best with the peace-offerings of Israel and the sacrifices of the heathen. Fellowship there is in each. The worshippers share in common what distinguishes them from all others. In the church's case it is the blood and body of Christ. The blood of Christ awakens the gravest thoughts in the Christian; the body of Christ, the most intimate unity possible, "because we, the many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of the one loaf." There is neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation. It is the loaf that we break, it is the one loaf of which we all partake. Representatively it is the one body of Christ; and if the loaf be that body, just so we, the many, are that one loaf also. This scripture, like the rest which speak of it, is wholly irreconcileable with Romanism or Lutheranism, which here present mere superstitions, not the truth of God. The words on which they essay to base their errors do really refute them.

There is not a thought of sacerdotal consecration of the elements. "The cup of blessing which we bless," "the loaf which we break," prove that it is no act of one endued with extraordinary power and transmitted authority. It is "we" and "we, the many," in the very context which speaks of "I" and "ye." But all such individuality vanishes from this feast, as being radically opposed to its nature. None that truly entered into its

spirit could have so marred the fellowship as to make the minister first receive in both kinds himself, and then proceed to deliver the same to the clergy if present, and after that to the people also in order. Who that is faithful to its scriptural meaning could say, The body.... which was given for thee, the blood.... which was shed for thee? Still less could there have been such a contrast with the Lord's words in letter and spirit, such an oblivion even of the form as a wafer expressly unbroken placed by the priest on the tongue and no cup whatever for the communicant. These are the palpable and fatal signs of a Christendom at war with the Lord, of His word set at nought, and the Holy Spirit quenched. One of course may give thanks at the breaking of the bread; but in truth, if duly done according to Christ, it is all the saints that bless, all that break the loaf. Such is the essence of its meaning; and he who departs from it must account for it to the Lord who commanded all that are His to do thus.

It may be added that in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark we read of the Lord, after taking the loaf, blessing, and then giving thanks after taking the cup. In Luke He is said to give thanks after taking a loaf. The decisive disproof however of what gross ignorance mistakenly infers from it is that, on the occasion of feeding the multitude with bread, the very same language is used; that is, when a sacrament confessedly was out of the question, He took the five loaves and two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, blessed them. (Luke 9) It is not that εὐλογέω is exactly equivalent to εὐχαριστέω, but clearly they can be used to a certain extent interchangeably; they express with a shade of difference the self-same act, neither prayer for a miracle nor the

form of effecting one, but very simply a benediction or thanksgiving. If our ordinary food be sanctified by the word of God and prayer, who could think of the supper of the Lord without blessing and thanksgiving?

Again that not faith only is possessed but the Spirit of God is supposed to have sealed the communicants is plain from all that is said. Nobody doubts that a hypocrite or self-deceived soul might partake; but the Lord's intention is as clear as that the character of the feast excludes such. They may drink the wine or break the bread; but they are as distant as ever from the grace and truth therein celebrated, and only add presumptuous sin to the self-will and unbelief of their habitual life. Individually the believer has already eaten the flesh of the Son of man and drunk His blood; he eats it, knowing that he has eternal life in Him, and otherwise no life in himself. Together we bless the cup, together we break the bread in thanksgiving before Him who has blessed us beyond all thought; and herein is communion. To suppose that unbelievers share it is profanity, and deliberate profanity if we systematically open the door for them and invite them in.

But the point before the apostle was rather that the Christian cannot go out to another fellowship if he enjoy this. Communion is the joint participation of the blessing for all whom it concerns; but it excludes as rigorously those who have no part or lot in it. Further it forbids from any other fellowship those who share this. Even the Israelite after the flesh who ate the sacrifices was a partaker with the altar of Jehovah, severed thus in principle and fact from the vanities of the heathen. "See Israel according to flesh: are not they that eat the sacrifices in fellowship with the altar?" How much more

did it become the Christian to judge and walk according to God! If they lived in the Spirit, let them walk in the Spirit.

“What say I then? that an idol-sacrifice109 is anything, or that an idol110 is anything? but that what they111 sacrifice112 they sacrificed to demons and not to God; and I wish you not to be in fellowship with demons. Ye cannot drink [the] Lord’s cup and a cup of demons; ye cannot partake of [the] Lord’s table and of a table of demons. What! do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” (Vers. 19-22.)

To eat of sacrificial offerings was evidently then no light matter. As the Jew who ate was in communion with the altar, so he who partook of what was offered to an idol had fellowship with the idol. Such is its real meaning. Does this contradict the previous reasoning of the apostle as of the prophets of old, that the idol was a mere nonentity? Not at all. But if such products of man’s device have no existence and their images see not nor hear, demons are very real and avail themselves of man’s imagination or his fears and arrogate to themselves the idol-sacrifices. The emptiness of idols is therefore no ground for partaking of meats sacrificed to them; for “what they sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God.” (See Deut. 32:17; Ps. 95:6.) The idols and their sacrifices may be utterly powerless; but demons hiding behind can and do thereby shut out from souls the true God and usurp the homage due to Him alone. This is the effect of heathen worship, not the intention of the worshippers or of those who partake in their sacrifices. They no more purposed to revere demons (or fallen and evil spirits) than the unconverted now mean to serve Satan. But they did and do so none

the less. The truth puts things in their real light which the reasoning, the imagination, or the indifference of man leaves in the shade.

The Corinthians loved ease and sought to escape the cross. Why trouble, they might argue, about trifles? The idol is nothing, nor its sacrifices, nor its temple. How unwise then to offend for nothing! Communion with demons, answers the apostle, is the result. He that eats and drinks where the Lord's blessing is not partakes in the demon's curse. We shall see in the next chapter what it is to eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's supper. Here it is the real character of the evil where one partook of things sacrificed to idols, which the vain Corinthians prided themselves on doing freely because of their superior knowledge. But no one can have fellowship with the Lord and with demons: if he tampers with demons, has he not virtually abandoned the Lord? They may delight to have and harm the christian professor; the Lord refuses His fellowship to the idolater. If fellowship is inclusive, it is exclusive. "He that is not with me is against me," said He Himself; "and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matt. 12) "What! do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" Love cannot but be jealous of wandering affections; it were not love if it did not resent unfaithfulness. And is He so powerless that we can despise Him with impunity? Are we stronger than He? Do we court destruction?

Thus had the apostle shown the danger of idolatry, from the inveterate tendency, not of the Gentiles merely in their habitual worship of idols, but of the very people separated to Jehovah as His witnesses against it. He had also proved that to partake of sacrificial feasts in a

heathen temple is none the less idolatrous, because, if the idol is nothing, the demons are very serious indeed, as the enemies of God and man. The meat in itself may be harmless, but to eat it thus is to have communion with the demons behind the idol, and so to renounce the fellowship of Christ. For one cannot have both: Christianity, Judaism, heathenism, are exclusive of each other. The Lord must feel and judge such unfaithfulness on the part of His own; His love. and honour could not pass by a virtual renunciation of Himself.

But if a Christian should abstain from idol-sacrifice out of love to a weak brother, and yet more for fear of provoking the Lord's jealousy, is it wrong in itself to eat such meat? Certainly not. As he began, so he closes. "All things are lawful,113 but do not profit; all things are lawful,114 but do not edify. Let no one seek his own [advantage], but his neighbour's [literally, that of the other]." (Vers. 23, 24.) The principle laid down in chapter 6 is enlarged. It is not merely lawful "to me," nor is it a question here of being brought under the power of any. There indifference as to meats exposed some to impurity, here to idolatry. The apostle urges not merely exemption from evil, but positive edification. This love alone secures; because it looks not at its own things and seeks the good of others. It would please one's neighbour, with a view to good to edification. Even Christ, in whom was no evil, did not please Himself, but rather took on Himself the reproaches of those that reproached Jehovah. Thus it is not enough to avoid being brought under the power of anything, but one should seek the profit, not of self, but of others, and the building up of all.

Hence we have the principle applied in general, and tested particularly, in verses 25-30. “Everything that is offered for sale in the shambles eat, examining nothing for conscience sake: for the earth [is] the Lord’s, and its fulness. And if any of the unbelieving inviteth you, and ye desire to go, all that is set before you eat, examining nothing for conscience sake. But if any say to you, This is sacrificed,115 eat not for his sake that pointed [it] out and conscience,116 but conscience I say, not one’s own but the other’s; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? If117 I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?” Thus the principle of God’s creation holds good for all that is on sale in the market, as well as for what might be on an unbeliever’s table, if one should go there, and one may eat in either case without special inquiry. It is otherwise, not merely in an idol temple but even in private, where one should say, This is offered to holy purposes, because he evidently has a conscience about it, though one otherwise might have perfect liberty. It is good in such a case to deny oneself, and not expose one’s liberty to be judged by another, or incur evil speaking for the thing for which I give thanks. One must in love respect the scruple of the weakest saint, while holding fast by the intelligence and liberty of Christ.

The apostle then lays down the still larger and golden rule of christian conduct: “Whether then ye eat or drink, or do anything, do all things unto God’s glory. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or Greeks, or to the church of God; even as I too please all in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but that of the many, that they be saved. Be imitators of me, even as I too am of Christ.” (Ver. 31; 1 Cor. 11:1.) Thus, if one does all to

God’s glory, self is not sought to be gratified, but given up; and in this way is no stumbling-block presented to man, on the one hand, whether Jews or Gentiles, or to God’s assembly, on the other. Love alone so walks, seeking God’s glory and man’s good. Against the fruit of the Spirit there is no law, even among those who vaunt law most, and least love grace. So it was with the apostle habitually; the most uncompromising of all the apostles, none equalled him in gracious concession, where it could be consistently with Christ.

1 Corinthians 11

It is not without instruction for us that the apostle can praise in the midst of so much too justly merited reproof. He loved to approve all he could. In this too he surely was, as he had said, an imitator of Christ. So love wrought in Him who had not a particle of self. It left Him free to approve without reserve whatever was of God in those dear to Him, and none the less because they were themselves weak and faulty. But the apostle for the same reason was delivered from the fear of others imputing to him vanity or pride when he called the Corinthians to imitate him, as he too imitated Christ. Certainly in seeking the salvation of souls there was no self-pleasing on His part, but such suffering as could be borne only by One who was God judged, for the sins of those He was saving, according to the unsparing indignation and holy vengeance of God against that which is above all hateful to Him. This was His work and His suffering alone; but the apostle appreciated it profoundly; and such an appreciation forms the heart accordingly. The untiring and enduring devotedness of his life was the fruit. He desired that this should characterize the Corinthians,

instead of the superficial abuse of knowledge, which in making light of idolatry lost sight of Christ and endangered souls precious to Him through the wiles of the enemy. Such had never been the apostle's way who loved others and cared for their true profit that they might be saved. He could ask the Corinthians to follow him in this, as he too followed Christ. Yet he could praise them also.

"Now I praise you118 that in all things ye remember me, and hold fast the traditions according as I delivered [them] to you." (Ver. 2.) Tradition in scripture is used, not only for the added maxims of men, as in Matthew 15, but for what the apostles enjoined on the saints, first orally, then in inspired writings, as also in both ways, while the canon was in course and not yet complete. Compare also Romans 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

"But I wish you to know that the head of every man is the119 Christ, and woman's head the man, and the120 Christ's head God. Every man praying or prophesying with head covered [literally, having something] on [his] head] shameth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with the head uncovered shameth her own121 head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn; but if [it is] shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For man indeed ought not to have his head covered, being God's image and glory; but the woman is man's glory. For man is not of woman, but woman of man. For also man was not created on account of woman, but woman on account of man. On this account ought the woman to have authority on the head on account of the angels. However, neither [is] woman without man, nor man without woman, in [the]

Lord; for as the woman [is] of the man, so also [is] the man by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman should pray to God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you that, if man have long hair, it is a dishonour to him; but if woman have long hair, it is a glory to her? Because the hair hath been given her instead of a veil. But if any one seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor yet the assemblies of God." (Vers. 3-16.)

This is a most characteristic specimen of the apostle's dealing with a point of order. He deduces the solution from first principles involved in divine dealings from the beginning. It is an admirable way of settling questions, not by mere abstract authority, even where the highest lay, but by conveying to others the ways of God in creation and providence, which drew out the admiration as well as submission of his heart. It is no question of new creation. There difference disappears. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. But here on earth there is a relative order established of God; and as the man is woman's head, so the Christ is the head of every man, and God is the Christ's head. It were still more perilously false to use these words to disparage Christ than to turn aside their force to deny the subjection of woman to man. The Christ is viewed as such, not in His own intrinsic personal glory, or in the communion of the divine nature, but in the place He entered and took as the Anointed. God therefore is the head of the highest; and as woman is bound to own the place given her by God, so is man to fill suitably his own assigned relationship. The principle is applied to correct some christian women at Corinth

who outstepped the limits of propriety. The apostle puts the entire case, and even a man's mistake as to it, though it would appear that it was as yet a question of the other sex. For a man to have his head covered would falsify his witness to Christ; so for a woman not to be. It is not argued on grounds of habit, modesty, or the like, but of the facts as revealed by God. It would be the sign of authority taken by the woman, of authority abandoned by the man. A woman without a veil is like a man, without being really so. It is to renounce, as far as the act goes, the subjection she owes to man; it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. Let her also be shorn, says the indignant servant of the Lord; but if either be shameful for a woman, he adds, let her be covered. (Vers. 2-6.)

There is a still further opening of the ground as to man and woman in the verses which follow. "For man indeed ought not to have his head covered, being God's image and glory; but the woman is man's glory. For man is not of woman, but woman of man. For also man was not created on account of woman, but woman on account of man. On this account ought the woman to have authority on the head on account of the angels. However, neither [is] woman without man, nor man without woman, in [the] Lord; for as the woman [is] of the man, so also [is] the man by the woman; but all things of God." (Vers. 7-12.)

Thus the apostle points out man's standing directly as God's image and glory: woman is man's glory, having no such place of public representation for God. Whatever she has relatively is essentially mediate and derivative. Creation is the proof, not of course the ordinary course of things since. It is impossible, therefore, to form a

right estimate without looking to the beginning. If verse 7 then refers to the origination of man and woman respectively, verse 8 sets forth the making of the woman for, and subsequently to, the man, as grounds of woman's subordination to man. It is easy to see that, where creation is denied, or even ignored, men naturally reason and labour for their equality. But there is another consideration, which only faith could admit — the testimony to divine order which should be given by man and woman to those spiritual beings whom scripture declares to have the most intimate connection with the heirs of salvation. (Compare 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3) "For this reason ought the woman to have power on the head on account of the angels" — a sentiment entirely mistaken by the mass of commentators, who have gone off, some into degrading thoughts about bad angels, others into lowering the word to the sense of the righteous themselves, the christian prophets, the presidents of the assemblies, the nuntii desponsationum or persons deputed to effect betrothals, or mere spies sent there by the unfaithful.

So also the expression, "authority on the head," has given rise to endless discussion. To have authority on the head unquestionably means to wear the sign of it in a covering or veil. On the other hand, in verses 11, 12, the apostle is careful to insist on the mutuality of man and woman, denying their independence of one another, affirming God the source of them respectively, and of all things.

Further, he appeals to the sense of propriety grounded on the constitution of both man and woman. "In your own selves judge: is it becoming that a woman uncovered should pray to God? Doth not even nature

itself teach you," etc. If it be as natural for man to have short hair as for woman to have long, is it not a revolt against the nature of each to reverse this in practice? God's creation must govern where the word of His grace does not call to higher things, and this could not be pretended here.

Finally, the habitual usage of the churches, as regulated by apostolic wisdom, is no light thing to disturb, and this the apostle puts with great moral force. "But if any one seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor yet the churches of God." It is a contemptible sort of independence which sets itself up, not only against the spiritual feeling of all the public witness in God's assemblies, but above those endowed with heavenly wisdom to direct all. It is neither conscience nor spirituality, but a fleshly love of differing from others, and at bottom sheer vanity. The "custom" negatived was the Corinthian innovation, which confounded God's order in nature, not disputatiousness, as many ancients and moderns strangely conclude.

The apostle had settled the point of comely order as respects women. He now turns to a still graver matter, the Lord's mind about His supper. From this the Corinthians had sadly departed there and then, slipping into the grossest evils, as we shall see.

Yet is it important to take note before we go into detail that, according to the modern mode of administering the sacrament, such a disorder was impossible. The reason is beyond measure a grave one. Christendom has radically altered the supper — a more serious state of things than even the distressing and immoral levity which then disgraced the Corinthian assembly. The

latter could be judged and rectified; the former demands a return to first principles which have been wholly given up, not merely as to the institution itself but as to the nature of both ministry and church, and their mutual relations.

What gave occasion to the grievous impropriety of the assembly in its then low and careless estate was apparently the mixing up the love-feast with the Lord's supper. The love-feast (or Agape) was a meal of which the early Christians partook in common, the aim being to cultivate social intercourse among those who are strangers and pilgrims called to suffer on earth and to spend eternity together in glory with the Lord. The Corinthians however had lost the sense of christian strangership, and as they had let in from the world the rivalry of the schools in zeal for favourite teachers, so they degraded even the Agape by holding to class distinctions, the rich feasting on their own contributions to the meal, while those who had nothing to give were made keenly to feel their poverty. Thus the principle of christian society was destroyed at the very meal which ought to have displayed it in practice; and as they thus selfishly forgot wherefore they thus came together, God gave them up to the deeper sin of degrading the Lord's supper, which was partaken of at the same time, by the effects of their licence in eating and drinking.

This doubtless was a scandalous irreverence; but the sacrament as now observed is the deliberate and systematic abandonment even of the form of the supper, the change of it into a superstitious ordinance from the thanksgiving of God's family in view of the deepest solemnity in time, nay for eternity, the death of our Lord on which it is based with the remembrance of Himself in

infinite love, humiliation, and suffering for our sins. Nothing but the appreciation of its spiritual aim preserved it from becoming a scene of shame; if not kept in the Spirit, it quickly passed into fleshly lightness; and this is the will of God in order that it may necessitate the looking to the Lord who promises His presence to those gathered to His name. It is with the supper as with all other parts of christian worship and service. They are nothing if not sustained by the Spirit according to the word of God. Change their principle in order to secure appearances, and all is ruined. This is precisely what tradition has done in the Lord's supper as elsewhere. From the sacramental eucharist of post-apostolic times the Corinthian excesses were excluded, but so was the Holy Spirit from guiding the saints according to the word. Clericalism was introduced to preside, formalism and distance imposed on the rest, and the rite made more or less a saving ordinance, instead of the communion of Christ's body and blood enjoyed by His members in His presence.

But let us weigh the apostle's words. "Now in enjoining this I praise122 [you] not, because ye come together not for the better but for the worse. For first, when ye come together in an assembly, I hear that divisions exist among you, and in some measure I believe [it]; for there must be even sects among you that the approved may become manifest among you." (Vers. 18, 19.) We have here important help toward deciding the difference between these terms as well as the precise nature of each. Schism is a division within the assembly, while they all still abide in the same association as before, even if severed in thought or feeling through fleshly partiality or aversion, Heresy, in its ordinary scriptural

application as here (not its ecclesiastical usage), means a party among the saints, separating from the rest in consequence of a still stronger following of their own will. A schism within if unjudged tends to a sect or party without, when on the one hand the approved become manifest, who reject these narrow and selfish ways, and on the other the party-man is self-condemned, as preferring his own particular views to the fellowship of all saints in the truth. (Compare Titus 3:10, 11.)

They met in one place. “When ye come together therefore into the same [place], it is not to eat [the] Lord’s supper. For each in eating taketh his own supper before [others], and one is hungry, and another drinketh excessively. Have ye not then houses for eating and drinking? or despise ye the church of God, and put shame on those that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I do not praise.” (Vers. 20-22.) They had not as yet broken up into sects: this evil was reserved for a later and worse day. If however they did come together into one place, the apostle will not allow that it was to eat the Lord’s supper, but each their own: so utterly were they losing the truth of things while the form lingered on. Not only was Christ gone, but even the social element. They were a spectacle of greed; and, what made it more flagrant, those who had means were the worse, despising the church of God and putting to shame the poor. With all his desire to praise the Corinthians, in this the apostle could not.123 This leads to the revelation on the subject vouchsafed by the Lord. “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was being delivered up, took bread, and, having given thanks, brake [it] and said124, This is my body which

[is] 125 for you: this do in remembrance of me; in like manner also the cup after having supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye announce the death of the Lord till he come." (Vers. 23-26.)

It is interesting to notice that to Paul was given a revelation of the supper, not of baptism. He was baptized like another himself, not by an apostle even, lest this might be perverted to make him dependent on the twelve, but by a simple disciple, Ananias. Baptism attaches to the individual confessor and would have its place as the sign of the great christian basis, the death and resurrection of Christ, if there had been no such thing as the baptizing believers by the Spirit into one body, the church. But the supper, besides being the memorial of Christ and emphatically of His death, is now bound up with the body of Christ, as we have seen in 1 Cor. 10:16, 17. This is so true that he who wilfully or under an act of discipline does not partake of that one loaf ceases to enjoy the privileges of God's assembly on earth; he who partakes of it cannot free himself from the responsibilities of that holy fellowship. And as Paul was the chosen vessel by whom was to be revealed the mystery of Christ and the church, so did it seem good to the Lord that he should receive a special revelation of His supper, the standing sign of its unity and public witness of its communion.

It is striking to observe that, plainly as the Lord has revealed His mind here, even the Protestant Reformers failed to recover its lineaments. They have individualised the Lord's supper. They make it "for thee." "Take thou," etc. This is consistent. They had not seen the one body

and one Spirit. Even if they had limited it to those who were believed to be justified by faith, still this would have been only an aggregate of individuals. They never received the truth of the church as Christ's body on earth. On the contrary they began the system of distinct or independent national churches on earth; they relegated the unity of the church to heaven. The one body, as an existing relationship to which the Christian belongs now, and on which he is bound to act continually, was unknown as a present reality; and this ignorance betrayed itself even in their mode of celebrating the sacrament, as it does to this day.

Even where there is no such form of individuality, there is as little sense or expression of the one body.126 The reason is obvious. They do not contemplate all the faithful, being avowedly associations of certain souls on the ground of points of difference (that is, sects), or embracing the world as well as believers. In either way dissenting or nationalist, being off the basis of God's church, they naturally drop the words as they are revealed for God's order of things, and change them, perhaps unconsciously, into what suits their own condition. Communion there cannot be but in the Spirit, who exalts Christ, not opinions, and goes out toward all saints, not some only, nor the world at all in such worship.

It is the holy, gracious, and deep meaning of the Lord's supper, and in no way the elements or the ministrant, which invests it with such value and blessing. He is in the midst of His own to give them the enjoyment of His love in present power, but as recalling their hearts to the sacrifice of Himself for their sins to place them without charge or question before God. The bread remains

bread, and so does the wine; the thanksgiving, or blessing, we find as at all times of ordinary life in receiving the creatures of God; of miracle at this time the word of God whispers not a word. The Lord breaks the bread and says, This is My body which is on your behalf: this do in remembrance of Me; in like manner the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do as often as ye drink it in remembrance of Me.

The Lord's supper then is to remind us of Christ, of His death; not of our sins but of our sins remitted and ourselves loved. It is in no wise the old covenant of condemnation, but the new covenant (God known in grace, iniquity forgiven, and sins remembered no more); not yet made with the houses of Israel set for ever the land under the reign of Messiah, but the blood shed which is its foundation, and we who believe, Jew or Gentile, having it in spirit, not in letter. (See 2 Cor. 3) Of this the cup especially is the pledge.

But Romanism takes away the cup from its votaries, and consistently enough; for as a system it supposes sacrifice going on, not finished, and consequently it administers a sacrament of non-redemption. The bread, say they, contains the blood, flesh, soul, divinity, all in the body; that is, the blood is not shed, and therefore no remission of sins, no perfecting of the sanctified, for the one offering is always going on and not yet accomplished or accepted. Romanism therefore stands in contrast with Christianity in the capital truth of the efficacy of Christ's death, indispensable both to God's glory and to the cleansing of the conscience of the Christian.

But Protestantism has infringed on Christ's institution, not only by impairing the grace of God in the Lord's supper, but by letting in the world as we have seen and by insisting for the most part on an authorised official to administer it. All these ruin its simple, profound, and most affecting significance. Not that one denies for a moment ministry or rule; they are of exceeding moment and will be treated of in their place according to scripture. Yet in the Lord's supper, not only as He instituted it at first but as it was revealed by Him to the apostle in its final shape, none of these things appear. It is essentially as members of the one body that we communicate. Even the gifts are introduced separately and afterwards. Elders, if any, are ignored; and this is the more remarkable, as the occasion might have seemed exactly one to have reminded them of the disorder allowed at Corinth, if it had really been their duty to preside at the supper. But, instead of reprehending any one's neglect as specially responsible, the apostle deals with the hearts and consciences of all the saints and brings out its true meaning, object, and guard for the instruction of the entire church of God. To discern the body, to appreciate the unfathomable grace of our Lord in His death for our sins, is the true corrective for all that have faith in Him who deigns to be in their midst as thus gathered to His name. To introduce a human order however reverent in appearance, without divine warrant, for the purpose of shutting out the Corinthian excesses or any others, is more offensive to him that trembles at the word of the Lord than any abuse of His supper as it was instituted. Even under such circumstances as those of Corinth the apostle adds nothing, takes away nothing, corrects nothing of that institution; in which we are called to

announce the death of the Lord until He shall have come.

These last words convict of a great, perilous, and irreverent error those who count the Lord's supper a relic of Judaism and argue for its disuse among Christians like the community of goods practised only for a brief space after Pentecost. A fresh revelation to the apostle of the Gentiles ought to have put such a notion to the rout, even apart from words such as those of verse 26 which suppose the constant and frequent observance of the supper till Christ returns in glory. And in fact the history of such theorists as the Society of Friends is the strongest proof of their error; for no christian sect has more thoroughly lost the force of the truth of redemption in discarding its signs. As is well known, they refuse as a whole (I speak not of evangelical individuals) both baptism and the Lord's supper. In accordance with this they do not see death Healed on the race, nor the efficacy of Christ's death in grace for the believer. They think of Christ as putting all mankind into a state of indefinite improvableness and so of saving those who do their best, Jew, Turk, or heathen; they repudiate therefore both institutions which set forth objectively that one can have no part with Christ risen but through His death. Subject to the word, we were buried with Him by baptism to death; and now continually announce His death till He come. Self is thus judged, yet are we kept in the constant sense of His grace. Is it not the truth as to ourselves, and due to Him? Is it not in perfect harmony with the gospel, which combines peace and salvation in Him with the confession of good-for-nothingness in those who are thus

blessed to the praise of God's mercy in Christ? Worship and even discipline only confirm this.

Such is the institution and the aim of the Lord's supper. Let us pursue the consequences pressed by the apostle with his wonted fulness, depth, and solemnity.

"Wherefore whoever eateth127 the bread or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily128 shall be guilty as to the body and the129 blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh130 eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body.131 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and pretty many are falling asleep. But132 if we were discerning ourselves, we should not be judged; but when judged we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when coming together to eat, wait for each other. If133 any one is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye may not come together for judgment. But the rest will I arrange when I come." (Vers. 27-34.)

But the more precious the Lord's supper is, as the gathering of christian affection to a focus in the remembrance of His death, the greater the danger, if the heart be careless, or the conscience not before God. It is not a question of allowing unworthy persons to communicate. Low as the Corinthians might be through their unjudged carnal thoughts and worldly desires, they had not fallen so grievously as that; they had not yet learned to make excuses for admitting the unrenewed and open enemies of the Lord to His table. But they were in danger of reducing its observance to a form for themselves, of partaking in the supper without exercise

of soul, either as to their own ways, or as to His unspeakable love who was thus reminding them of His death for them. Hence the solemn admonition of the apostle, “Wherefore whosoever eateth the bread (for the added emphasis of the common text is uncalled for) or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.” To eat or drink it as an ordinary meal, or a common thing, without reflection or self-judgment, is to eat and drink “unworthily;” and the more so because it is a Christian who does so; for of all men he should feel most what he owes the Lord, and what the Lord expressly brings to his remembrance at that serious moment. It is to be guilty of an offence, not merely against Himself in general, but in respect of His body and His blood, if he treat their memorials with indifference. There meet together the extremity of our need and guilt, the fulness of suffering in Christ, the deepest possible judgment of sin, yet withal grace to the uttermost, leaving not a sin unforgiven: what facts, feelings, motives, results, surround the cross of the Lord Jesus! For this reason it appeals, as nothing else can, to the believer’s heart as well as to his conscience, and therefore does the apostle censure and stigmatize the Corinthians’ fault so strongly. How much for their and our profit!

“But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body.” Grace is thus maintained, but through righteousness, as ever. Each is to put himself to the proof, and so to eat and drink. The Lord would have His own to come, but not with negligence of spirit or levity; this were to be a party both to His own dishonour,

and the deeper evil of his followers. Still He invites all, if He urges the trying of our ways. Self-judgment is with a view to coming, not to staying away. For it is a question of those whom grace counts worthy; whatever their past or personal unworthiness, they are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Having the Spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind, they are assumed to be in peace with God, and delivered from the law of sin; they are contemplated as jealous for the Lord's glory, and hating what grieves the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption.

It is not supposed that they could persevere in evil that they discover themselves exposed to, or that they confess sin in which they begin again to indulge, as if God were mocked by an acknowledgment which would thus aggravate their wickedness. Grace strengthens the man who tries himself with integrity, and it emboldens him to come. Where there is lightness on the other hand, the Lord shows Himself there to judge. "For he that eateth and drinketh (most add "unworthily," but the most ancient omit) eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body," that is, the Lord's body, as the mass add, in both cases needlessly, though right enough for the sense which is implied. To bring in the church would falsify the thought: the wrong was forgetfulness of the Lord's self-sacrificing love. He instituted the supper to remind us of it continually.

But there is another error still more prevalent, and even long and widely consecrated, which has wrought as much mischief as almost any other single mistranslation of a scripture. It is not "damnation" of which verse 29

speaks, but in contrast with it judgment, κρίμα. Yet all the celebrated English versions, from Wiclif downward, have sanctioned the grievous mistake, save the worst of them, the Rhemish, through its servile adherence to the Vulgate, which here happens to give judicium rightly. The curious fact however is, that of all systems none is really so tainted with the unbelief which led to the mistranslation as the Romanist. For it naturally regards with the utmost superstition the Lord's supper, and with it interweaves its idolatry of the real presence. Hence its interpretation of guilt as to the body and the blood of the Lord. Hence its notion of "damnation" attaching to a misuse of the sacrament, followed by almost all the Protestant associations. But the Protestant is misled by his version, while the Romanist is the less excusable, inasmuch as his Vulgate and vernacular versions are so far right, yet he is even more deeply under the delusion which denies christian relationship and an atom of grace in God, as a fact now know to the heart by faith.

Here the Spirit really teaches us that, where the true and holy aim of the Lord's supper is slighted, and the communicant does not discern the body (that is, does not discriminate between the memorial of Christ and an ordinary meal), he eats and drinks judgment as a present thing. He brings on himself the chastening hand of the Lord in vindication of His honour and His love. Hence it is added, "For this cause [are] many weak and sick among you, and a considerable number are falling asleep." There sin, sickness, was to death, And there is still further instruction: "For if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged; but when judged we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." This is conclusive. The express aim of

the Lord in inflicting these bodily sufferings at the present is in order that His faulty saints may escape damnation. Condemnation awaits the world because, rejecting the Lord, it must bear its own doom. He has borne the sins of the faithful; but if they are light about His grace, they come under His rebukes now, that they may be spared condemnation by and by with the world which they so far resemble. If they discerned the evil in its working within, they would avoid, not only its manifestation without, but His chastening; if they fail in this self-judgment, He does not fail in watchful care, and deals with them; but even such judgment flows from His love, and takes the shape of chastening, that they may not perish in the condemnation yet to fall on the guilty world. How grievous on the part of the saints; how gracious and holy on His part! But it is evidently and only present judgment that they may not fall into future condemnation; that is, it is in contrast with “damnation.”

The apostle closes his grave censure and instruction with the exhortation to wait for each other when coming together to eat; self would thus be judged, and love in active exercise. “If any one is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye may not come together for judgment.” The indulgence of flesh in one provokes flesh in another, and the Lord must then judge more than the one who first dishonoured Him.

The apostle manifestly did not say all he might. “The rest will I arrange when I come.” It would not be for the best interests of the assembly if all were laid down formally. The Spirit in living power is the true supplement to the written word as the unerring standard, not tradition. We need and have the Holy Ghost as well as scripture; but scripture is the rule, not

the Spirit, though we cannot use it aright without Him. This keeps up practical dependence on God, who would not have us to act either alone or together without the distinct light of His word, for which, if we have it not, we ought to wait. And waiting on God for light which we have not, though humbling, is ever wholesome, as God Himself is faithful who has called us to the fellowship of His Son. But it is evident that what despises the plain word of God cannot be His light, however high be the pretensions of those who are beguiled by it. No lie is of the truth, which surely hangs together as a whole. So it is in Christ; and not otherwise with the written word. It refuses the admixture of that which is not of God; and those who are led of the Spirit will prove the divine energy which works in them, not by presuming to bring in any thoughts of their own, as if scripture were at fault, but by a juster and fuller application of scripture than others could have seen till it was thus pointed out there.

1 Corinthians 12.

It may be well to remark here the wisdom of God in furnishing the revelation of the due object and order of the Lord’s supper before He treats of the Spirit’s presence and operations in the assembly. The observance of that holy feast is independent, not only of the presence of elders or bishops, as we have seen, but of the display of power in the assembly. Not that grace now withholds the Spirit’s working, but that God would have us to know that His saints are free, and bound, to remember Christ in this solemn and appointed way of His love, apart from this, or that, or any form of gift. The unfolding of the ways of the Spirit in the church follows

as a fresh topic, and is thus kept quite distinct from the standing sign of our fellowship in showing forth the Lord's death.

Nor can there be a doubt to the intelligent believer that an apostle had authority from Christ to act, speak, and write of Him in all that concerns the church, its doctrines and discipline, its order and worship; and that these regulations found in the written word bind the church at all times. It is in the despising of these institutes, and the deliberate abandonment of them, consists the sin and ruin of the church; as, again, those who have ears to hear prove it in their practical submission and obedience. For it is not enough to do the will of the Lord in our individual ways. After being awakened of the Holy Spirit, and brought to God, we find, if we believe scripture, that we are not units but living parts of an organic whole. We belong to God, but also are members of a body on earth — the body of Christ, the church, in which the Holy Spirit acts with a view to glorifying the Lord Jesus. We are not left to our own wisdom as to this, but instructed and directed by the word of God, and very especially by such apostolic epistles as the present. Hence the all-importance of diligent attention to these inspired words, with dependence on God and distrust of ourselves; for the aim of Satan is by all means to thwart what is so near to His glory, and so full of blessing to the saints themselves. Self-confidence may be the snare of some; others may be exposed to the influence of tradition, public opinion, and human learning. The truth is that we must be taught of God, though this be in the godly use of every means His word warrants for our help. But then we have the assurance that "they shall be all taught of

God” — a word which our Lord drew from the prophets and applies to the present, so that we may confidently look for its verification in the measure of our waiting on Him in faith.

We shall also see, as we study this new section of the epistle (1 Cor. 12 - 14), how grace turns the errors and faults of the Corinthians to the standing profit of all who desire to learn and walk faithfully. Power is wholly distinct from spirituality. What assembly among the Gentiles surpassed that in the capital of Achaia for the display of energy evidently supernatural? Yet was their communion with God’s mind at the lowest ebb. This should have checked the yearning, in our day as in the past, after such manifestations of the Spirit as abounded in their midst; and the rather, as we live when Christendom has grown so inured to its own ways, that though God’s word seem to many saints peculiar and eccentric, they have forgotten, if they ever knew, that the most ancient tradition is but an innovation on the “old path” marked down unerringly in scripture. The Corinthians had slipped away from God’s end of glorifying the Lord Jesus in the assembly; and hence flesh was active, which forgets the common grace in Christ, and leads us to measure ourselves by ourselves, and to compare ourselves with ourselves. It is vanity, not intelligence; and the fruit is puffing up, not edification. But the watchful eye of the apostle was led to use it for God in his care for all the churches, yea, for the church at all times. Scripture meets every need. It is God’s word, and in view of all wants, though He availed Himself only of what then pressed, but after a divine sort.

There are indeed two great and widely prevalent snares: that of sacrificing the individual to the assembly; and that of forgetting the assembly for the individual. Romanism illustrates the former, as Protestantism the latter. In Romanism the church is all; there alone is the Spirit, the truth, holiness, everything: the individual is nothing, not even a saint. It were presumption; the church must settle it, if at all, fifty years after he is dead. The individual cannot even pretend to know his sins forgiven: anathema, says the Council of Trent, to him who says justification is by faith alone; anathema to him who says he can know it for his soul. Thus is the gospel ignored and denied in principle, and most distinctly, for every individual within the bosom of Rome; and this to aggrandize the church, which arrogates to itself alone to speak, but speaks here falsehood in Christ's name. And as to any individuals pretending to say that their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in them, which they have of God, it could only sound still more awful presumption, if not blasphemy. And no wonder, for it is wholly inconsistent with the sacrifice of the Mass, or the subsistence of an earthly priesthood, which are the Jachin and Boaz of the Romish temple. It is of no avail that the apostolic doctrine is plain, precise, and conclusive that every Christian should know this transcendent privilege of himself now on earth. Romanism boldly sets it aside, and every other which belongs to the individual, in order to swell the church's power and glory. "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:7-9)

But there is an opposite snare, not so destructive of man's salvation, but equally at issue with God's glory. It is the Protestant scheme, which rightly affirms justification by faith, and God's title to address every man's conscience in His word, though enfeebled and spoilt by putting it as man's right to a private judgment on it. But Protestantism ignores the church of God, and in claiming a co-ordinate place for churches, national and dissenting and what not, virtually denies the one body on earth. It may dream of one body in heaven, where scripture never speaks of such a thing, but it recognizes ever so many bodies on earth, each independent, which scripture expressly sets aside.

The word of God guards the truth as to both points, and excludes all error. According to it the gospel deals with each soul first of all. By faith the individual has life and is justified, adopted as a child of God, blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Then, over and above his faith, he is sealed by the Spirit. In virtue of one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all given to drink into one Spirit. Thus, and thus only; is the body, the church, formed; it supposed the individual question settled by faith, and then the corporate relationship begins, and is established by the Holy Spirit; and this now on earth, as a privilege indeed of the highest kind, yet at once involving responsibilities thenceforth of the gravest. If the known individual blessedness by faith delivers the soul from Romanism, no less surely does the corporate place of the church, when understood, lift one outside and above Protestantism in all its manifold and varying phases. How could you, intelligibly or consistently, join this, or that body, when you are consciously of the "one

body," and responsible to walk according to God's will in that relationship? If I hear God's word, I am first in Christ, then in the church; I know the Spirit dwells in me, and know also that He dwells in the church, which is therefore one while on the earth, not merely alike in doctrine, discipline, and polity, which might be in many independent societies, but one body here below. And this is so true and grave, that the truth would call one out of Romanism, if Rome had not an Image nor a superstition, and out of Protestantism, if its sects kind not a single unconverted member or minister. All this, however, and more, will appear plainly as we pursue the teaching of the apostle.

"Now concerning spiritual things, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant. Ye know that, when134 ye were Gentiles, [ye were] led away unto the dumb idol as ye might be led. Wherefore I give you to know that no one speaking in [the] Spirit of God saith, Jesus [is] accursed, and no one can say, Lord Jesus,135 unless in [the] Holy Spirit. Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of services, and the same Lord, and there are differences of operations, but the same God136 that operateth all things in all." (Vers. 1-6.)

The Authorized translation, with almost all others, inserts "gifts" after "spiritual" in the first verse; but this is scarcely comprehensive enough, for it does not properly contemplate the presence of the Spirit Himself, which clearly is far more momentous than any gift, and in itself distinct from them, they depending on Him rather than He on them. Hence "manifestations" has been suggested. But this, though better, seems inadequate to express the great truth in question, as we

may learn from verse 7, where “the manifestation of the “Spirit” refers to what is given to each, as distinct from the baptism of the Spirit, which forms all into one body. The sense is the entire range of what pertains to the Spirit; and if our language could bear “spirituals,” this would seem the best way of rendering τῶν πνευματικῶν. A christian usage has already adopted “heavenlies” in Ephesians. There seems at least as much need for a similar modification here in Corinthians. There is no sufficient reason, with Locke and others, to suppose that spiritual men are meant here again, as in 1 Cor. 14:37, 1 Cor. 2:15; Galatians 6. Compare verse 31 and 1 Cor. 14:1. This would narrow the field even more than the common version, and thus be more objectionable still.

The apostle, then, would have them acquainted with the source, character, and object of all that flows from the Spirit in the assembly, and of His manifestation in each member of Christ. And, first, he reminds them of their pitiable condition when heathen. They were led away to the dumb idols so familiar to all, as they happened to be led. Their own will, doubtless, wrought and exposed them to unseen beings, who availed themselves of those senseless objects of adoration. The more, therefore, did they need to learn what had a wholly different origin and intent. This brings in the criterion of the Holy Spirit, the confession of Jesus as Lord, in contrast with the aim of evil spirits, who said, Curse on Jesus. Alas I this was not confined to Gentiles, for so cried the Jews under Satan’s influence at the late crisis of their history. It would be to lose much, however, to reduce this twofold test to such gross forms alone. We may justly infer that, as the Holy Spirit ever works to exalt Jesus, so does the enemy to

degrade Him. And this appears to be the point here, not the ascertainment of true believers among professors, but the character of what is taught in the assembly, whether of God's Spirit or of Satan. So it is even in 1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7.

Next, the apostle descends from this broad and absolute test, in which all true confessors must unite, to the varieties, and these in relation to their source and aim. "Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministries, and the same Lord; and there are differences of operations, but the same God that operateth all things in all." It is not, on the one hand, the Trinity, as such, which we have here, though unquestionably "the Spirit" and "the Lord" could not be thus introduced if they were not God equally with the Father. But it is plain that our Lord appears not so much in His divine glory as the Son, but rather in the official position conferred on Him. And God is spoken of as such, not in His personal distinctiveness as Father. On the other hand, it is not a division into three classes of gifts, but the same thing in substance viewed in three relations: gifts, in relation to the Spirit, through whom they come; services, in relation to the Lord, under whom and for whose glory they are responsibly exercised; and operations or workings or effects, in relation to God, for it is God, and not man, that works the whole in all. Thus, if by the Spirit there be a gift, its exercise is a ministry or service of the Lord, by whose authority it is carried on; and it is God who works it all effectually. Compare 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 and chapter 2.

We learn also how surely the action of the Holy Spirit in a Christian must be in communion in order to meet the mind and will of God. Powers, even of the most

manifestly supernatural kind, may be exercised, as in too many of the Corinthians, to self-exaltation.

We come next to individual distinctions, the special forms of the Spirit's working in Christians.

"But to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for profit. For to one, through the Spirit, is given [the] word of wisdom, and to another [the] word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;137 to a different one faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the same138 Spirit, and to another operations of powers, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits;139 to a different one kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. But all these things operateth the one and the same Spirit, dividing in particular to each according as he pleaseth." (Vers. 7-11.)

It is well to remark that the apostle is speaking only of the assembly, of each one there and not in the world. This might seem needless to notice, did we not know that a whole community in Christendom is based on the opposed assumption that a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man on earth without restriction. Here the apostle is treating strictly of the church: to each within it is the manifestation of the Spirit given, and that with a view to the common good, not for personal influence or display. Chrysostom is quite in error in supposing that the term "manifestation" is here used because unbelievers do not own God, save by visible wonders. For it is not a question of miracles only, as the very first samples (the word of wisdom and that of knowledge) prove; nor is it a sign to unbelievers, but for the profit of believers.

The way of the Spirit too is not concentration of all His powers in a single person, but distribution to a variety of individuals; and this because the assembly is contemplated, not a chief man but the church, by the different constituents of which God is pleased to work for the good of all. “For to one, through the Spirit, is given [the] word of wisdom, and to another [the] word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit.” The apostle takes care to begin with what would be called non-miraculous gifts, the better to counteract the fleshly mind, whether of the Corinthians or of any others, which sets an inordinate value on what strikes the eye, the mind, or the imagination by undeniable effects of power. Though not miraculous however, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are as expressly of the Holy Spirit as the most striking sign-gifts. It is not through a commanding, or a merely “sanctified,” intellect that the word of wisdom comes; it “is given through the Spirit.” “According to the same Spirit” is given the word of knowledge. They are thus no less supernatural, though not in the ordinary sense miraculous. They are the fruit neither of innate powers nor of acquirement, but of the Spirit, just as is the new birth of every believer; and far more important than any miracle, grave as it may be and glorifying to God in its own place and for its own purpose.

What then is “wisdom” as distinguished from “knowledge?” Wisdom seems to me that moral discernment given by God of things as they are before Him, and consequently as they truly are in themselves, and in relation to one another, which is of prime value for practical judgment and conduct here below. Good and evil, right and wrong, are thus seen intuitively,

because of familiarity with the presence of God, not only in their results but in their principles and springs. Knowledge is rather that understanding of revealed truth, which of course therefore is given through a diligent use of the scriptures, and is of great value for appreciating the ways as well as word of God, though the abuse of it issues in systems of divinity, of prophecy, and the like. The “word” in the two instances means or implies the faculty of communicating to others the wisdom or knowledge, as the case may be. It does not seem correct to infer that the prophets were characterized by the latter as apostles undoubtedly were by the former. It would be more according to scripture if one said that “the word of knowledge” pertained to the teacher, always remembering that an apostle or a prophet might also be a teacher and a preacher, as Paul himself was beyond all controversy. But his was a rare combination of gifts, and all of them rich, deep, and ample, in order to accomplish the special work for which he was called of the Lord.

But next follow very different manifestations of the Spirit. “To a different one faith by (ἐν) the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, and to another operations of powers, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits,” etc. Clearly “faith” here, as sometimes elsewhere, does not mean a soul’s believing in Christ or the gospel for salvation, being a manifestation of the Spirit, and this to one here or there among the Christians. It is that distinctive gift from God which enables its possessor to face foes and dangers, and rise above hindrances or difficulties, and be assured of the issue, where others,

even saints, are perplexed and disquieted. It is thus distinct from healings, powers, prophecy, etc.

There seems no need of dwelling on “gifts of healings in virtue of (ἐν) the same Spirit,” further than to say that it is not more comprehensive, but less, than “faith.” There was faith in him who exercised spiritual powers in healing the sick, but gifts of healings were restricted of course to their own peculiar domain. “Faith,” as such, might be exercised in a great variety of ways besides that which strengthened some to be martyrs or confessors. Again, another might have “operations of powers” (erroneously rendered in the Rhemish and the Authorized Versions, “the working of miracles”), which were not “healings,” but such superiority to things material, or beings spiritual, as we see promised in Mark 16:17, 18, and illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles. “Prophecy” another might have given him, which was an energy of the Holy Ghost in the purely spiritual domain, enabling him to give out the mind of God as to the present or future. This definition embraces the twofold application of the term in scripture, whether to the narrow field of prediction, or to the larger one of declaring God’s mind and will, so as to act on conscience with unfailing, divine conviction. (See for the latter 1 Cor. 14; for the former Acts 11) “Discerning of spirits” is another gift, which means the faculty of deciding, not between true and spurious professors of the Lord Jesus, but between the Spirit’s teaching and that which simulated it by evil spirits. The general responsibility to try or prove the spirits if they are of God we see in 1 John 4, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Here it is a special gift. The danger, or rather the fact, of misleading some is also foreshown in 1

Timothy 4. The designed distribution of these gifts is strikingly shown in the last two, where “kinds of tongues,” or a variety of languages naturally unknown to the speaker we find distinguished from “interpretation of tongues” given to another, though 1 Corinthians 14:13 intimates the desirableness of their combination.

“But all these operateth the one and the same Spirit, dividing in particular to each according as he pleaseth.” (Ver. 11.) The unity of the Spirit, who not only distributes each to each but works all the gifts, thus keeping up dependence on His power, is thus set forth, no less than His sovereign activity as a divine person, however truly come down to work in subservience to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Evil and error may have as many springs as there are men and demons with their varied and often conflicting wills, lusts, and passions. But the self-same Spirit works all that glorifies Christ in these different gifts, distributed respectively at His pleasure to each servant of the Lord. How this diversity with unity characterizes the church will appear from the reason given in the subjoined comparison, as little understood in its force as it is familiar in its forms or phrases, yet of all moment for His glory and our blessing.

“For even as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the140 body, being many, are one body, so also [is] the Christ. For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of141 one Spirit.” (Vers. 12, 13.) Thus the assembly, being an organic unity, while it consists of many parts or members, harmonizes with the various gifts which the Spirit distributes according to His will. Just such is, as the apostle pointedly says, “the Christ;” we would have

said the church. The apostle looks at Christ and the assembly as one mystic man, which, while one, has many members, and yet all the members, many as they are, forming but one body. “So also is the Christ.” The assembly is identified with Him, and this because “by (ἐν, in virtue of) one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

It is important to observe that it was not by faith, precious and mighty as it is, that this unity was formed, but by the Holy Spirit personally sent down from heaven. Faith is individual; it does not unite, though fitting for union morally. One believes the gospel for one’s own soul; and the believer receives life for himself in the Son of God, who is life and quickens the dead. But the baptism of the Spirit is over and above life, and is given therefore not to the dead unbeliever but to those already quickened, and the issue is the one body. So the Lord, who had already quickened the disciples, and this even with life more abundantly in resurrection (John 10; 20), promised them just before His ascension that they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit, which accordingly was fulfilled not many days after at Pentecost. (Compare Acts 1:6, Acts 2; also Acts 8:15, 16; Acts 10:44, 45; Acts 11:15-17; Acts 19:2-6.) The one body had never existed; from Pentecost it begins, as a present fact, on earth, because the Spirit is thus sent to baptize as He never did before; and this continuously, for He when given was to abide in and with us for ever. (John 14:16, 17.) No difference in religion or in social standing hinders. There is one body and one Spirit. The figures employed in the verse before us seem to allude

to baptism and the Lord's supper, the latter being the standing sign of the church's unity.

But it must be borne in mind that scripture nowhere identifies water-baptism with the baptism of the Spirit. Thus, on the grandest occasion of all, the disciples in Jerusalem, waiting for power from on high, were not baptized with water that day; and the convicted souls from among the Jews were told to repent and be baptized each of them, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The disconnection of the two is still more manifest in the case of the Samaritan converts a little after, and of the Ephesian disciples long after. If possible more evidently false is the hypothesis which binds them together in Cornelius' case, with his household and friends, who received the gift of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized with water.

It is not only Catholics then but Protestants also, who are utterly wrong in adducing this text for the effect of baptism. We are not, though Calvin puts it into the lips of the apostle, "engrafted by baptism into Christ's body."142 Baptism is not an engrafting into the body; it associates the believer with His death. It means that we were buried with Christ unto death, a strictly individual truth, and wholly distinct from making us members of His body, which is always attributed to the Holy Spirit, whether we were or were not baptized with water at that time. Nor is it possible to attribute to the cup the keeping up of the unity, or the conducting us by degrees to the same unity, for the phrase implies a single finished act (ἐποτίσθημεν, like ἐβαπτίσθημεν, both aorists). It is at most therefore a glance at the two institutions of our Lord, and in no way a doctrinal

connection. They are separable, and in fact separated, even when true believers are concerned; and, blessed as is the aim and the effect of the Lord's supper, it has nothing whatever to do with our reception of the Spirit, though doubtless the Spirit, when received, gives an immense accession to the enjoyment of the grace of Christ in the supper, and this in communion with one another. They are not sacramentally bound together, even baptism being to death with Christ, not to life, still less to union or the one body which is by the baptism of the Spirit.

Further, it will have been gathered by the thoughtful reader that the baptism of the Spirit is wholly distinct from the new birth, as in John 3. Hence it is incorrect to think that any communication of the Holy Spirit is called His baptism. Neither the new birth nor sanctification of the Spirit is so designated, any more than His inspiration, but only the gift, Himself personally received by the believer, not His quickening operation which makes a believer or gives one faith.

The apostle proceeds to employ the idea of the body to illustrate the assembly of God as now existing on earth. Doubtless it was in season for the state of things then in Corinth; but it is ever needed while we are here below, and never more so than now, when the state of Christendom renders it, on the one hand, harder to seize and apply the truth, and, on the other, still more imperatively due to the injured honour of the Lord, whose word and will are in general so grievously set at nought and ignored.

"For also the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the

body, it is not on this account not of the body; and if the ear say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, it is not on this account not of the body. If the whole body [were] an eye, where the hearing? If all hearing, where the smelling? But now God set the members each one of them in the body according as he pleased. And if they all were one member, where the body? But now [are there] many members, and one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. But much more the members of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary; and those which we think to be less honourable [members] of the body, on these we put more abundant honour, and our uncomely [members] have more abundant comeliness; but our comely [members] have no need. But God blended the body together, having given more abundant honour to that which lacked, that there might be no division in the body, but that the members might have the same concern one for another." (Vers. 14-25.)

The great and most obvious characteristic of the body is that it consists of not one member but many. This is so essential to its nature that it could not be called "the body" if it consisted of but one member, and not of many. It would be a monstrous formation, not the beautiful unity with diversity seen in the human body, as indeed in every other organization. It is exactly so with the assembly of God. It is not only His house, but Christ's body in virtue of the one Spirit who has baptized all the believers, whatever their antecedent and their otherwise irreconcilable differences, into one: an unity which subsists now and not by-and-by alone, on earth and not merely in heaven. Indeed we may go farther, and say

that the sole object of the Spirit's instruction here is the church now on earth, and not at all in heaven, where we hear of the bride and the new Jerusalem, never of the one body or the many members.

But it is important to observe that the instruction has no bearing on denominations, save simply to blot them out. So far are they from being contemplated in the exhortation, that the truth of the one body utterly condemns them root and branch. In no extent or way then can the apostle's words be applied to the different denominations which now exist. It is opposed to the fundamental unity of the body on which Paul insists, that one denomination stands in need of another. The body has many members, not denominations, which only exist antagonistically to that unity. Far from being necessary to the due working of the church, like the many members of the body, they frustrate the truth, allowed in theory perhaps, but always denied in practice, as indeed they are dead against the will of the Lord.

The first practical inconsistency with the church's constitution which the apostle warns against (vers. 15, 16) is the discontent of inferior members with their position. They were in danger of ignoring and neglecting their own functions from envy of those who had a higher place. "If the foot say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not [or, is it] on that account not of the body. And if the ear say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not [or, is it] on this account not of the body." Such disaffection, if carried out, would destroy the church. Each has its own office, but for the assembly, not for itself; as the foot and hand, the eye and ear, act for the entire body.

Next the absurdity of such wishes is shown. If one member might desire lawfully some special place, so might all the rest; the consequence of which would be the ruin of the body. “If the whole body [were] an eye, where the hearing? If all hearing, where the smelling?” (Ver. 17.) The admirable co-ordination and sub-ordination of the various members in the one body would be at an end.

Nor is this a question of a true theory or of a wise practice, but of the divine will. God has so ordained it; and those who wish otherwise are fighting against His word.” But now God set the members each one of them in the body according as he pleased.” (Ver. 18.) It is not merely the providential fact of one being in the wilderness, and another in a city; nor is it one led of the Spirit to go here, and another there. As the assembly is according to God’s design and constitution, each is set in a place arranged by God in the body of Christ with a gift suitable for it. One’s own choice is excluded: and so is selection by other men. It is neither self, nor man, nor the church, but God, who can, or ought to, set the members; and He set them, each one of them, in the body according as He pleased. He determines for the least as well as for the greatest. Any other ordering is at issue with God’s ways and pleasure. It is God’s church; and He, not man, orders the place of each and all in it.

“And if they all [were] one member, where the body?” (Ver. 19.) It is the remark of another that as the former proof of absurdity (ver. 17) appealed to the concrete, so does this to the abstract. I add that as there is shown that the distinctness of the members would be destroyed by forgetting the truth, so here the completeness of the body. “But now are they many

members, and but one body." (Ver. 20.) The unity of the body perfectly consists with diversity in the members, and the diversity of the members with that one body. And so, in fact, it is according to God's mind. It is the departure from this which constitutes mainly the present disorganized state of the church which we see in Christendom. For the most part all the gifts which can find expression must be in one member in a congregation, and there is not one body, as far as facts attest, but many bodies, differing and opposed. The root of the evil is that the one Spirit is not really owned, but human acquirement and appointment of varying form. And the eye does, in present practice, say to the hand, I have no need of thee, and the head to the feet, I have no need of you, the eye and head coalescing in the one sole minister.

Thus openly is the truth, enunciated by the apostle, set at naught; for he is proving that, as this cannot be without ruin in the natural body, so is the body of Christ framed in the grace of God. "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (Ver. 21.) Disdain is thereby put down even more strongly here, on the part of the higher members toward the lower, than was discontent, as we saw, in the lesser toward the greater. The highest cannot do without the least. God has made nothing, gives nothing, in vain; yea, the truth demands more than this. "But much more, the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those [members] of the body which we think to be lees honourable, these we invest with more abundant honour; and our uncomely [members] have more abundant comeliness: but our comely [members] have

no need. But God blended the body together, having given more abundant honour to that which lacked, that there might be no divisions in the body, but that the members might have the same concern one for another." (Vers. 21-25.)

By this instinctive sense implanted in us, we feel that the most attractive features can do without the care which is freely bestowed on the less comely; while we know that there are parts of the body which seem weaker, and yet are necessary to its wellbeing, or even life, which last is not the case with some possessed of show and strength, and having a good place, if not so essential. Nature itself teaches us to cover or adorn what is not pleasant or proper to see, while what is fair can appear freely.

So is it according to God with the body of Christ. Much that appears not is,of the utmost importance; those that laboured like Epaphras are far more necessary than some who shone at Corinth with miracles or tongues. As we cover the feet, not the face, so it is that God uses and honours what is apt to be despised; and so should we, if we have the mind of Christ; and this is thus ordered of God to guard against the tendency to division in the body. Had the Corinthians heeded this, how much sorrow and shame would have been spared! The disorder, however, grace has turned to our account, who have been awakened to see and judge, and to have done with that which is so dishonouring to the Lord, but a state which is ever ready to repeat itself, and not least where knowledge takes the place of love, and saints condescend to form cliques with a favourite leader. to help them on in the sorry work of jealousy and detraction. Is this the members having the same concern

one for another? or is it not schism, against which God tempered the body together so that there should be none?

We have seen, then, that God has so constituted the body of Christ, like the natural one, that there should be no division of interest, but the good of each in the good of all, and the care of each for every other member. It is His aim, but may not be the fact.

“And whether143 one member suffer, all the members suffer with [it]: whether a [or one] 144 member is glorified, all the members rejoice with [it].” (Ver. 26.) It is not said merely that they ought, but that they do. Whether it be good or ill, all that is according to God in one Christian goes out for blessing to all the rest; and there is not an ill or scandal in a saint at the antipodes which does not affect with its shade and suffering every other in these lands. We consciously suffer or rejoice, one may add, in the measure of our spiritual power. But the effect is real throughout the church. It is a body — the body of Christ — and as a whole it feels in joy or sorrow: else it were not a real organic unity. Undoubtedly also its present condition, with denominational barriers, which in all the saints sever into independent associations, as well as with the allowance of the world in most, reduces spiritual sensibility to the lowest: still, far from desiring otherwise, one dares not deny that it subsists, surviving these deplorable hindrances by its own vitality, as flowing from the Holy Spirit of God who dwells in the church.

See how the blessed apostle brings home the truth from the abstract to the concrete, applying this precious truth

to the case before him. It is true that the state of the Corinthians was such that he would not go there. If he had gone, he must have taken a rod with him, and this was far from his heart. He would rather write, and wait; and God blessed his written rebuke to their restoration in measure, and he could rejoice as we see in the second epistle. But even here, before he was refreshed with the fruit of grace, while censuring severely their faults, he does not hesitate to say, “Now ye are Christ’s body, and members in particular.” (Ver. 27.) Such is the privilege, and such no less the responsibility of the local assembly; not independently of course, for this would deny the body of Christ, but representatively, for, if it were not so, the local assembly were not Christ’s body; and as this they collectively were, so also they were members severally.

It is very evident too that it is not an ideal or future picture. It is a living reality on earth, which every Christian is bound to walk in and manifest, abandoning at all cost whatever is inconsistent with, or destructive of, it. It is a state now on earth, not about to be by-and-by in heaven. There will be no such thing as the suffering of one and the sympathy of the rest on high. Unbelief shirks responsibility, and would like to conceive it another state, not yet practicable, because it does not like the trial. In heaven, no doubt, there will be perfect love, and all selfishness will be gone for ever; but it is quite a different state of things, and not once contemplated in these verses.

“And God set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then powers, then145 gifts of healings, helps, governments, kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all

powers? Have all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater146 gifts, and yet I show you a way of exceeding excellence." (Ver. 28.)

We see hence how completely the true thought is that God, not man, arranged the assembly, and the relative place of all in it. It is the same principle, from the highest to the lowest, from apostles to the least gift for the manifestation of the Spirit in it. And the Corinthians then, as others of late, had to hear, whether they heeded or not, that those striking displays of power in which they found their childish surprise and delight, like the world without, were not highest, that there were gifts relatively first and second and third, the last-named being the very one they had been abusing to no small disorder and hindrance of edification in the assembly. The apostles had a place of governing for Christ which prophets had not, though both constitute the foundation on which this building of God is built. (Eph. 2) Teachers were subordinate of course. "Helps" and "governments" are commonly supposed to be the gifts needed for the offices of deacon and elder respectively. It at least is certain, that there is no difficulty in understanding this of the presbyters or bishops, because these had to be διδακτικοί. For "apt to teach" is not the same thing as a "teacher." The ruling elders of Presbyterianism are very distinct from scriptural elders; and so still more is the one teaching elder, or the minister. Other societies diverge, if possible, farther from the principle laid down here and elsewhere.

But it is the Lord who calls, not the church. The church may be the sphere of the exercise of the gifts, never the source of the authority, any more than of the power, both

of which come from Christ. It is He who gives mission, He who sends labourers to sow or reap. Nor does scripture ever assert it to be the church's office to examine the candidate for the ministry, as it is called, nor authoritatively to declare its judgment. There is no appointed way for the church in either case, because it is not the church's work or duty. The Lord qualifies the servant whom He calls for the work He appoints to be done; and He works by the Spirit, not only in this member, but in all the others, to have His call and work and workmen respected, though flesh and world be stirred up of the enemy to discredit all. Hence we find the church at Corinth, as well as those of Galatia, questioning, not declaring authoritatively (which God never asked any to do), the apostleship of St. Paul. Ministry, according to scripture and this very chapter in particular, is clearly the exercise of a gift from the Lord to a given end. So says the apostle Peter in his first epistle (1 Peter 4:10): "As every man [each] hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." There is therefore no real ministry according to God without a gift in the word; and where such a gift is exercised, it is ministry. Only there were also lower gifts of power, and these the apostle puts in their true place, as the Corinthians had put them out of it.

It is to be noticed too how, in verses 29, 80, the apostle's questions suppose distribution of gifts among the members of Christ, and not their concentration either in one or in all. Neither have all the same functions, nor has any one all the functions which are expressly said to be distributed to each of the many members, to this one, and to that another.

The Corinthians' folly was not greater in wishing all the gifts to be in each and all the saints, than the modern theory of arrogating all, as far as public ministration goes, to a single official. The one was ignorant vanity before the truth was fully revealed in a written form; the other is more guilty presumption in presence of the acknowledged word of God, which condemns every departure from His principles, and the great fact of the one body with its many members, wherein the Holy Spirit works to glorify the Lord Jesus.

At the same time the saints are encouraged to desire earnestly the greater gifts, but these were for edification, not for show. And yet he points out to them a way surpassingly excellent; not surely a mere way, however eminently good, to obtain these gifts, as some suppose, but a way for souls to feel and think, to walk and worship, beyond all gifts. It is the way of love, which he opens out in the next chapter.

89 The order is transposed in the vulgar text, following the mass but not the best MSS and versions, A B P, etc. Vulg. Syr Cop. Aeth. Arm., etc.

90 Ἰ. X., as in T. R., D L K L P, most cursives and versions; X. F G, etc.; Ἰ. A B, a few cursives, some ancient versions, etc.

91 μὴ ἐργ. A B D F G P, etc.;

τοῦ μὴ ἐργ. the rest.

92 The ignorance of the plainest facts and statements of scripture which characterizes the fathers, even those who were comparatively near the apostolic age, would be scarce credible, if one did not see the same sort of haze over the eyes of almost all who read their writings.

They seem incapable of a spiritual or even sober judgment. Thus Eusebius (H. E. iii, 30) cites from Clement of Alexandria (Strom. iii.) that “Paul does not demur in a certain Epistle to mention his own wife, whom he did not take about with him, in order to expedite his ministry the better.” This is a total misconception of Philippians 4:3 and of our chapter, neither of which supposes him married, whilst 1 Corinthians 7 proves he was not. Again, quite a crowd of fathers (Tertullian, Ambrose, Aug, Jerome, Theod, etc.), followed of course by Romanist theologians, even their two best commentators (Cornelius à Lap. and Estius), interpret 1 Corinthians 9:5 of rich christian females who accompanied preachers to help out of their substance. Possibly so gross a misconstruction flowing from a false system of thought as to celibacy led to the ἀγαπηταί, ἀδελφαί, or συνείσακτοι of early ecclesiastical notoriety, condemned by the first council of Nicea. One may add here the curious error in the Vulg. (not alone the printed editions but some good, if not most of the, manuscripts), hoc or haec operandi.

93 τὸν κ. E. p.m. A B Cp.m. F G P, etc;

ἐκ τοῦ κ. T. R. supported by the mass.

94 T. R. adds

τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ with large but inferior authority.

95 παρεδρεύοντες p.m. A B C D E F G P, a few cursives, and many citations; προσεδρεύ T. R. following a few uncials, most cursives, etc.

96 μὴ ὢν αὐτός ὑπὸ νόμον A B C D E F G P, many cursives, ancient versions, etc.; Dcorr. K and most cursives omit, as does Tex. Rec.

97 γάρ p.m. A B C D E F G P, ten cursives, the Latin and Egyptian versions, many fathers Greek and Latin; δέ is read by corr. K L, most cursives, etc.

98 ἐβαπτίσαντο (= got baptized) B K L P and the cursives generally, and many Greek fathers; ἐβαπτίσθησαν A C D E F G with some cursives and Greek fathers.

99 ἐν, added by most, is not in p.m. B Dp.m. F G, etc.

100

κύριον B C P, eight cursives, some ancient versions and fathers; Χριστόν D E F G K L, most cursives, versions, etc.;

Θεόν A, etc.

101

ἀπώλλυντο A B, the rest

ἀπώλοντο.

102

γογγύζωμεν, 'let us murmur,' D E F G, etc., contrary to the general testimony.

103

καθάπερ B P,

καθώς the rest, as in Text. Rec.

104

πάντα is omitted by A B, etc.

105

τυπικῶς A B C K P, and many other witnesses;

τύποι, as in Text. Rec., D E F G L and most cursives, etc. For the Text Reel sunevbainon, supported by A D E F G L and most; - νεν B C K (not L, as Tisch. gives by oversight on both sides) many cursives, etc. The force is greatest, when we see the facts in detail happening, (pl.) to Israel, but recorded (sing.) as a whole in scripture for us.

106 Calvin, Transl. Soc. in loc. Edinb. 1848.

107

ὑμᾶς (“ye”) is expressed in Tex. Rec. with large cursive support, but contrary to the great uncials, save in a correction of two.

108

ἐστίν stands before

τοῦ αἵμ. in A B P, etc., and before

τοῦ σ. A, etc., contrary to all the rest.

109 corr. B Ccorr. D E P, some cursives, many versions, etc., have the order different from K L and most with Text. Rec., p.m. A Cp.m. omitting the second clause altogether.

110 Ibid.

111

τὰ ἔθνη A C L most cursives, the ancient versions, etc., as in Text. Rec., but not in B D E Fgr Ggr. etc.

112

θύουσιν A B a D E F G I’ etc.

θύει K L. most cursives. etc.

113

μοι is added by the correctors of and C, by H K L, most cursives, etc., contrary to the best authorities of every kind.

114 Ibid.

115

ἱερόθυτον, as a heathen would say, A B H S Sah. yr. (Pesch.); but all others, εἰδωλόθυτον, sacrificed to idols, as a Christian might say.

116 The last clause of T. Rec. is omitted by the ancient authorities.

117

δέ (“For”) is added in T. Rec. by few and slight witnesses.

118 A B C P, some good cursives, and ancient versions, do not read ἀδελφοί, “brethren.”

119

ὁ X. X. A Bcorr. Dcorr. E K L P, most cursives, etc.; but some good witnesses omit.

120

τοῦ A B D E, etc, the rest omitting the article.

121

ἑαυτῆς B Dcorr E K, etc.; very excellent authorities,

αὐτῆς.

122 The readings here are singularly conflicting. Lachmann and Tregelles read τοῦτο δέ παραγγέλλω οὐκ ἐπαινῶν, “This I enjoin, not praising [you]” on the authority of A Cp.m. F G, some cursives, the Vulgate, Pesch. Syr., and other ancient versions. Tischendorf had

adopted this, but in his eighth edition he returns to the common text, παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶ supported by and the mass of uncials and cursives, etc. The Vatican strangely gives παραγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶν, which can hardly be said to have any just sense and is probably a mere slip, one or other only being a participle, not both.

123 No wonder that Dr. C. Hodge remarks, “If within twenty years of its institution, the Corinthians turned the Lord’s Supper into a disorderly feast, although the apostles were then alive, we need not wonder at the speedy corruption of the church after their death.” The case is yet stronger; for the corruption began almost immediately after the apostle had planted the church at Corinth. It is only as walking in the Spirit that anything goes aright in the church. And so would God have it who has for us judged and ended forms in the cross of Christ.

124 The Alexandrian, Vatican, Sinaitic, and Palimpsest of Paris, with other authorities, have not κλώμενον “broken” as in most followed by Tex. Rec. Still more largely do the witnesses reject λάβετε, φάγετε, “take, eat.”

125 Ibid.

126 Early, in the Catholic days of Gregory, so little was the unity of Christ’s body apprehended that we find the form, “the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul,” enlarged before the time of Alcuin and Charlemagne to “the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto everlasting life.” The grace of the gospel had then also faded greatly, as one can see.

127

τοῦτον K L P, most cursives, several ancient versions, and so Text. Rec., contrary to AB1CDEFG, several cursives and ancient versions.

128 Dcorr. L and twenty cursives, add

τοῦ κυρίου “of the Lord.”

129 Text. Rec., with some cursives, omits

τοῦ.

130 Text. Rec. adds

ἀναξίως and

κυρίου with many MSS and versions, contrary to A B C, etc.

131

δέ p.m. A B D E F G, etc.;

γάρ corr. C K L P, etc. Text. Rec.

132

τοῦ B C, etc., which Text. Rec. omits with most.

133 Text. Rec. adds

δέ with most, contrary to p.m. A B C Dp.m. F G, etc.

134 It is clear that

ὅτε was omitted by mere oversight through the preceding ὅτι in F G K and many cursives, followed by the Pesch. Syr., Cop., etc, but all the rest A B C Dgr Egr L P, etc., read it.

135 The Text. Rec. follows the mass in giving the accusative; but A B C, etc., the nominative.

136 B C, etc., read

καί “and;” and the Text. Rec. with most adds

ἐστι “is.”

137

δέ “and” is read by the majority of MSS and versions, but is not in p.m. B Dp.m. E F G, etc.

138 Or “one,”

ἑνί, A B, etc.

139 Authorities are pretty equal for and against

δέ “and.”

140 Text. Rec. adds

ἕνος, with two or three uncials and the mass of cursives, etc., contrary to the best MSS, versions, and other authorities.

141 A few uncials with most cursives insert E”, contrary to B Cp.m. Dp.m. F G P and the best of the other witnesses. A gives the strange reading καὶ πάντες ἓν σῶμά ἐσμεν.

142 “Probatio est ab effectu Baptismi. Inserimur, inquit, per Baptismum in Christi corpus..... deinde ubi sacram Coenam percipiunt, gradatim rursum ad eandem unitatem deduci, quia eodem simul potu reficiantur.” (Calvini Opera, vii. 187, 188, Amst. ed. folio, 1667.)

143

εἴ τι B F G, etc., and versions, the rest

εἴτε.

144 The second

ἔν is not in p.m. A B.

145

ἔπειτα (sic) ABC, five cursives, and several fathers;

εἶτα Text. Rec., with E L and most cursives, etc., while D E F G, etc., omit either.

146

μείζονα A B C, ten or more cursives, both Aeth., and many ancients; κρείττ(σσ)ονα as in Text. Rec. DEFGKL and the great mass of cursives, most versions, etc. Chrys. and Theoph. expressly add even that he did not say τὰ μ. but τὰ κρ.

1 Corinthians 13-16

1 Corinthians 13.

Love is the theme in hand, not “charity,” for which we are indebted to Wiclif’s too close following of the Vulgate. Tyndale and Cranmer gave “love,” from which our Authorized translators often went back again to “charity.” The apostle discourses on it worthily of Him who displayed its perfection here below. Not law, but love, is in harmony with God’s assembly. Doubtless it is handled with special reference to the need and dangers of the Corinthians, but the Holy Spirit gave it out with divine precision and fulness. Love was a new sound even to a Jew; how much more to the Gentiles, used to walk in the vanity of their mind, darkened in understanding, hardened in heart, who, after having cast off all feeling, gave themselves up to lasciviousness, though none the less hateful and hating one another! Selfishness reigned, whatever the sentiments and pretensions of men, and this because God Himself was unknown, sin was unjudged and unforgiven. For love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God; as, on the other hand, he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love, while he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. So our apostle tells the Thessalonians that they were taught of God to love one another, and the Colossians, that love is the bond of perfectness, reminding Timothy that the end of the charge laid on him, and on others through him, was love out of a pure heart and good conscience and faith unfeigned.

It is well, however, to remark its connection here with the assembly of God, and the working of the Holy Spirit in it. Everywhere precious, never out of season, above all it is the lifebreath of the church. Where love is not the regulating power in the Spirit, the very nearness of the saints to each other, and the action of the gifts, prove the greatest dangers; where love governs, all else works smoothly to the edification of the saints and to the Lord's glory. If the Corinthian saints, in their ministering of the gifts, had forgotten the supreme excellence of love, the apostle puts it forward with all prominence between his treatment of the Spirit's presence and action in the assembly, and the order laid down for the due exercise of gift there.

Love, he shows, has intrinsic and divine excellency, surpassing all gifts, even the gifts that edify. For such gifts may be where there is no love. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, yet have not love, I am become sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and know all the mysteries, and all the knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to remove mountains, yet have not love, I am nothing. And if I should dole out in food all my substance, and if I should deliver my body that I might be burned, and have not love, I am nothing profited." (Vers. 1-3.) The apostle begins with the superiority of love to the gift of tongues in any conceivable degree. It is as evident from this verse as from Acts 2 how baseless is the effort of Meyer and others to deny that they were articulate and intelligible languages. "Of angels" completes the cycle for the apostle, who here, as elsewhere, personates the supposed case. (Cf. 1 Cor. 9:26, 27; Rom. 7:7-26, according to the principle stated in 1 Cor. 4:6.) To speak

all possible tongues without love were to become sounding brass or a clattering cymbal, not even vox but sonitus and praeterea nihil. But he goes farther. The possession of the prophetic gift, with an inward consciousness, and not merely acquired knowledge, of all the mysteries and all the knowledge that is revealed, nay, the possession of all the faith so as to remove mountains, if without love, leaves one nothing. It is plain that he is not treating of divinely given faith in Christ's person, which is inseparable from eternal life and love too. It is the gift, or χάρισμα, of faith. Power is not grace. (See Heb. 6; Matt. 7) If one should bestow all one's property in charitable doles, and give over one's body to the flames of martyrdom, without love, he is nothing profited, whatever others might reap.

We may notice that the reading,

καυχήσο-(or -

ω-)-

μαι, "I may boast," is that of A B, 17, the Roman Æthiopic, etc. But it is, as Matthaei said, whatever Jerome alleges, "prorsus absurda lectio," and a change by one letter from καυθήσο-(or -

ω-)-

μαι, "I may be burned," whether inadvertently, or by the design of such as did not understand the scope of the passage; for the motive of boasting would exclude love so completely, as to render ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω a needless addition. The fact however is instructive, in that it is one of not a few proofs how mistaken and perilous it is to accept absolutely the united verdict of the three most famous uncials.

Next we come, not to a definition of love, but to its qualities as in this world, specified for our instruction. It is what Christ was here, active as well as suffering in love above evil. “Love is long-suffering, is kind; love is not emulous, is not vainglorious, is not puffed up, doth not behave unseemly, seeketh not its own things, is not easily provoked, reckoneth not the evil, rejoiceth not over iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” (Vers. 4-7.) Patience in the midst of trial is the first-mentioned attribute of love, which even shows positive kindness instead of harbouring a vindictive thought. Again, as it does not indulge in envy or jealousy of another, so there is no self-display (or, as some think, forwardness), nor the arrogance whence it springs. Hence indecorum, or rude behaviour, is incompatible with love, as it is marked by disinterestedness and slowness to anger, and by readiness to forget the wrong that is done.

“Thinketh no evil” scarcely expresses the clause, but rather not having the evil in the mind and tongue. “No evil” would answer to the phrase if anarthrous. Here it is an actual evil done, which would rankle but for love, which is ever above evil, always free and always holy.

Hence love does not rejoice over unrighteousness, as malice does, too glad to cover its own evil by that of others; the joy, the sympathies, of love are with the truth, which is personified here as elsewhere. Thus love bears all vexations, believes all possible good (cf. Acts 9:27; Acts 11:22-26), hopes all, in spite of evil manifest enough at present, endures all things, persecutions or afflictions, knowing the! we are set for this. God being

seen in Christ raises the heart above the depressing power of evil or even suspicion.

Strange to say, the Vatican manuscript (B) reads

οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ μὴ ἑαυτῆς, that is, love only seeks her own advantage! So do even the Gentiles, who know not God. It is the character of selfishness, not of love. Yet Clement of Alexandria cites this false reading, and reasons on it as if correct in Paed. iii. 1, sec. 3; though elsewhere he cites the clause as it should be. One sees the folly of making such men authoritative in the least degree.

The perpetuity of love, in contrast with means of present testimony or blessing by the way, is next urged. “Love never faileth; but whether prophecies, they shall be done away; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall be done away. For in part we know, and in part we prophesy; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.” (Vers. 8-10.) Evidently this again proves the immense superiority of love. It will never be out of date. Prophecies, knowledge, shall be done away, and tongues cease; but love abides. They are suited to our time-state, they are but in part, and do not square with the perfection where no evil exists and love is in fullest exercise. Love is thoroughly in keeping with a condition of glory, while incidental and partial agencies as naturally terminate with its arrival.

There is a difference in the phraseology as to tongues as compared with prophecies and knowledge, and it has been inferred, perhaps justly, that the cessation of tongues intimates their dropping when God’s aim was achieved, whilst the means of edifying fall in with continuance, till the perfection of glory brings them to a

comparatively abrupt end. Those habituated to the accuracy of scripture expression will not doubt that a difference is intended by the change of words. Certainly, however this be, there is the utmost care to maintain the Lord's coming as our immediate hope. All expression of a long future for us on earth is avoided here and everywhere.

The apostle proceeds to illustrate the present and the future by the childhood and full growth of a man as follows. "When I was a child, I talked as a child, I thought as a child, I reckoned as a child; when I am become a man, I have done away with the things of the child. For we see now through a mirror in a dark form, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall fully know, even as I also was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but [the] greater of these [is] love." (Vers. 11-13.) Clearly the drift of the passage is not to cast uncertainty on our present measure of knowledge, but to set forth its partial character, as compared with the fulness in glory. He confirms the difference by another similitude, the reflection of a mirror with no more than a dim shape seen thereby, and seeing face to face. The medium, or rather our seeing now, is necessarily imperfect, and the result more or less dark. By-and-by it will be immediate vision, and I shall know fully as I was also fully known. It is a difference not merely of measure but of manner too. Our very learning now, no matter how much we have learnt, proves our ignorance. It will not be so then. The state which needs to grow, as well as the means which contribute to growth, will have passed away. Truth will be fully known as a whole in that day, not learnt piecemeal as now.

“But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but [the] greater of these [is] love.” The apostle speaks of the main moral principles characteristic of Christianity not of power in testimony; and here too love has the greater place, though all are great and abiding. But there is no intimation of faith and hope abiding throughout eternity. They remain, but to say that these three shall remain for ever is to interpolate rather than interpret. It is well known how some try to explain the continuance of faith and hope, where all is seen and enjoyed in glory: the one as anticipation certain to be fulfilled; the other as trust, entire and undoubting But scripture cannot be broken; and faith is the evidence or conviction of things not seen, as hope seen is not hope. (Rom. 8; Heb. 11) Faith and hope therefore refer only to the present state, love alone to eternity as well as to the present. Fruition supersedes the faith that looks at God’s word for the object presented, and the hope that desires and waits for it; but love never fails. So it was laid down in verse 8, in contradistinction from the instruments or signs there given of God. Then, after the setting out of the intervening verses which explain or confirm, the apostle resumes with νυνὶ δέ μένει, “now however remaineth” not love only, nor first, but “faith, hope, love, these three; but the greater of these is love,” which last is turned to grave account in the chapter following. They are the cardinal points of every Christian, as is attested right through the New Testament; and of the three love has the pre-eminent place, not because it contains in itself the root of the other two, but because they point and lead through Christ our Lord to it, as their end which has no end, that nature and activity of divine goodness which we share now by grace in a world of

evil, and which will last everlastingly where there is no evil but only good in source and fruit.

In writing to the Thessalonians the Apostle could remember their labour of love and tell them that he had no need to write to them about it, they themselves being taught of God to love one another. Was it so at Corinth? He thanks God for enriching them in all word and all knowledge, so that they came short in no gift, but as to love kept ominous silence. Was it love to form rival parties? to cry up the servants into leaders? to crave after worldly wisdom? to slight impurity? to refer differences to courts of law? to enfeeble family ties? to seek relief in change of circumstances? Alas! the Corinthian saints were proud of their knowledge, though even at that time it had worms and stank, for they were perverting it to tamper with idolatry, and needed to learn that, while knowledge puffs up, love builds up; while the one gives no deliverance from self-seeking and self-indulgence, the other strengthens the believer in the self-sacrificing service of Christ, free from all, yet becoming slave to all, in order to gain the most possible. And assuredly the palpable alienation of the Lord's supper, and even of the love-feast mixed up with it, from the divine object of it was the saddest proof that they needed that teaching on love which grace gave them: with what special aim we shall hear presently.

1 Corinthians 14.

Here we come to the application of love. Blessed as is always and everywhere this energy of the new nature, it is in the assembly of God that it finds its largest and deepest exercise, so far as we are concerned. Nowhere else is it demanded so continually, and in such varied

forms. Without love souls therein make speedy and utter shipwreck; with it the sorest trials turn into the happiest testimony to the grace of Christ.

But hitherto the saints in Corinth had failed to learn it. They were far from the simple freshness of the Thessalonians, to whom the apostle could say some years before that they needed not that he should write, for they themselves were taught of God to love one another. Nevertheless he besought even them that they should increase more and more, as indeed (we learn from his second epistle) they did. At Corinth the failure was great, and not in private only but in public, as even shown on the solemn occasions when the assembly came together to celebrate the Lord's supper and to exercise their spiritual gifts. Hence the exhortation that follows.

"Pursue love, but earnestly desire the spiritual things, yet rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not to men but to God; for no one heareth, yet in spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh to men edification and encouragement and comfort." (Vers. 1-8.)

Love, then, should be the main and constant object; but there were spiritual manifestations which had a place only subordinate to love, for the Holy Spirit, in giving and working thus, was glorifying the Lord Jesus. Among these prophesying has the chief place, the superiority of which over such a sign-gift as speaking in a tongue, the apostle rules, is proved by this, that such a speaker speaks not to men but to God, for none hears or understands while in spirit he speaks mysteries; whereas he that prophesies speaks to men edification and encouragement and comfort.

Assuredly the apostolic test is not always appreciated, and there are those in our day as indifferent to edification as the Corinthians. But a greater than they did not regard as a defect in spiritual tone the desire that men should be refreshed or helped in whatever way they needed. No doubt those who spoke in a tongue argued that they stood for the rights of Christ, who was glorified in the gift, and that theirs was the divine side — they spoke to God. But the apostle boldly maintains that the lack of speaking to men demonstrates the inferiority of speaking in a tongue to prophesying. He that so speaks is not taxed with speaking unintelligibly, or unintelligible things; on the contrary he is presumed to speak the truth, and high truth — "in spirit he speaketh mysteries." But, the language being unknown, "no one heareth;" he is not understood. He that prophesies speaks to men edification, encouragement, and comfort. The testimony flows in blessing to souls. The apostle was not dazzled, as the Corinthians were then and many since, in their yearnings after it, with the display of power. But he unqualifiedly sets prophesying beyond such a display, for it brings in not power merely but God, and God in His building up souls, encouraging them and consoling them. This does not cast such a halo around man; but it really brings in God in grace, and gives the consciousness of His presence.

We must remember, however, that verse 8 is not a definition of prophesying, but its contrast with speaking in a tongue. Prophesying, again, has no necessary connection with the future, as some suppose, nor is it preaching or teaching in general. It is forth-telling rather than fore-telling. It is so speaking to man as to

put him in the light of God — of God's dealing with his heart and conscience. It gives His mind.

Hence the apostle proceeds to say (ver. 4) that he that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly. Here again the mistake of the Corinthians was exposed, and the grace and wisdom of the apostle evident.

Still more does the largeness of his heart come out in verse 6. "But I wish that ye all should speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy. And greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, in order that the assembly may receive edification." Such is his continual test. It was near the faithful servant's heart, as it was in his Master's. What astonishes is for the spiritual mind far less than what edifies. This he enters into a little more minutely in verse 6. "But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I shall speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or [in] doctrine?" It was not therefore that the apostle slighted the gift of tongues. How could he, seeing it was a manifestation of the Spirit promised of the Lord Jesus — a mighty testimony to the grace of God from the day of Pentecost and onwards? Still the less showy gift of prophesying has a far higher character in and for the assembly. The error he corrects lay in the misapprehension and misuse of the Corinthians. Had their eye been single, they had been full of light; but it was not so, and hence their unspiritual judgment, as well as conduct, draws out the instruction of the Lord. It is important also to observe how it is insisted on that all done in the assembly should be done in the Spirit. For the idea is not that he who

spoke in the tongue did not understand what he said, yet it is never supposed that he would communicate, unless he had the interpretation of tongues. But his own knowledge of what was spoken is not the same as this interpretation; and unless he could interpret, there is no thought of his communicating to the assembly what was said in a tongue. For the assembly is the sphere,' not for man's ability, but for the Spirit of God. Interpretation must therefore be a gift, not a human power, to be available there.

It may be remarked also that revelation and knowledge seem to correspond in general with prophesying and teaching respectively. It is not meant that they are identical, but that they more or less correspond. They are the great means of edifying the assembly, not speaking in a tongue, unless the gift of interpretation accompanied it. To profit souls one must come thus. Indeed the apostle appeals to themselves whether it was not so.

Next he adduces the case of musical instruments to confirm the point. The sounds must be distinguished and understood in order to the wished-for result. "Nevertheless lifeless things giving sound, whether pipe or harp, if they give not distinction to the notes, how shall be known what is piped or what is harped?" (Ver. 7.) Now we do not distinguish the sounds of a language we do not know. The truths conveyed may be ever so weighty, but an unknown language is but a confused jargon. Nor is this the only illustration given. "For also if a trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for war?" (Ver. 8.) The trumpet-call must be understood in short. "So also ye through the tongue, unless ye give a distinct speech, how shall what is spoken be known,

for ye will be speaking into air?" (Ver. 9.) Distinctness, so as to be understood, is the point pressed; not exactly easy to be understood, but distinct speech, so as to be intelligible: otherwise all is lost for the hearers.

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none insignificant. If therefore I do not know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian in my case. So also ye, since ye are zealous after spirits, seek that ye may abound for the edification of the assembly." (Vers. 10-12.) To be understood then is essential to edification. No matter how excellent the matter conveyed by the unknown language, it has no claim to be said to the assembly, unless it be duly interpreted. It is foreign there, even more out of place than a colloquy with a barbarian or foreigner If they really were in earnest for the power of the Spirit in their midst, why did not they seek to abound for the building up one another? This were divine love, not vain display, but worthy of Christ and His saints: It is flesh that likes distinction for itself, not the service of the Lord for the good of others, where God deigns to deal with souls.

Edification, then, is rule absolute for what is said in the assembly. No matter how astonishing may be the exhibition of divine power answering to the name of Jesus, if it edify not, it has no rightful place there. For love edifies, as knowledge puffs up, and power startles or stuns; and as God is love, so the assembly is the suited sphere for the exercise of this, the energy of His own nature. The children partake of His nature; for he who loves is born of God, and knows God. To keep up the exercise and testimony of this is of all moment; as it is to hinder what would give loose reins to the flesh,

under cover of displaying the mighty effects of Christ's victory. Hence the regulation that follows: "Wherefore let him that speaketh with a tongue pray that he may interpret." (Ver. 18.) But the apostle proceeds to give reasons, and this, as his manner was, by application to his own case: "For if I pray with a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray also with the understanding; I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing also with the understanding. Since if thou bless in spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the private person say Amen at thy thanksgiving, since he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank God, I speak in a tongue more than you all; but in an assembly I desire to speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue." (Vers. 14-19.)

Thus the rule of love is still further enforced and maintained. Praying in a tongue is excluded on this principle as decidedly as any other kind of speaking in a tongue. And it is evidently the strongest case as being an address to God, who of course understood all, and conclusive against prayer in any unknown tongue. Communion is the joy of the assembly; at the least edification is indispensable. What cannot be understood by the assembly as such has no claim to be heard there, unless there were interpretation directly or indirectly.

But we see also that prayer, singing, blessing, thanksgiving, as well as prophesying, had their full place in the assembly. They are all to edification; and who could forbid any of them? Power is insufficient, however manifestly divine. What is with the understanding, and

consequently addresses it, has the greatest weight with the apostle, as thus speaking authoritatively for the Lord; and this is as true of prayers and hymns as of teaching. The least in the assembly is presumed to go intelligently with the praise or thanksgiving that rises up to God.

Indeed fellowship is the aim of the Holy Spirit in all church action; and hence the all-importance of His guidance into the will of the Lord, which alone is entitled to govern all the saints, and into such worship as renewed hearts can feel and join in spontaneously. Influence and effort are alien and unseasonable, as they are human. The assembly is of God, with One there perfectly adequate to work in all hearts to the glory of the Lord Jesus; and the new man the apostle would have to do, say, and hear all intelligently. The day of vague emblems is past; ecstatic utterances, mighty effects, may have their scope elsewhere; but in the assembly there ought to be the exercise of the understanding. It is called to be “fruitful;” so that he who holds no public place (ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιωτοῦ) maybe able to go along with what is said. To be intelligible, so as to edify, is requisite in the assembly.

It is evident, from Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, that the Christians of that early day had psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, quite distinct from those God inspired by David and others for His ancient people. Not a word implies that what was sung in the assembly of God was either a Jewish psalm or of New Testament inspiration. They were therefore, I presume, substantially such as Christians in our day, and in all days, are wont to use. Only they sought the Lord’s guidance, and the fellowship of all, on these solemn public occasions. Our

chapter is of importance in proving that they sung in the assembly; as the other epistles referred to, as well as James, prove the use of hymns in private or alone. Of course the power of the Spirit was sought in both; as He indeed dwells in the individual Christian no less than in the assembly.

The apostle is careful to intimate that there was not the least reason on his part for jealousy of others speaking in a tongue; for he himself was gifted in this way more than them all. But in the assembly to speak five words with the understanding was to him more desirable than ever so many in a tongue; and this, because his heart was set on instructing others also. It is love which should animate, not self-pleasing; and love works with a view to edification. Hence the grave and wise exhortation that follows, not without reproof.

“Brethren, be not children in mind, but in malice be infants, but in mind be of full age. In the law it is written, By men of other tongues, and by lips of others, 147 will I speak to this people; and not even thus will they listen to me, saith Jehovah. Wherefore the tongues are for a sign, not to those that believe, but to the unfaithful, while prophecy [is] not to the unfaithful, but to those that believe. If therefore the whole assembly come together unto the same place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in simple or unfaithful [persons], will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and some unfaithful or simple one come in, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all;† the secrets of his heart become manifest; and thus148 falling on [his] face he will do homage to God, reporting that indeed God is among you.” (Vers. 20-25.)

Thus the apostle as a father again admonishes his beloved children that they should eschew the trifling natural to the young, the disposition to be occupied with some new thing of slight moment in itself, but apt to tend to mischief, as their fondness for and misuse of tongues in the assembly hindered a due estimate of prophesying, the weightiest of all gifts for such an occasion. But he would nave them to cherish with the artlessness of a babe the understanding of riper years. And he cites freely from Isaiah 28:11,12, so as to convoy a wholesome inference for the Corinthian saints. For God is there warning the Jews, dull to hearken to His prophets, that He would speak to them with the stammering lips of foreigners. Such a tongue speaking to Israel was a sign of their humiliation, and of God's judgment. What perversity, then, for the saints in Corinth to turn from God, speaking in prophecy for their edification, to tongues which they could not understand! to find their pleasure as Christians in what was God's solemn threat to His ancient people because of their unheeding refractoriness! The apostle, neither here nor anywhere, despises a tongue in its own place and season, used as a sign for unbelievers as God intended it. The unintelligent and unloving mistake was introducing it among believers, who could not profit by it. Divine gift as it was, its possession constituted no license to exercise it apart from the end of the Lord, who gave it in His grace and for His glory, and with His will now expressed to control its use.

The common English version needlessly introduces "serveth" in the latter half of verse 22. I think, however, that it is justified in not understanding "sign" with prophesying, which essentially differs from those powers

correctly falling under that designation, like a tongue or a miracle. It was this, no doubt, which influenced them in changing the “to” of the former clause into the “for” of the latter, which reads more smoothly in English. But the change seems scarcely called for, and is not here adopted. We could equally well say tongues are as a sign for the unbelieving, prophesying for those that believe.

But the apostle is not content with this withering application of the Jewish prophet; he both exposes the folly of their conduct, and lays down the right aim in the assembly. On the one hand he puts the case of their all speaking with tongues in full assembly, and this in presence of simple persons or unbelievers. What must be the impression produced? That the saints were mad. On the other hand, if all were to prophesy, how would such an one feel if he came in and heard? In the discovery to himself of his heart’s secrets, divinely dealt with by them all, the profoundest conviction that God is truly among the saints. So, when the woman of Samaria had her life set out in a few words by One who had never met her before, she confessed, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” By His words she could not but feel and own that all was out, and God was speaking to her conscience.

This is the characteristic of prophesying, not the announcement of the good news as in evangelizing, nor the unfolding of doctrine as in teaching, but God by His word dealing with the soul consciously. Such, in this hypothetical case, would be the conviction irresistibly brought home by all prophesying, and such the report made, as well as the homage rendered at the moment. It is supposed to be the effect, not of one preaching in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, but of God’s

presence in His saints thus prophesying in the assembly. The apostle does not describe it as a fact that ever did take place, but as the natural effect under the circumstances.

How solemn that there is no such “assembly” now found, or even essayed, in the so-called “churches”! How blessed that ever so few have faith in His word and Spirit, who alone can make it good in the measure of their dependence upon Him! It is in the Spirit that we wait on the Lord, the central object of faith to the assembly gathered to His name. That the two or three who thus meet have “little strength” is most true; that they have deep reason to humble themselves is no less true; but they have the deepest and unfailing reason to praise Him for His faithfulness as they keep His word and deny not His name. Those who forsake or despise such assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of most is now-a-days, are scarcely entitled to speak. Unbelief or unfaithfulness should at least be silent. What can be worse than to invent plausible appearances to cover sin and shame?

The apostle now comes to the practical deductions from the divine principles laid down for regulating the assembly. The Corinthians had assumed absolute openness or really license for human will from the fact of the powers distributed to one and another by the Spirit. To control a meeting where He wrought thus seemed unreasonable. But here they were wholly mistaken; for the blessed One who is now sent down from heaven is a Spirit of order, and works in love for the purpose of maintaining the Lordship of Christ. Hence no power at work in or by man exempts from the

rule of the Lord, but on the contrary exalts it, if exercised according to the will of God.

“What is it then, brethren? Whenever ye come together, each of [you]149 hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edification. If any one speak with a tongue, [let it be] two or at the most three, and in turn, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him be silent in an assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern; but if there be a revelation to another while sitting, let the first be silent; for ye can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all be exhorted. And spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not [a God] of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.” (Ver. 26-33.)

Such was the restless desire of contributing each his part, not of general edification by whomsoever the Lord might deign to employ. Indeed they were thinking of themselves, not of Him nor of each other in love. Still none can deny to the assembly the fullest liberty: else it could not have been thus abused. Modern arrangements exclude not the abuse only but that liberty which ought to be; and in fact, where the Spirit of the Lord is, liberty is characteristic of His presence individually or collectively, and in the assembly it is marked according to scripture. Not that this was in the least understood by such as Neander, who founded it on the priesthood of all Christians, which is a wholly different relation concerning the saints in their freedom of access to God. Here it is a question of His assembly wherein the Holy Spirit acts by the members as He will to glorify the Lord

and edify the saints. Hence power is subordinated to the Lord's authority, the vessel of divine energy is made to feel responsibility in its use, and the vital principle of obedience is preserved intact. Thus is God in all things glorified through Jesus Christ, as says the great apostle of the circumcision, when exhorting that each should use the gift which he had received as a good steward of God's manifold grace.

The apostle then limits speaking in a tongue to two or at most three on the same occasion, in turn, and then only in case of one there to interpret. So it was to be even with prophesying, where the others150 were to judge or discern, instead of one interpreting. Prophesying was of all gifts the most precious and suited to build up or otherwise act on the saints and even those outside for good; but there must not be an excess even of the best thing, for God is jealous for the blessing of His saints, and thinks of the weakest in the assembly who might be distracted, not edified, by more than three. Should a revelation be made to one sitting by, he could speak, the other being silent, for a revelation when thus given took precedence of all communication. There was room indeed for all to prophesy for the instruction and stirring up of all, but one by one. Power must not set order aside: spirits of prophets are subject to prophets, instead of there being an uncontrollable impulse. It was not with the working of the Holy Spirit as with demon power; and this because God is not the source of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints, where order was peculiarly due to His character as present. Excitement and tumult, even in the exercise of divinely given energy dishonour Him, the spring and giver of peace.

It is not quite certain whether we should connect the last clause with verse 33 as its close, or with verse 34 as its beginning. Many critics and commentators prefer the latter. There is no doubt that Lachmann was wrong in punctuating the Greek, so as to make “of the saints” the complement, not of the assemblies to which it unquestionably belongs, but of “the women,” ὑμῶν being of course omitted on the authority of the three greatest uncials, six cursives, with most of the ancient versions and early citations. But safer editors, like Tischendorf, who also omit ὑμῶν, separate αἱ γυναῖκες, “the women,” from τῶν ἁγίων, “of the saints.” To begin with such a phrase is unexampled. “Let the, women be silent in the assemblies; for it is not permitted to them to speak, but let them be in subjection151 as also the law saith. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in an assembly.” (Vers 34, 35.)

This rule is of great moment. Women are forbidden to speak in the assemblies. It might have been supposed by those who love to reason that there if anywhere they might be allowed. The holy atmosphere, where man is as nothing, where God makes His presence and power known spiritually, might have seemed a fitting place for holy women to speak, who undoubtedly might have gifts, even that of prophesying like the four daughters of Philip the evangelist. (Acts 21:9.) But no; the apostle was inspired to forbid it in the assemblies, of course not absolutely, for every gift is meant to be exercised, but the manner must be in submission to the Lord’s direction. Divine revelation in the Old Testament gave clear intimation of woman’s place generally in subjection: the New Testament is no less peremptory as

to the assemblies. The notion of their standing forth in proclamation of the gospel crossed no mind in those days. This was a violation of female propriety, which would have shocked even the heathen. It was reserved for the corruption of the best thing, for the innovating spirit and ways of modern Christendom. The apostle forbade their even asking a question on these public occasions. If they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a women to speak in an assembly.

The entire subject is wound up by the demand whether the word of God set out to them or reached to them only, The Corinthians were the first to depart from the apostolic order established everywhere. It was the beginning of ecclesiastical revolt. The church is to be subject. The word of God commands, and commands all assemblies alike.

“What, did the word of God go out from you, or reached it unto you alone? If any one seemeth to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things which I write to you, that they are [the] 152Lord’s commandment.153 But if any one be ignorant, let him be ignorant.154 Wherefore, my155 brethren, seek earnestly for prophesying, and forbid not the speaking in156 the tongues;157 but let all things be done becomingly and in order.” (Vers. 36-40.)

The assembly is bound to maintain the truth, and, whilst bearing with want of intelligence (for we all know but in part), to sanction no error. The assembly is bound to walk in holiness to the Lord, as becomes those called from darkness into His marvellous light. But the assembly is taught; it cannot and ought not to teach, but

to accept those whom the Lord sends to teach. The assembly is called to act in receiving and putting away, in both subject to the Lord and His word; but rule properly is in the hands of those so gifted of God, just as preaching, teaching, or any other service. It is the Lord who gives; it is the Lord who commands, as we see here, in the authoritative injunction of His apostle. The word of God comes to the saints, and it comes to them all. Differing views may be found, alas! like every other failure; but the assemblies are surely to seek to walk in the fellowship of His mind and will. Different circumstances may modify in matters of detail, yet more in appearance than reality; while, in matters which concern not only vital truth but godly order as here, scripture leaves no justifiable ground for dissent.

Again, to be gifted with special insight into God's mind, or to reap the fruit of this in spirituality, if real, would only deepen the sense of the Lord's authority and the imperativeness of obedience. We see the perfection of this in Christ Himself here below. Let power of the Spirit then be shown in the recognition of His commandment! Does any one refuse subjection on the score of ignorance? Then let him keep the place of ignorance and not pretend to teach. Those who wish to guide others should know what is, and what is not, of the Lord. It is really a question of will in those who do not see; for His injunction fails not in power to reach the conscience. To reason further would be to indulge will and strengthen self-confidence, beside possible harm to one's own soul. The refractory are best left in His hands whose words they cavil at: if His own, He knows how to break them down and make them thankful for the light, the refusal of which keeps them in ignorance.

The conclusion the apostle then shuts up the brethren to is, zeal for prophesying, and no prohibition of speaking with tongues, regulated as we have seen in the assemblies. For all things, not these merely, are to be done becomingly and in order. But the Spirit alone can give us to discern always what is comely, and the order is not left to human discretion, but revealed by the Lord. Thus man's will, as it is condemned in every detail of individual life (for we are sanctified to obedience, yea, to the same kind of obedience as our Lord Jesus Christ), is no less excluded from the assembly of God which He has formed for the glory of Christ, and in which He acts by the Holy Ghost according to the written word.

1 Corinthians 15.

But there was another question of the deepest moment, and still more fundamental, which the apostle reserved for the last place. The resurrection of the dead was doubted and denied by some at Corinth. This was grave indeed; but it is incomparably more so now, after the ample testimony to the truth rendered here and throughout the New Testament. It was inexcusable ignorance then; it is far guiltier and more rebellious if we doubt in presence of the disproof we are about to study, and of much more to the same effect elsewhere.

"And I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I announced to you, which also ye received, in which also ye stand, by which also ye are being saved, if ye hold fast with what discourse I announced [it] to you, unless ye believed at random. For I delivered to you in the first place that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day according to the

scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas, after that to the twelve. After that he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the most remain till now, but some also have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, after that to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the abortion, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God; but by God's grace I am what I am, and his grace that [was] towards me became not vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that [was] with me. Whether then I or they, thus we preach, and thus ye believed." (Vers. 1-11.)

Nothing was farther from the intention of the Corinthian speculators than to compromise the gospel or the resurrection of Christ. But to this exactly does the apostle reduce their question. They forgot that there is an enemy behind who can take advantage of the mind no less than of the body, and whose artifice it is to array falsehood with a fairer garb than the truth, and so not only to gain admission for what is false, but thereby also to expel or undermine what is true, holiness suffering in the same proportion.

It was humbling therefore, but wholesome, to have the gospel made known afresh to saints, who ought rather to be in the fellowship of its activities — to have the apostle insisting on it, (1) as what he had declared to them originally, (2) as what they had received, (3) as that in which they had their standing, and (4) as the means of their salvation. The copulative conjunction, καί, defines each consideration recalled to them; the hypothetical particle, εἰ, supposes the fact of their holding fast the glad tidings, otherwise their faith was worthless.

Salvation in this epistle, as in many others, is viewed as going on. (Vers. 1, 2.) It is σώζεσθε, the present, and neither the perfect, ἐστε σεσωσμενοι, as in Ephesians 2:5, 8, nor the aorist, as in 2 Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:5.

If Paul was an apostle, and delivered to them especially the glad tidings, it was what he too received; he pretended to no more than a faithful discharge of the trust the Lord had reposed in him as a witness concerning Himself. He received it, as we are told elsewhere, immediately from Christ. There was no intermediate channel, but a direct revelation and a personal charge. And what is the foundation laid? “That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” (Ver 3.) Not for ourselves merely, not at all for our good ways, but for our bad, “for our sins.” Who could have said or thought it but God? And He has said it, not only now in the gospel, but from of old in the scriptures. From Genesis to Malachi all was a preparing the way for Christ to die for our sins. The law witnessed to it in the sacrifices; the Psalms declared that the sacrifices were but temporary, and that the Messiah must, and would, do the will of God; and the prophets showed that He would do it by suffering and death when Jehovah should lay on Him the iniquities of His people. Without the death of Christ for our sins, not only has the gospel no foundation, but the Old Testament has no adequate meaning or worthy end.

But God would give the amplest evidence. So it is added to Christ’s death (ver. 4), “and that he was buried.” Only here is made no mention of the scriptures. This is reserved for the immense fact of the resurrection: “and that he was raised the third day according to the scriptures,” which is followed by the repeated

appearances, of course without any such attestation. It is not merely an accessory fact or corroboration of Christ's death. His resurrection is the grand pivot of the chapter, the display of God's glory as regards man, the fullest answer to all unbelief, and the knell of Satan's power. This was the truth which the enemy sought to undermine among some at Corinth; but the result, under the grace of God, is the complete demonstration of its certainty, and of its all-importance.

But this is not all that the apostle points out. Christ was not raised only; He "was raised the third day according to the scriptures." The first book of the law gave its early preparation for it. For from the beginning, even in Eden, though not till after sin entered, God announced that the bruised Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Still more distinctly do we see the Father ready to give His beloved and only Son, and that Son under the sentence of death till "the third day" (Gen. 22:4), when a ram in the type was substituted, and Isaac was received as from the dead in a figure. (Heb. 11:17-19.) The Psalms give their intermediate but glowing witness, Psalm 8 showing us the Son of man who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, but crowned with glory and honour, with all things put under His feet; Psalm 16, the dependent One, trusting in God through life and death, and beyond. What possibly more distinct? "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life," etc., — words which, as a whole, apply as clearly to the dead and risen Messiah, as they cannot to David or any other. There is no mention of "the third day" here of course,

which would be a foreign element, and destructive of the calm confidence of the psalm; but it is plain that for the soul not to rest in Sheol, and the body not to see corruption, there must be not only a raising from the dead, but this without delay. His flesh therefore should rest in hope, and not merely the spirit. But the prophets carry on and complete the testimony, for if Hosea 6 be only the principle applicable to Israel by-and-by, Jonah 1:17 is the striking type of the Son of man three days and three nights (so it was counted Jewishly) in the heart of the earth: what a sign to the faithless Jew!

The apostle confirms the resurrection of Christ by certain of His appearances afterwards, as He had the death by burial. “And that he appeared to Cephas, after that to the twelve.” (Ver. 5.) He omits Mary of Magdala and the other women, important as both might be for the objects which the evangelists had in view. There is no heaping up of proofs in either Gospels or Epistles, but a selection suitable to the design of God by each writer. The apostle gives only men who for weight, number, or other circumstances, furnished evidence unanswerable for every fair mind. The risen Lord appeared to Cephas, or Simon Peter, before He stood in the midst of “the twelve.” (Compare Luke 24:34.) Nor could any individual be of greater importance than Simon, especially at a moment when his soul needed reassurance so deeply. But no individual could have the weight of the entire company which knew him best; and the twelve are therefore next named, without noticing either the two disciples who had enjoyed His company to Emmaus on the resurrection-day, or that the apostolic body wanted somewhat to complete it on the same evening.

But there is another occasion, to which the apostle points as unsurpassed for magnitude of testimony: “after that he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the most remain till now, but some also have fallen asleep.” (Ver. 6.) Never was a truth better attested. The greater part of these five hundred united witnesses still survived if any one doubted. Even if a person were prejudiced enough to accuse the twelve of a plot, what unreasonable folly to allow such a thought of so large a body of simple disciples, above all suspicion of object or office? The Holy Spirit left Luke to record the Lord’s partaking of food when risen, and John the incredulity of the apostle Thomas, only the more to strengthen the truth; but Paul gives us this great body of witnesses, most then alive, if any chose to examine or cross-examine them. Surely had it not been the simple truth, some of that crowd of eyewitnesses must have disclosed the wickedness of thus conspiring in a lie against God.

“After that he appeared to James, after that to all the apostles.” (Ver. 7.) James had a place of singular honour, both in the church at Jerusalem, and as an inspired writer; and as he was the object alone of an appearance of Christ, this is mentioned, no less than His appearing subsequently to all the apostles. All was in place, and each had its separate importance; and this, extending over forty days with such a variety of occasions and circumstances, marks the care with which divine wisdom and grace made the resurrection known. The quiet statement of the fact is in remarkable contrast with what Jerome quotes from the spurious Gospel of the Nazarenes (Catal. Script. Eccl.), how James made a vow neither to eat nor drink till he saw the Lord risen

again. Man spoils all he touches in divine things; he cannot even fill up a gap with a trustworthy tradition. James had no such superiority of faith over the rest; nor, if he had possessed it, would he have shown it by any such vow.

One more remained, the most extraordinary of all, and long after date; “and last of all, as to the abortion, he appeared to me also.” (Ver. 8.) It was from heaven, in broad daylight, as he drew near to Damascus, not only an unbeliever, but the hottest of adversaries, in the midst of a like-minded band of companions: all smitten down, all seeing the light, and hearing the Pound, but he alone seeing Jesus, he alone hearing the words of His mouth. Unspeakable grace he felt it was, with unaffected lowliness of heart; “for I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (Vers. 8, 9.) If Thomas illustrated the difficulties even of believers, Saul of Tarsus is the best sample of opposition on the part of earthly religion. But he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and the sight of a risen, ascended, Lord becomes the end of his old life (closed in grace by God’s judgment in the cross), the beginning of what was new and everlasting. No wonder that, as the others preached by Jesus the resurrection from among the dead, to the horror of the sceptical Sadducees, Paul was no less urgent to both world and church. It was the turning-point of his own conversion; and his penetrating, comprehensive, mind soon saw under God’s teaching that the death and the resurrection of Christ were none other things than what Moses and the prophets had said should happen, and light through this be announced both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

Of this ministry the converted persecutor was to be the most honoured instrument. And this he himself could not but add; “but by God’s grace I am what I am; and his grace that [was] toward me became not vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that [was] with me.” (Ver. 10.) The simple truth carried its own weight. His apostleship, which had been assailed by those who were not less hostile to his full preaching of grace, received no small confirmation; the pride of human nature, in its merits or its wisdom, was put down; God was in every way exalted; and the special point in debate had a crowning testimony from Paul himself, which also accounted for a revolution never surpassed, if equalled, in any man’s history since the world began: a revolution which was unintelligible otherwise in one trained, as he had been, in the strictest traditions and ways of Pharisaism, and now the boldest minister of the gospel, the most devoted minister of the church, yet withal a mind eminently sober and conscientious, logical and profound. The appearing of the risen Jesus from heaven explained all perfectly, not his conversion only, but his work beyond all laborious and blessed of God. Truly it was the grace of God that was with him, who loved to own it, while he abased himself.

But of those labours, so abundant and fruitful, what was the foundation truth, and what the animating spring? The resurrection of Christ with Paul, as with the apostles whom some pitted against him. “Whether then I or they, thus we preach, and thus ye believed.” (Ver. 11.) There was no change in the preaching: how then such a departure in some of the Corinthians? It was not so when they believed. Could it be of God?

Having thus shown the immense care with which God had provided witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, as it was preached by the apostles, and believed by all Christians, he now proceeds to reason from it to the resurrection of the dead, and also from their denial of the resurrection to its effect on Christ and the gospel.

“But if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from [the] dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of [the] dead? But if there is no resurrection of [the] dead, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, then also empty [is] our preaching, and empty also your faith; and we are also found false witnesses of God, because we witnessed concerning God that he raised the Christ, whom he raised not, if indeed no dead are raised. For if no dead are raised, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, vain [is] your faith; ye are yet in your sins; then also those that fell asleep in Christ perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are most to be pitied of all men.” (Vers. 12-19.)

Philosophy may issue in dualism, pantheism, or materialism; it may make reason or experience the sole criterion of truth; it may glory in the creative imagination of a Plato, or the pure reason of an Aristotle; but Stoics and Epicureans mock and evade the resurrection, which displays the power of God in the scene of man’s total nothingness and corruption. Of the soul they may boast. It is man’s soul; and its capacity, its intellect, may be as great in the wicked as in the righteous. But God alone can raise the dead. Man has not even the idea. Even the well-read Pliny (Nat. H.) denies the possibility: Revocare defunctos ne Deus quidem potest. Then Oriental thought, which ever thinks

of matter as essentially evil, and therefore makes liberation from the body the highest blessing, would help in the same direction those who attach weight to such speculations. Christ, Christ risen from the dead, is not only the death-blow to all these workings of human intellect, but establishes, as the great fact presented by God to faith, victory over evil in Him who bore its consequences, in the righteous judgment of God, that He might deal in sovereign grace with man, give the believer power morally by the Holy Ghost meanwhile, and associate him openly and triumphantly with Christ in the same risen condition ere long and for ever.

We can understand, then, the effort of Satan to bring in among the Christians doubt and denial of the resurrection of the dead. As the seal of Christ's grace and glory, of the miracles He wrought, and of the truth He taught, His resurrection is all-important; no less is it the proof of Satan vanquished, of redemption accepted, of God glorified, even as to sin and sins borne in Christ's body on the tree. It is the power of the new and inner life, and it is the object and spring of the most glorious hope, in which the Christian and the church look to be blessed with Christ in heavenly places, and this in fact, as now in title, Christ having already borne God's judgment for the believer, who has passed from death into life.

In vain, then, did reason object to a state of incomparable superiority to the present, or even to the past, before sin entered and spoilt the work of God on earth. In vain did it scorn the re-union of soul and body, as if it must be a hopeless imprisonment, a going back and not forward, and an everlasting degradation for the spirit after its emancipation. Christ risen is the

completest possible answer, wherein God gives us already to behold by faith man according to His counsels of glory, flowing from His love, and founded on His righteousness: not an idea, but a fact, attested as none ever was singe the world began, for precision and competency and fulness as well as certainty, those witnesses alone being excluded which were incompatible with its nature, and which constituted therefore a moral impossibility.

It is impossible to read the Acts of the Apostles without seeing that the resurrection of Christ was the all but unvarying testimony presented to souls, Jews or Gentiles: not merely that He died for our sins, but that God has raised Him from the dead. To say that there is no resurrection of dead men is evidently to set that aside. (Ver. 12.) It is the introduction of Christ which brings every reasoning of man in divine things to the test. The universal message, the gospel to every creature, is that the Saviour is raised from the dead after suffering for sin. The denial of the resurrection denies not merely the future hope of the saints, but the standing fact of Christ, the mainspring of God's good news. For it is plain that, if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, what becomes of the apostolic preaching? what of the faith of saints in Corinth, and everywhere else? (Vers. 13, 14.) He had told them before that there is salvation by the gospel for such as held fast the truth preached, unless they believed heedlessly, or at random (εἰκῆ, ver. 2), in which case they would be as ready to give up as to receive. Now he goes farther, and, instead of speaking of their subjective state as a light reception of the truth, he points out that, if Christ has

not been raised, as the gospel declares, the preaching of the apostles was objectively as empty (κενόν) as the faith of the saints. But there is something more precise still: “and we are also found false witnesses of God, because we witnessed concerning God that he raised the Christ, whom he raised not, if indeed no dead are raised.” (Ver. 15.)

The resurrection of Christ is thus vital and fundamental. It is no accessory privilege, nor proof ex abundanti, which can be lopped off, leaving the stock of divine grace unimpaired. If it is not true, the foundations are gone, the gospel is worthless, God Himself misrepresented, and the witnesses impostors. The immense fact of resurrection was one which Christ not only predicted over and over again, but on it staked the truth of His mission and Sonship. It is the manifestation of that power of deliverance from death and judgment which is the present joy of the Christian, as it is the brightest witness to the efficacy of atonement, and the pledge of glory with Christ at His coming again. Hence too, if it be not true, the chosen witnesses are convicted of falsehood, because their testimony belies God in attributing to Him the raising of the Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact no dead are raised.

It will be seen how persistently the apostle binds together the resurrection of Christ and of the dead. This is no accident, but the fruit of God’s grace and wisdom, who would associate every hope and ground of confidence for His own with Christ; as indeed the Christian is truly united to Him, and knows it. “For if no dead are raised, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, vain [is] your faith; ye are yet in your sins; then those also that fell asleep in Christ

perished." (Vers. 16-18.) Again, he argues that, if no dead are raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if He has not, vain (ματαία) is their faith, in the sense of being without purpose, and without effect; or, as the next clause teaches, "ye are yet in your sins." The consequence is, of course, no less serious for the believers already passed away: "then also those that fell asleep in Christ perished." Inferences so shocking as to saints that are gone, as well as for their own souls, yet flowing legitimately from any principle, are no slight evidence of its falsity. But if the conclusions were so inadmissible, who could accept the premisses which make them not only just but inevitable?

Thus the future, according to God, is lost, and we are reduced to a hope in Christ for this life only. But if this be all, the Christian, instead of the happiest, is of all men most to be pitied; for he certainly falls under special trials because of his faith in Christ, which is nevertheless fruitless, and leaves him in his sins, if no dead rise; for in this case Christ has not been raised, and perdition must be the portion of all that sleep in Him; they suffer in the present, and they have lost their hope for the future. None can be more pitiable. (Ver. 19.)

The apostle, having thus brought to a climax of absurdity the consequences that flow from the assumption that no dead rise, turns next to the facts of revelation, and triumphantly displays their blessedness in Christ, as contrasted with the first head of the race.

"But now hath Christ been raised from [the] dead, 158first-fruits of those fallen asleep. For since by man [is] death, by man also resurrection of dead. For as in the Adam all die, so also in the Christ shall all be made

alive; but each in his own rank: [the] first-fruits Christ; then those that are the159 Christ's at his coming; then the end, when he giveth up 160 the kingdom to him [who is] God and Father, when he shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until161 he put all the enemies under his foes. Death, last enemy, is annulled. For he subjected all things under his feet. But when he saith that all things have bean subjected, [it is] manifest that [it is] except him who subjected all things to him. But when all things shall have been subjected to him, then also the Son himself will be subjected to him that subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all." (Vers. 20-28.)

Thus the fact is that Christ is raised from the dead, not merely first, but "first-fruits of those fallen asleep." It is uncalled for, therefore, to reason more on the disastrous results of non-resurrection. For not only is a dead man risen, but that dead is Christ, the conqueror of Satan, not only for this life in the wilderness, but from the grave for eternity. He is risen, so that death has no more dominion over Him; He is risen, the pledge that those fallen asleep shall consequently rise. It is the proof that all men shall live, unjust no less than just; but here He is viewed, not in His power to raise His enemies for judgment, but as the blessed spring of the resurrection of His own, first-fruits of those fallen asleep. Consequently He is said to be, as He was, raised from out of (ἐκ) dead men, as His saints will be at His coming or presence. In His and their case it is not only ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν but ἐκ νεκρῶν (that is, resurrection of, but from among dead men), because in both cases other dead remain in their graves; whereas the

resurrection of the unjust will be only ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, and not ἐκ νεκρῶν.

Such is the simple statement of the truth as to this, which is sometimes missed through ignorance, if not prejudice. It is superfluous to argue that the resurrection of the saints is called a resurrection of the dead. Of course it is, as the resurrection of the unjust might be also. But the decisive point of difference is, that only the resurrection of Christ or of His own, who are raised without disturbing the wicked as yet from their graves, could be designated a resurrection from, or from out of, the dead, because the rest of the dead await His voice to wake them up to stand before the great white throne, and be judged according to their works. There are two distinct acts, as well as characters, of resurrection, according to our Lord, in John 5 (and so in Rev. 20); never, therefore, such a notion as one universal or indiscriminate rising of all (good and bad) at the same moment, as tradition supposes with an effort at proof from Daniel 12 (which predicts the revival of Israel on earth), and from Matthew 25 (which treats of all the Gentiles, or the nations which the Son of man will judge when He sits on the throne of His glory here below), neither scripture speaking of resurrection in the true and literal sense.

But more: we are shown the connection of resurrection, as of death, with man. If the weak and fallen Adam brought in the one, the glorious last Adam will bring in the other, Himself already the first-fruits. “For since by man [is] death, by man also the resurrection of dead. For as in the Adam all die, even so in the Christ shall all be made alive.” (Vers. 21, 22.) There are two families characterised by the irrespective heads. The Adam

family consists of all mankind, and they all die; the Christ family consists of all that are Christ's, and they shall all be made alive, that is, in resurrection. For the question is exclusively of the body, and not of the soul, important as this last may be in its place. What the apostle here demonstrates is, that the bodies of the dead rise, and this in virtue of Christ for all His people, as death is the portion of all Adam's posterity as such. It is impossible to sever "all" in either case from their representative head: only "all" in Adam's case embraces the entire race, whereas "all" in the case of Christ as necessarily attaches to His family alone. And as this is certain to the thoughtful believer, so is it made plain to the simplest in verse 23, "But each in his own rank; [the] firstfruits Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming." Then all that are made alive in virtue of the Christ are shown here distinctly to be those that are His, and none else. Are not the wicked, then, to be raised? Unquestionably; but so special is the resurrection here that they are not even named. It is the resurrection of life, and belongs only to those that have practised good. They are His. For them He has won the victory. To them even now He has given eternal life; and they, if fallen asleep, shall rise at His coming.

"Then the end, when he giveth up the kingdom to him who is God and Father, when he shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power." (Ver. 24.) Here it will be noticed that the apostle introduces, not the rising of the wicked dead, but "the end," when Christ delivers up the kingdom in which He is to come and appear. (Compare Luke 19:12; Luke 23:12; 2 Tim. 4:1.) "The end," being the epoch of the delivery of the kingdom in which He is to judge, must be after all judgment is over,

and still more after the rest of the dead have been raised in order to be judged. It is in this way, then, that the resurrection of the wicked is not expressed but involved; not in the blessed life-giving resurrection which is for His own, but in that exertion of His power which characterises His kingdom, when all the enemies are to be put under His feet, the last of those to be annulled being death. The unjust are no longer, even seemingly, under that power of death or Satan; for they must be raised, Satan punished, and death annulled. He must reign and judge the enemies, and theirs is expressly a resurrection of judgment according to the Lord's express declaration; whereas believers do not come into judgment, but have life in Him, and will reign with Him then. The risen saints are associated with Him when He takes the kingdom; the wicked are judged before He gives it up. "The end" here is absolute. It is the close, not merely of the age, as in Matt. 13, Matt. 24, and Matt. 28, which inaugurates the Son of man's coming to reign, but of that kingdom. It is strictly "the end," when eternity in the fullest sense begins, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It will have been seen that the grand point is God's exaltation of the risen Man, the Lord Jesus, in contrast with fallen Adam. And we must carefully distinguish between the words of the two psalms applied to Him: in verse 25 of Psalm 110, and in verse 27 of Psalm 8. God, according to the latter, subjected all things to the Son of man, once humbled, now risen; and this so absolutely takes in the universe as put under Christ, that God alone is excepted. But according to the former the glorified Messiah sits on the throne on high till Jehovah makes Messiah's enemies His footstool. He is waiting until that

moment. Then is the rod of Messiah's strength to be sent by Jehovah out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies.

Thus the subjection of all things to Him risen is already true to faith, according to the use made of Psalm 8, while at His coming from the right hand of God His enemies will be made His footstool, and He will rule in their midst. To this last answers the necessity of His reigning till He put all the enemies under His feet, death's annulling included at the last. It is what scripture calls the kingdom, during which the Lord is to reduce all rule and all authority, and power, and then render it up to Him who is God and Father. (Ver. 24.) This will be at the end of the thousand years' reign, which reign is characterised in verse 26, verse 26 adding what will be at its close. Verse 27 states the universality of His present title, as bound up with His resurrection; as verse 28 the eternal condition, when the universe has been subjected in fact, and the Son Himself shall be also, to Him who subjected it all to Him, in order that, not the Father exclusively, but God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) should be all in all, instead of the kingdom of man in Christ exalted and reigning. Thus is the lie of Satan met by the truth, grace, righteousness, and glorious counsels of God: man in Christ governing all first; and finally God all in all, where righteousness needs not to rule, but can dwell in endless blessing and peace.

The apostle now resumes the reasoning interrupted by the great parenthesis of divine revelation in verses 20-28. Therein he had traced out the consequences of Christ's resurrection, and its connection with the kingdom to the end, when God shall be all in all. And the

simple apprehension of the unquestionable fact that he does take up again the thread laid down at verse 19 is of all moment in helping us to understand the true bearing of verse 29, which has been singularly misapplied by all who fail to see this reference. It had been shown that the denial of the resurrection affects alike the dead and the living saints. If Christ be not raised, not merely did those that fell asleep in Him perish, but if in this life only we have had hope in Christ, we are more to be pitied than all men. This directly in sense connects itself with the disputed clause.

“Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If no dead rise at all, why also are they baptized for them?162 Why are we also in danger every hour?” (Vers. 29, 30.) There is no need of departing from the ordinary meaning of “baptized,” “for,” or “dead.” Still less is it admissible that the Corinthians or others, in that early day, had devised a new and superstitious application of baptism, either for catechumens about to die, or for relatives already departed, who had not been baptized. It is incredible that the apostle should have contented himself with so passing a notice of such a nefarious imposture; though Dean Stanley assumes its truth, and characteristically draws from it a testimony to the apostle’s charitable dealing with a practice for which he could have had no real sympathy. Calvin justly explodes the notion of any such allusion here. It is probable however that, though with Estius, etc., he is wrong in thinking “the dead” mean those about to die, such a misinterpretation of the language may have suggested the rite later to the excitable and perverted minds of the Syrian Marcionites, or other heretics, of whose practice we hear in the writings of Tertullian, Epiphanius, etc.

Neander's mind revolts from the idea of such a baptism, yet he so far yields to the reasoning of Ruckert as to allow that it seems the most natural interpretation. (Hist. of the Pl. and Tr. of the Christian Church, i. 164, ii. 117, ed. Bohn.) He suggests the raging of an epidemic about that time in Corinth, which may have swept away believers before baptism, whose relatives were baptized in their stead; but he pleads that, if Paul might for the occasion have borrowed an argument from the conviction lying at the basis of such a custom, he would probably have taken care to explain himself at another opportunity against this custom itself, as he did in reference to females speaking in their public assemblies.

There is not the smallest foundation for any hypothesis of the sort. The context suggests the true substitutionary idea. That ὑπέρ allows of some such shade of thought is certain, not only from its usage in all correct Greek, but especially from the New Testament, where the physical sense of "over,"163 so common elsewhere, does not occur. Thus we find the apostle's use in Philemon 13, which is distinct. (Compare John 11:60-52; John 18:14; Rom. 5:6, 7, 8; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 20; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Peter 3:18, etc.) Nor is this found in the inspired writers only. Viger has cited a decisive passage from Dion. Hal. (Ant. Rom. viii. 87, ed. Reiske, p. 1723): οὗτοι τὴν ἀρχὴν παραλαβόντες, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀποθανόντων τῳ πρὸς Ἀντιάτας πολέμῳ ατρατιωτῶν, ἠξίουν ἑτέρους καταγράφειν.

The apostle then refers to those who had already slept in Christ, as well as the living trials of such as himself. What will become of those baptized for the dead? Why then be enlisted into such ranks, if no dead at all are

raised? Why do we too incur danger every hour? It was a forlorn hope indeed, if the light of resurrection did not shine. There is no strange practice supposed, but a forcible association of any now baptized with those who had gone before; still less is there a reprehension, express or tacit, which it is only possible to conceive by indulging in the imagination. Had it been οἱ βαπτισθέντες, there might have been some biding show of argument for an exceptional fact or class, but οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι much more naturally suits the baptized in general, the objects of that action. To infer that the present participle, rather than the aorist, implies a practice not generally prevalent, is as illegitimate grammatically, as it is exegetically to conceive a practice not otherwise known to us. There is not the least ground to gather from the text that it existed then, or was here alluded to. There is no reason, therefore, for translating the phrase “on behalf of the dead.” Indeed it seems to me that, were there a reference to friends, believing or not, who had died without baptism, a much more definite and restricted formula would be imperatively called for than ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν, which very naturally refers to those in verse 18, as present danger does to verse 19. This also accounts for the change from the third to the first person; so strict is the analogy, without the strange fancy that by the third person, and by the article before βαπτ., the apostle indirectly separates himself and those to whom he is writing from participation in, or approval of, the practice.

I do not contend for, nor agree with, the views of the Greek fathers; but it is to be noticed that not one of them, as far as I am aware, saw any such reference, as Ambrose, Anselm, Erasmus, Grotius, etc., followed by

Ruckert, Meyer, De Wette, Alford, etc.; still less does one state it as “the only legitimate reference,” which is indeed not only unfounded but presumptuous, if not to the last degree puerile. Nor do I understand what Hr. T. S. Green means by “baptized concerning the dead,” as he translates in his “Twofold New Testament.” In his “New Testament Grammar” of 1842, page 251, he cites Romans 1:4, and 1 Corinthians 15:29, as supposed instances where by νεκρῶν only one person, namely, Christ, is really signified; but this is in both a mistake. C. F. Matthaei falls into the opposite error of supposing that, baptism being typical of resurrection, ὑπὲρ τῶν ν. =

ἑαυτῶν, comparing Matthew 8:22 and similar passages. This resembles Chrysostom, Theodoret, Tertullian, etc., who taught that “for the dead” meant for our bodies. None of them saw the train of thought.

But G. B. Winer seems at least as uncertain as any in his Grammar of New Testament Greek (Moulton’s edition). First, he tells us (page 219) that ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν can hardly refer to (the dead) Christ — in that case we should have had εἰς τοὺς νεκρούς — but must be understood of (unbaptized) dead men. There is no such necessity, as we have seen. But, letting this pass, in page 349 we are told that the text is probably to be rendered, “who allow themselves to be baptized over the dead;” whereas, when formally treating of the prepositions, he admits that the meaning of ὑπὲρ in the New Testament is always figurative, the nearest approach to its local signification being 1 Corinthians 4:6, unless we so render our text. In the same page (478) he gives “for the benefit of, for,” as probably meant in 1 Corinthians 15:29. But he does not close the paragraph without

admitting that, as in most cases he who acts in behalf of another appears for him, ὑπέρ sometimes borders on ἀντί, “instead of,” and cites, besides Eurip. Alc. 700 and Philemon 13, Thuc. i. 141 and Polyb. iii. 67. 7. This last evidently sustains the real unforced sense of our text, which is as consonant with the context and argument, as it avoids the need of doing harshness to grammar, exegesis, early doctrine, and history.

It is the resurrection (and all is based on that of Christ) which, as it is the basis of Christianity, so also animates with a calm and constant courage more than human. Here the apostle turns to his own experience, the more vividly and solemnly to impress the saints addressed: “Daily I die, by the boasting of you, brethren,164 which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. If after man I fought with beasts in Ephesus, what [is] the profit to me? If no dead rise, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Wake up righteously, and sin not; for some are ignorant of God: I speak unto your shame.” (Vers. 31-34.)

The Corinthian saints were his boast and joy, whatever their faults, which no one had such reason to feel as the apostle; but he had it in Christ Jesus, which gave it force and permanence. Thus does he protest his dying day by day. It is not a doctrinal standing; there he could say, I died. Death with Christ is a fact; for faith it is never a mere and slow process going on, as mystics dream. Here it is a constant exposure to physical death. So he served the Lord, and boasted in His saints: how absurd if there be no resurrection l But it was not only joy in the saints spite of daily dying; what a spring for endurance in the world outside l “If after man I fought with beasts in Ephesus, what [is] the profit to me?” Faith is not

fanatical; it reasons as soundly as it feels loyally and works by love.

Here again it was resurrection which cheered him in the fierce conflict, which, speaking as men do, he calls a fight with beasts. It is no uncommon figure. Compare Titus 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:17; and so, it seems, Heraclitus designated the Ephesians: see also Appian, Bell. C. ii. 763, and Ignat. ad Rom. 5. To me also with some ancients and moderns, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον seems meant to qualify the phrase, so that it should not be taken literally.

To abandon resurrection then is to yield ourselves up to ease, pleasure, and indulgence. It is not the immortality of the soul, but the faith of resurrection, which keeps man from sinking to and below a brute. Men may cry up the soul, without a thought of God and only to self-exaltation; but the resurrection brings in the reality of God's intervention with men, either in salvation or in judgment. And these human thoughts, which looked plausible and even spiritual, had deceived some of the saints in Corinth. Is it not more purifying to think of the soul apart from the body, and in heavenly glory? Not so; it is the hope of the body rising which encourages us to deny self, and mortify our members here below. See the place given to the body in Rom. 6, Rom. 12, as well as in the Epistles to the Corinthians, and elsewhere. Now is the time, here the place, to walk as dead with Christ, and alive in Him to God. In glory we shall dwell at ease, our bodies changed into the likeness of His glorious body.

The word of God maintains this life of unselfish faith and readiness to suffer, not the communications of men, as

themselves confess. These puff up and corrupt: so say Euripides, Menander, and common proverbs. Hence the call to wake up righteously, or to righteousness, and not to be sinning. To deny the resurrection is to display ignorance of God. (See Matt. 22:29.) This was not wonderful in a heathen; but what a disgrace to the saints that some among them should be thus ignorant! So ends boastful knowledge. The Corinthians must begin again, and, starting from a dead and risen Christ, use the truth of God to judge the thoughts of men. He loves to be known as the God that raises the dead, while it is also true that all live unto Him.

The apostle next turns from warning to meet objections in the shape of questions physical, as our Lord met the social difficulty raised by the Sadducees. These he quickly exposes in their true character. They are folly; or he rather is a fool who employs his avowed ignorance to reject the testimony of God, who alone knows. Our wisdom is to know the scriptures, and so His word, without a question of His power to give them effect.

“But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come? Fool, what thou sowest is not quickened unless it die; and what thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may be of wheat, or of some one of the rest; and God giveth to it a body as he pleased, and to each of the seeds its own body.” (Vers. 85-38.) Thus severely is the inquisitive mind of man rebuked, and especially so in this instance, where the clear revelation of God is doubted or denied, because the process, the how, of the resurrection may not be understood, or the character of the risen body. It will be found, however, that God does not withhold the weightiest information; but the apostle

here administers a reproof which would be deeply felt by those who piqued themselves on their wisdom, yet were foolish enough to overlook the analogies of nature before their eyes, which refute the assumed likeness between the body as it is, and as it shall be. “Fool, what thou” (not God merely, but the feeble objector) “sowest is not quickened unless it die.” Death, therefore, was no barrier to the resurrection, of course not its cause, but its antecedent. There may be change, as shown afterwards, but no resurrection unless death be first. There is dissolution in death, but not annihilation. There is disorganisation in death previous to another mode of being. But the seed dies as such in order to pass into a plant; and so he adds, “and what thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain it may be of wheat or of some of the rest, and God giveth it a body as he pleased, and to each of the seeds its own body.”

What springs up differs widely from what was sown, yet each seed issues in its own plant. There is such a thing as species, and this fixed from the first, as God pleased. “Natural selection” is not only contrary to fact but senseless, yet none the less the idol of modern materialists, as Ashtoreth was of the Sidonians and Molech of the Amorites. No doubt there is a germ or principle of life; but what does the objector know of it? If he is utterly unacquainted with this even in the seed, is he in a position to cavil as to the body? One may reason fairly from known truth, not from ignorance. If one rejects whatever is not understood, where is such unconscionable doubt to end? Not only is all spiritual being swept away, but one must begin with denying the existence of oneself and every other being. Nothing is

less rational than to make reason the only inlet of thought, feeling, knowledge, conscience, or consciousness.

“Every flesh [is] not the same flesh, but one [is] of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes. [There are] both bodies heavenly and bodies earthly; but different is the glory of the heavenly, and different that of the earthly: one [the] sun’s glory, and another [the] moon’s glory, and another [the] stars’ glory; for star differs from star in glory. So also [is] the resurrection of the dead.” (Vers. 39-42.) The apostle shows how vain is the assumption of a condition for the body in resurrection similar to the present state, from the diversity even of flesh in the animal world that now is. There is no monotony in God’s creation. The flesh is palpably different in men, cattle or quadrupeds, birds, fishes: how unreasonable then, if that ground be sought, to take for granted that the body must be at all like what it is now in a condition so distinct as resurrection! Far more sensibly might one conceive the most striking difference. It is no question, however, either of reason or of imagination, but of faith as far as God has revealed. But there is a farther illustration, which the apostle draws even from sight, to set aside empiricism, petty and grovelling, as it always is.

“There are both bodies heavenly and bodies earthly,” and the glory of the one differs from that of the other; and not only this, but the heavenly ones, sun, moon, stars, vary from each other, as do those below. There is no need to suppose angels are meant, like Alford, de Wette, and Meyer; and to introduce saints here as do Chrysostom and his followers, is to confound the things compared. The objection to understanding “heavenly

bodies" of the sun, etc., as if too modern a term, is simply want of knowledge; it is mere captiousness to boot that, if we apply these words thus, we must suppose the apostle to have imagined the stars to be endowed with bodies in the literal sense; for similar language occurs in the Hellenistic Greek of Galen (iv. 868, 869, ed. Kuhn), who lived not long after the apostle, as was pointed out by Wetstein, ii. 171, more than a hundred years ago. Yet the object is not to prove different degrees of glory in heaven, as thought by many ancients and moderns, but rather to contrast the risen with the natural state. "So also is the resurrection of the dead." This is made plain from what follows. They are quite wrong who make the glory to be exclusively heavenly or earthly. Both will be found in the kingdom of God. (See John 3:12.)

"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: if165 there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual." (Vers. 42-44.)

This is one among the scriptures where the present is used, not as an actual or continuous thing, but abstractly: a sense constantly forgotten by grammarians as well as expositors. Yet is it inexcusable ignorance, for the same principle applies to almost, if not all, languages, and seems to flow from the nature of language, the present being most suitable for an abstract, as distinguished from its historical, usage. Here it is impossible rightly to take it otherwise. Resurrection, and even burial, or sowing, as it is here figuratively called (and not the origin of our natural being, as Archbishop Whately understood), excludes a

merely actual or a continuing fact. It is the statement of a truth.

The body of the believer is sown in dishonour, corruption, and weakness: so all see; what do we believe? It is raised in incorruption, glory, and power — not a mere ethereal or airy body, as Chrysostom and Origen respectively said, but a body instinct with spirit life, as once with animal life from the soul, yet not a spirit, but a spiritual body, not limited by earthly conditions, but capable either of passing through a closed door, or of being felt, able to take food, though needing none, if we may judge from Him who, risen as the great Head and pattern and power, declared that a spirit has not flesh and bones, as they saw He had.

The suitability of this for heaven is apparent. “If there is a natural (or soulish) body, there is also a spiritual.” As surely as there is the body which we have now, suited to the earth and the life that now is, there is also a spiritual body, which we shall have when the Lord Christ comes to raise those that are His. (See vers. 20-23.) God, who constituted the one for the sphere of responsibility and trial, will certainly adapt the other to the conditions of glory, where the eternal life which is now exercised in scenes of sorrow, itself in faith, hope, and love, will then enjoy the unclouded rest of God on high. The εἰ, omitted by most of the later uncials and cursives, and even the Syrr. vv. as well as the Greek fathers, is attested by the most ancient and best manuscripts, uncial or cursive, the rest of the old versions, and the Latin fathers: only some, by ὁμοιοτέλευτον, have left out the entire latter half of verse 44.

Now the apostle comes to the decisive proof of scripture, and the personal test of Christ. “So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit: yet not first [is] the spiritual, but the natural, afterward the spiritual; the first man out of earth made of dust, the second man166 out of heaven: such as he made of dust, such also those made of dust; and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones]; and even as we bore the image of the [one] made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly[ones].” (Vers. 45-49.) It is the way of the apostle, and indeed of the inspired in general, to trace up all to the sources; and so it is here at the end, as at the earlier part, of this discussion. Adam and Christ are before us, the first man Adam made only a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. Thus, as usual, first is seen man failing in his responsibility; then the obedient, suffering, victorious Man.

It is to be noticed too that the great occasion when scripture shows us the Lord become a quickening spirit was when He rose from the dead. Then, not before, did He breathe on the disciples, and say, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. It was not the new birth merely, but life more abundantly, because in the power of resurrection; and this quite falls in with the doctrine of the chapter, which looks neither at incarnation nor at ascension, however important, nor here at His death, though this be sacrificially and in moral power the foundation of all for us as well as for God’s glory.

Such was the order, and this the triumph, not yet in our resurrection, but in His who will raise the sleeping saints at His coming. It is not that Adam had not an immortal soul, or that Christ could not lay His life down;

but the one at the beginning became a living soul, the other (after having been manifested in the end of the ages for putting away of sin by His sacrifice) a life-giving spirit as risen. “Out of heaven” is no more inconsistent with this, than “out of earth” with Adam’s being made a living soul, but each, on the contrary, most suitable.

And now we can go a step farther in each ease. Such as was the dusty one (Adam), such also the dusty ones (the race); and such as the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones (Christians); and just as we bore the image of the dusty one, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly One. We were, and are, naturally the family of the first man, and bore his image (cf. Gen. 5:3); we, as now in Christ, shall also bear the image of Christ in the day that is coming. God has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He should be first-born among many brethren. It is not a question of any transforming of us meanwhile according to the same image by the Spirit, which is true and momentous day by day; it is that full and final conformity which cannot be till Christ consumates salvation, and transforms our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of His ability even to subdue all things to Himself.

If we go alone by manuscripts, etc., we should have here φορέσωμεν, “let us bear,” seeing that the great majority of the best authorities is in its favour, not (it is true) the Vatican, and a few cursives with some versions and fathers, while others lay the express emphasis on the hortative form. The context is decisively in favour of the fut. inc. How then is the erratum to be accounted for? By two considerations: first, the proneness, even of the best copies, to confound o and w; secondly, the

readiness of pious men, who feebly know grace, to turn a promise into an exhortation. The rationalist naturally prefers a reading which puts forward man, so as to hide the glorious power of God in raising the dead into the likeness of the risen Christ.

Thus the dying man and the Man of resurrection power stand in full contrast, as do those who are respectively theirs, with the glorious issue for such as once, the first man's, like others, became by grace of the Second, the last Adam. Adam became a sinner, and was sentenced to death before he became head of the family. Christ bore sin, and died to it, before He became Head of those who believed. Till He died He abode alone; after it He had much fruit. And as there never was a hope for man in another, so none other can rival Him. He is the last Adam, no less than the second Man. He who will finally pretend to it, ere the age ends, and secure the worship of what was once Christendom, as well as (strange to say) of the Jew, is only the man of sin, though sitting down in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. He is emphatically from beneath, as the Lord is from heaven, and they that follow him perish everlastingly, while the believer has life eternal in Christ, and shall be glorified with Him.

But we have more. "Now167 this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,168 in an instant, in [the] twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for it shall sound, and the dead shall live incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have

put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word that is written, Death was swallowed up in victory. Where, death, [is] thy victory?169 where, death,170 thy sting? Now the sting of death [is] sin, and the power of sin the law; but thanks to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my brethren beloved, be firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your toil is not vain in [the] Lord." (Vers. 50-58.)

It will be observed that God's kingdom is here viewed exclusively on the other side of death, in accordance with the great theme in hand. "Earthly things" have their place very definitely elsewhere; here, for the reason given, they are not found. Flesh and blood, man, as he is here below, cannot inherit God's kingdom. It is not merely that corruption does not inherit incorruption, being incompatible, but man in his best estate is altogether vanity. Short of resurrection, which is the intervention of another Man, who is also God, he cannot inherit where God reigns. But in Christ we see the power which withdraws the believer completely from death, impossible without His death, not because He could not intrinsically quicken for evermore, but because the believer had been a sinner like others, and could not otherwise be saved consistently with God's righteousness, holiness, truth, and glory.

His victory extends even to the living saints, not merely to keep them alive in the world, but to change them at His coming, without undergoing the humiliation of death in any shape. This is no doubt a truth unknown to Old Testament times, and the revelation there given; it is a secret made known now. "Behold, I tell you a mystery:

we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for it shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The earlier communication was not a mystery; this is. Old Testament saints (witness Job) knew certainly the resurrection, not only of man in general (Job 14), but of the saint in particular (Job 19). But who could tell or think of saints being changed without going through death in virtue of the perfect victory of grace in Christ? It was reserved for the days of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, when the infinite work was done whereby souls, once guilty, could be brought into the efficacy and the knowledge of redemption. And what a proof of its efficacy, when the saints that remain alive are changed without dying, or still less any purgatorial process after death, and this, not in some specially known for practical holiness, but in all the saints then waiting for Christ here below!

Here man breaks down utterly. He revolts from what makes nothing of his power or his merits, yea, what exposes his total inability and demonstrates his ruin through sin, while it reveals the free and full and triumphant grace which saves — saves the body as well as soul of the Christian, through Christ, to God's glory. Even saints, themselves owing all to it, find it often so beyond their thoughts, that they are apt to curtail its extent, too bscure its clearness, and to fritter away its power.

A notable evidence of this appears in the singular vacillation here found in the ancient copies and versions. There is no need, perhaps no ground, for accusing any of failure in good faith; but if not, it is hard to account

for the departure from the words and truth given by the Spirit, save by the strangeness of it for those who copied or translated.

Thus the Latins followed the reading extant in the first hand of the Clermont manuscript, but corrected there later , ἀναστησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δέ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur, “we shall indeed all rise again, but we shall not all be changed,” a double error, directly opposed in each part to positive scripture. Indeed the dead saints shall rise, but all saints are not to die, nay, none found alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord, when the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living that remain, shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. It is appointed unto men, doubtless, once to die; but saints stand on another ground — of the second Man, not of the first; and such as live till He comes look to be not unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality be swallowed up of life, instead of dying and rising again like the rest. Thus those who teach that we shall all rise imply the universal dying of the saints, and in effect deny the power of life in Christ, which it is the great aim of the Spirit to press in 2 Corinthians 5. But they teach still more erroneously that “we shall not all be changed” in no less open contrariety to the invariable declaration of scripture, and the necessary exigencies of that glory of God in hope of which we rejoice.

For we look for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as Saviour, who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. The earthly house of the

tabernacle we have now is wholly unmeet for the glory of God: we need therefore a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which we shall have at Christ's coming. Consequently we must, and shall, be changed then and there. Hence the second clause of the Latin is as false as the first. They together ignore grace and glory in their full character and final issues. Accordingly, without a particle of prejudice against the Vulgate, one may say that it would be difficult to match such a departure from the true text and the truth in general in the worst version that ever was made. Yet human tradition dooms its votaries to the sanction, as authentic scripture, of these gross and grievous errors throughout half Christendom.

But the text of Lachmann the critic, founded on A C F G, and other authorities, is as bad, if not worse, π. [

μ.]

κοιμηθησόμεθα, οὐ π. δέ ἀλλαγ. For here we are taught in no sense the power of life, but of death, in the very chapter which develops resurrection in and of Christ, and in the part of it, above all others, which discloses the secret of victory by and with Christ when He comes for His own then alive on earth. A singular mystery it were, that "we shall all die (or sleep);" seeing that this is the common lot of the race, and in no way the disclosure of the exemption which grace will confer when the Lord Jesus will come and gather us to Himself. We need say no more of the further error which denies the change, after the pattern of Christ's glorification, to any that are His. Rationalism shares this latter with Romanism; and though they differ as to the former point, the one affirming that "we shall all sleep," the other that "we

shall all rise," they agree in adopting mistaken readings, which deny the special grace of Christ to His own who are to be found awaiting His descent from heaven, and the special mystery here added to complete the general truth of the chapter.

This is entirely confirmed by the context (ver. 52), which besides furnishes somewhat more to the believer. We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. The glorification of the saints will be effected, immense as it is in itself, and from every spot of the globe, sooner than the mind can reckon, or the eye discern, when the final summons is given to the heavenly host to quit its halting-place. The allusion is to the signal last given on the breaking up of a camp, at that time too familiar a figure to escape the nations of Europe and far beyond it, which had been welded into the empire of Rome. "For it shall sound," however little man may expect it, "and the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall be changed;" not, remark, we shall rise then, nor they only, but "we" too shall be changed, in exact accordance with the true and common text of verse 51, and in opposition to the changes of both rationalists and Romanists.

But we have more explanation, and a scripture rich in its connection of truth, cited from the Old Testament. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality." (Ver. 53.) The apostle expresses the truth with perfect precision. He does not speak of those corrupting in the grave; nor even of the dead or dying, but of what is "corruptible" and "mortal," so as to take in the body even whilst we are alive, and thus be an object for the change, if not for resurrection. "But when this corruptible shall have put-on

incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the word that is written, Death was swallowed up in victory." (Ver. 54.) The epoch of the change is the coming of the Lord from heaven. When the dead in Christ shall rise, and we who are alive be changed and caught up, then shall Isaiah 25:8 come to pass. But it is evident from the prophet that this must be at the end of the age, not of the world; that then the earth's blessing begins, instead of passing away, and that then Jehovah will destroy in this mountain [Zion] the face of the covering cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.... In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, We have a strong city, etc. It is the kingdom come in power and glory, instead of the end of it for eternity; and the risen or changed saints will share it, as well as eternity, with Christ. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" It is to be feared that many Christians know it less now than the carnal Corinthians of old. Yet it is less excusable for those who have the apostolic correction to profit by.

No wonder that the apostle refers to the challenge of another prophet, "Death, where [is] thy victory? Death, where [is] thy sting?" (Hosea 13:14) with the comment, "Now the sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin the law; but thanks to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Vers. 65-57.) What a triumphant answer is the resurrection and the change of the saints at the coming of the Lord! It is sin which gives

not only occasion, but its sting, to death; and the law, however righteous, could work no deliverance for the guilty, but proves in effect the strength of sin, by provoking its rebellious will so much the more against the commands of God. His grace; not the law, is the strength of holiness, as we learn from Romans 6:14; and therefore does the apostle here break forth into thanksgiving as he sees God giving us the victory so completely and for ever, through our Lord Jesus Christ. “Wherefore, my brethren beloved, be ye stedfast, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your toil is not vain in [the] Lord.” (Ver. 58.) Christ’s resurrection is the pledge of ours, the witness of salvation, the pattern of deliverance, and the spring of hope in the midst of labour as well as suffering for Christ,

1 Corinthians 16

Another and a very different topic claimed the service of the apostle, because it fell under the Lord’s care for the church. It might seem wholly a matter for the saints; but experience itself proves how much they need in it the guidance of the Spirit through the written word. Hence pretension to superior spirituality here, as elsewhere, sinks below the instincts of love, and the dictates of every sound mind. How blessed to have the regulating wisdom of God, who deigns to give us His mind even for the smallest things of this life!

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the assemblies of Galatia, so do ye also. Every first of a week let each of you put by him, storing up whatever he may be prospered in, that there be no collections when I come. And when I am arrived,

whomsoever ye shall approve, them I will send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem; and, if it be suitable that I go, they shall go with me." (Vers. 1-4.)

It is untrue that the assemblies were left without apostolic regulation, or that they were regulated differ entry. The snares and the circumstances of Galatia were as unlike those of Corinth as could be conceived; the directions given by the apostle were the same, and this, not merely on matters of the most momentous significance, as sound doctrine, and holy discipline, and the attesting institutions of Christ, so that the worship and public ways of the saints might present the same testimony everywhere, but here, as we see, even in the exercise of their liberality.

One cannot overlook the frequent remembrance of the poor saints at Jerusalem; and no doubt there were circumstances which gave them a special claim. Probably external distress prevailed, and persecution had left some widows and orphans. Not only were the believers very numerous there, but there only, so far as we read, had they sold their possessions and substance, so as to distribute to all, as any one had need; there only not one said that anything of what he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them, so that none was in want. But there, partly through this surprising testimony of unselfish love, poverty prevailed later; and none among the Gentile assemblies was so urgent as our apostle that relief should be sent for the brethren in Judea, not merely during the great famine under Claudius Caesar, but thenceforward, as we may gather from 1 and 2 Corinthians, as well as Romans. (Of. Gal. 2:10; Acts 24:17.)

Still a general principle and practice we find laid down of the highest value for any time. The collection for the saints was bound up with the solemn and gracious associations of the first, or resurrection, day. It was to proceed regularly, not occasionally; it was to be done with conscience, according as any might be prospered, not under influence, or pressure, or haste, still less with indifference, or on mere human grounds. Thus faith and love would be called out, and healthfully applied, while waiting for the coming of the Lord. It seems that each was to lay aside at home what he judged according to the means given; but the mention of the first of the week, or Lord's day, points to their joining their contribution, when they came together, as every disciple did, to break bread. This is truly to lay up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupteth, and where thieves do not dig through or steal.

Again, the apostle was careful to leave no room for evil surmise or appearance; and so he here indicates a fresh application of the apostolic wisdom which we see in Acts 6. The multitude chose their own administrators. They contributed the funds, and they, not the apostles, chose men in whom they had confidence to dispense them. (See also 2 Cor. viii.) As the church cannot impart a spiritual power, so the Lord alone gave gifts for the ministry or service of souls. (Rom. 10, Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4) The apostles, personally or by delegate (as Titus), chose elders, being the chiefs of that authority of which the presbyters were the ordinary representatives locally. (Acts 14; Titus 2) Everything in the church rests on its own proper ground. Here, then, the apostle promises on his arrival to send with letters whomsoever

they should approve to bring their bounty unto Jerusalem.

But the letters were to be his, not theirs as the Authorised Version says, following the mistake of the Vulgate, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, and the Text. Rec., which punctuates wrongly in consequence. For what would be the sense of their approving by their letters when the apostle came? The Corinthians really were to select whom they approved, and Paul, on arriving, would send them on, furnished with letters from himself. So too the Greek commentators understood.

It is common to make the genitive dependent on

ἄξιον, “meet,” and to deduce the meaning, “if the occasion, or magnitude of the collection, warrant an apostolic mission in order to carry it.” But such a sense, though grammatically possible, seems to me unworthy, not only of the apostle, but even of the delegates, and only tolerable because men have been lowered by the mendicant habits of Christendom. The truth is that the genitive of design, purpose, or the conclusion to be formed, as here, is a common Hellenistic usage, not infrequent in classical authors. The Authorised Version is therefore nearer the mark, and much more in unison with the dignity of all concerned, as well as with God’s word and Spirit, which, while cherishing the largest self-denial and generosity, are wont to slight the resources of unbelief, and to brand covetousness as idolatry. If it were suitable, then, that Paul also should go, the delegates should go with him. He would guard his services from all ground for reproach, providing for things honest, not only before the Lord, but also before men.

“But I will come unto you when I shall have gone through Macedonia, for I go through Macedonia. But perhaps I shall stay, or even winter, with you, that ye may send me forward wherever I may go. For I do not wish to see you now in passing; for I 171 hope to remain some time with you, if the Lord permit. But I will remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effectual door is open to me, and [there are] many adversaries. But if Timotheus come, see that he be with you without fear, for he worketh the Lord’s work, even as I. Let none then despise him, but send him forward in peace, that he may come unto me, for I am awaiting him with the brethren. But concerning the brother Apollos, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren; but it was not at all [his] will to come now, but he will come when he shall have good opportunity.” (Vers. 5-12.)

It is evident from verse 8 that the apostle was in Ephesus when he wrote to Corinth this first epistle. The spurious postscript in the common text, followed in the Authorised Version, says “from Philippi,” but it was really from Ephesus, as in the Vatican and some other copies; and therefore salutations are given from “the assemblies of Asia.” (Ver. 19.) His purpose was to pass through Macedonia: this is the force of Μακ. γάρ διέρχομαι, a journey then before him as a settled thing, but not actually in progress. He might, perhaps, then stay, or even winter, with them, adding an expression of loving confidence that they might send him on wherever he might go. For he declined seeing them then, for reasons explained in 2 Corinthians 1, hoping to remain some time with them, under the Lord’s permission, instead of merely passing through. He should remain at Ephesus, where he then was, till Pentecost. That the

Lord was there working was a sufficient reason, and none the less because there were adversaries many. He trusted to carry on the work, and help souls against Satan.

But his heart could not rest without commending Timothy, and the more as he was timid. He would have him be without fear in their midst, and deigns to put him as a workman of the Lord so far on common ground with himself. He is anxious that none should despise him — a danger among the saints, who are as open to be deceived by self-seeking men, as to slight true servants of Christ.

The case of Apollos is also instructive in more ways than one. Paul besought him to go to Corinth, rising above all feeling that not a few set him above himself; Apollos would not then go, it would seem, out of similar delicacy, unwilling to give occasion to such folly and wrong among the saints as they then were. We see how the Lord maintains freedom, as well as calls out grace, among His labourers, even when apostles were there, recording it for our guidance when there are none. Nothing, in its way, can be happier than this picture of unjealous love and respect, but free as before the Lord, among servants so varied as an apostle, his young companion, and a comparatively independent labourer like Apollos.

After these details the apostle gives a few pithy words of exhortation: “Watch, stand in the faith, play the man, be strong.172 Let all your doings be in love.” (Vers. 13, 14.) They are words eminently suited to the state of things at Corinth, besides being wholesome for all saints in all times and places. Carelessness had marked them as a

company, and therefore were they now called to vigilance. They had allowed speculations to work even on foundation truths of revelation, and so they needed to cleave firmly to the deposit of faith. They had been walking after the manner of man (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον), and had shrunk from reproach and suffering, feebly dreading the world's opinions; they are urged, therefore, to quit themselves in a manly way (ἀνδρίζεσθε), and to be strong. They kind need also, and above all, that whatever they did might be done lovingly. It is the final application of that which 1 Cor. 13 had opened out — the blessed energy of the divine nature, which lives and delights in the good of others; and it is the fitting preface to his next topic.

"Now I beseech you, brethren — ye know the house of Stephanas,173 that it is a first-fruit of Achaia,174 and that they appointed themselves to the saints for service — that ye also be subject to such, and to every one that co-operateth and laboureth." (Vers. 15, 16.)

This entreaty of the apostle was, and is, of the highest, for the house of Stephanas represents a considerable class of labourers, if we reckon them up in every place where God has His assembly. They stand on a distinct footing from such servants of the Lord as Timothy, on the one hand, or Apollos on the other. They do not answer to one designated by prophecy, specially gifted to serve with an apostle; neither were they men eloquent and mighty in the scriptures, who from small beginnings learnt the truth more exactly, and could, in a freer action of the Spirit, either boldly speak before adversaries, or contribute much to those who believed through grace.

The house of Stephanas had no such prominent, wide, or energetic sphere; but they devoted themselves in an orderly way to the saints for service. It was their regular work, not a thing taken up perfunctorily now and then; and this, which some dare to deride as self-appointment, is as thoroughly maintained and commended by the apostle in the name of the Lord, as the call of a patron or of a congregation to the ministry of the word is absolutely unscriptural, and opposed to all sound and holy principle. The apostle establishes their attitude and activity as of God, whose love gave them a heart toward the saints in service. They were not elders. Indeed it would seem that as yet none had been chosen at Corinth to the work of oversight by the apostle. But none the less does he call on the saints also to range themselves under such, and every one sharing the work, and toiling. We see the same thing in Romans 12 and 1 Thessalonians 5, where no trace, of presbyters appear, and where, in fact, we can hardly conceive of their existence. But there were those who ruled, or took the lead, those who toiled among the saints, and presided over them in the Lord, entirely apart from exterior appointment. As this was of moment to sanction in those early days, so is it of at least equal importance in our own time, when we have no apostle, or apostolic delegate like Titus, to visit the assemblies, and to establish elders, as of old. The same holy liberty, the same solemn responsibility, and the same apostolic warrant, abide for our day of weakness and need. How evident the gracious wisdom of the Lord, while thus naming but incidentally, as it might have seemed, the house of Stephanas, really providing for all that call on His name, in every place, and at any time of the church’s career here below! How blessed in His eyes is the

subjection of the saints, not only to such devoted servants, but to every one joined in the work, and labouring!

Another feature of interest is the delicacy with which the apostle notices some from Corinth who had not forgotten his temporal necessities. “But I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, because what was lacking on your part these filled up; for they175 refreshed my spirit and yours: own then those that are such.” (Vers. 17, 18.) It would appear from both epistles that the help did not come from the assembly as such, but from these three individuals, whose love the apostle does not fail to record. In his allusion there is certainly the grace which counted on the mention refreshing the Corinthian assembly as it had refreshed himself, but not without a hint that they had lost an opportunity which the three discerned and used before the Lord.

“The assemblies of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca176 salute you much in [the] Lord, with the assembly in their house. All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand. If any one loveth not the Lord [Jesus Christ,]177 let him be anathema maranatha (a curse: the Lord cometh). The grace of the Lord Jesus [Christ] [be] with you. My love [be] with you all in Christ Jesus. [Amen].” (Vers. 19-24.)

The salutation from “the assemblies of Asia” falls in with the fact that the apostle was writing from the capital of that pro-consular province. But it seems to me a mistake to conceive that the name of the church or assembly is applied to a single family in the next clause. The truth

really is that this godly pair appear to have opened their house habitually for the saints to assemble there wherever they might reside, whether in Ephesus or in Rome. Thus it was in those early days, when true unity prevailed and vast buildings for accommodating multitudes did not yet exist among Christians. So in Jerusalem, from the first they used to break bread κατ᾽ οἶκον. That Aquila and his wife should greet the Corinthian saints “much in the Lord,” as distinguished from the more general salutation, “all the brethren,” or of the Asiatic assemblies, is easily understood from their personal acquaintance with the Achaian capital. But the mode of salutation enjoined here, as on the Romans, and by the apostle Peter on the christian Jews scattered throughout Asia Minor, points to the ardent, but holy, affection which then knit together the saints as such: so should it ever be in a world where sin brings in distance or corruption.

The apostle, then, appends his salutation with his own hand; for here, as usually, the body of the epistle was not in his autograph. But he also adds the sternest denunciation of any one who loved not the Lord, under a seemingly familiar Syrian formula. Calvin ridicules the idea of writing so to Greeks in that tongue; but, explain it as you may, such is the fact, which does not seem mitigated by his own suggestion that it was a customary form of expressing excommunication among the Hebrews. To me it appears to go farther still: yet did it not in the least clash with the love which animated and filled his heart, as one sees from verse 23, and especially 24. It is to be doubted indeed whether love can be unfeigned without abhorring evil; and what evil can

compare with bearing the name of the Lord without real attachment to Him?

Thus the first epistle to the Corinthians ends with a denunciation similar in solemnity to that with which the epistle to the Galatians opens. There the apostle in his zeal for the truth of the gospel imprecates a curse on himself, or an angel from heaven, or any one preaching aught besides what he had preached and they received; here he burns with no less vehemence against any one loving not the Lord, and in the light of His coming too, which goes beyond excommunication. But this in no way interferes with his prayer, that not His judgment but His grace might be with you, as he assures them all of his own love in Christ Jesus. Thus confidence and affection mark this autograph conclusion as well as the gravest warning, the wise and worthy personal message to his beloved children in the faith.

London: G. Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square. 1878.

147 So read A B and twice as many cursives, etc.; but the vast majority give the easier reading of the Text. Rec. “by other lips”

148 The Text. Rec., with two or three uncials and most cursives, etc., here inserts καὶ οὕτως instead of before the last clause, contrary to the best authorities; it also puts ὄντως after ὁ θεός whereas it should be before as I have translated.

149

ὑμὼν “of you” is not in A B, etc.

150 No adequate reason appears to limit

οἱ

ἄλλοι, the others, or the rest, to prophets. The spiritual, not prophets only, can certainly judge all things. I am aware that some assert that “the spiritual” means inspired persons. Such teaching corrupts God’s word and demands not correction or disproof only, but the moral reprobation of every true-hearted Christian. The truth is, on the one hand, that, when the Corinthian saints abounded in every gift, they were as a whole carnal and not spiritual; as on the other hand we may and ought to be spiritual, if we have ever so little strength.

151 Text. Rec., with D F G 11(L, &e., has

ὑποτάσσεσθαι, which may be regarded as the more difficult, but ὑποτασσέσθωσαν is in A B and other ancient authorities, besides, good cursives.

152

τοῦ “the” in Text. Rec., with many cursives, but not in the uncials, the best and most cursives, etc.

153 Tischendorf omits

ἐντολή with D E F G, etc.; Lach., etc.,

ἐστὶν ἐντολή, with A B, etc; Text. Rec.

εἰσὶν ἐντολαί, with most.

154

ἀγνοεῖται “he is ignored,” with A D F G, etc., the common reading has excellent authority.

155

μου, omitted by Text. Rec. with most, is in A B D, etc.

156

ἐν BDFG, etc.

157

δέ omitted by K L and most, is read by A B E F G P, many cursives, versions, etc.

158

ἐγένετο (Text. Rec.) is added by Dcorr. K L, most cursives, Syrr., Goth., etc., contrary to all the rest.

159

τοῦ is omitted in Steph. and the early edition, Elz., by mere carelessness.

160

παραδῳ (Text. Rec.) K L and most cursives, etc.,

παραδιδοῖ (or -

ῳ,) the best authorities.

161

άν (Text. Rec.) is added by a good many authorities, uncial and cursive, but not the more ancient, as is αὐτοῦ by A F G, etc.

162

αὐτῶν A B Dp.m. E F G K P, twenty cursives, most versions, etc.

163 Yet this was the thought of Luther, Tyndale, and others here. They took ὑπέρ as meaning over their graves; but the Greek Testament usus loquendi is against the sense.

164

ἀδελφοί, A B K P, many cursives, versions, and fathers.

165

εἰ A B C D F, etc., while Text. Rec. omits it with the rest: so also with the place of καί after or before ἐστιν, and further against or for σῶμα before πν.

166 So p.m. B G D E F G, etc., with many ancient versions and fathers, T. Rec. adds ὁ κύριος, “the Lord,” with most of the later uncials and cursives, Syrr. Arm. and Goth. It is even said to be a Marcionite corruption in Dial., and by Tertullian.

167

δέ is the reading of A B C K L P, all the cursives known, etc., γάρ “for” of D E F G, etc. So the future κλ. is in C D F G, etc., but contrary to the mass and best.

168 The true text is

πάντες μὲν οὐ κ., π. δέ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, as in B E K L P, etc. But A F G, and many other excellent authorities support the absurd reading, “we shall all sleep, but we shall not all he changed,” as Lachmann actually edited not only in 1831, but in 1850. He also read with many MSS ἀναστήσονται for ἐγ. in verse 52, but this makes scarcely a perceptible difference in translation.

169 p.m. B C I M, etc., support this order contrary to Text. Rec., with most.

170 “Grave,” or “Hades,” 2 A3 L M P contrary to the oldest as above.

171 Not

δέ as in Text Rec. following K L and most cursives, but γάρ in the A B C D E F G I M P, many cursives, the best of the ancient versions, etc.

172 Some manuscripts and versions, etc., prefix

καί, “and,” but it is not sustained by the best authorities.

173 Some add of “Fortunatus” here, others, “and of Achaicus” also, but the best oppose. It is a gloss.

174 In the common text of Romans 16:5, Epaenetus is said to be a first-fruits of Achaia; but the ancient and true reading is Asia, not “Achaia,” of which Stephanas’ house was the firstfruits.

175

οὗτοι B C K L P, and the cursives, etc., in general;

αὐτοί ADEFGM, etc.

176 Priscilla as in Acts, but Prisca also in Romans 16:3, and 2 Timothy 4:19, as in the common text.

177 I have given the best authenticated reading; but others add what follows in each case of the dotted brackets.