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ROMANS.

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ANECDOTES, SIMILES, EMBLEMS, ILLUSTRATIONS, EXPOSITORY, SCIENTIFIC, GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND HOMILETIC, GATHERED FROM A WIDE RANGE OF HOME AND FOREIGN LITERATURE, ON THE VERSES OF THE BIBLE.

BY

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CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 11. **But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus . . . dwell in you.**—*The indwelling Spirit:*—The indwelling of God the Holy Spirit is the common mark of all believers in Christ. It is the shepherd's mark of the flock of the Lord Jesus, distinguishing them from the rest of the world. It is the goldsmith's stamp on the genuine sons of God, which separates them from the dross and mass of false professors. It is the king's own seal on those who are his peculiar people, proving them to be his own property. It is the earnest which the Redeemer gives to His believing disciples, while they are in the body, as a pledge of the full redemption yet to come on the resurrection morning. This is the case of all believers. (*Ep. Ryle.*) *The indwelling Spirit the Raiser of the dead:*—I. THE INHABITATION OF THE SPIRIT. Dwelling may relate either to a man in his house (1 John iii. 24) or of God in His temple (1 Cor. vi. 16). The Spirit buildeth us up for so holy a use, and then dwelleth in us as our Sanctifier, Guide, and Comforter. 1. He sanctifieth and reneweth us (Tit. iii. 5; John iii. 6). 2. He guideth and healeth us in the ways of holiness (chap. xv. 14; Gal. v. 25). 3. He comforts us with the sense of God's fatherly love and our eternal inheritance (ver. 16; 2 Cor. ii. 22). II. WHY THIS INHABITATION IS THE GROUND OF A BLESSED RESURRECTION. 1. To preserve the order of the personal operations. (1) The rising from the dead is a work of Divine power (2 Cor. i. 10). (2) This Divine power belongeth in common to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who, being one and the same God, concurred in the same work. We are raised by the Father (text), by Christ (John v. 21), by the Spirit (text). (3) They all concur in a way proper to them. The Holy Ghost is the operative love of God, working from the power of the Father and grace of the Son; and whatever the Father or Son doth, you must still suppose it to be communicated to us by the Spirit. 2. Because the Holy Spirit is the bond of union between us and Christ. We are united to Him, because we have the same Spirit which Christ had; and therefore He will work like effects in you and Him. If the Head rise, the members will follow after. 3. Because the Spirit of sanctification worketh in us that grace which giveth us a right and title to this glorious estate (Luke xx. 35, 36; Gal. vi. 8). 4. Because the Spirit abides in us as an earnest (Eph. i. 14). 5. Because of His respect to His old dwelling-place (1 Cor. vi. 19; 1 Thess. v. 23). 6. Because the great work of the Spirit is to retrench our bodily pleasures, and to bring us to resolve by all means to save the soul, whatever becometh of the body in this world, and to use the body for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. vi. 13, 20; Rom. viii. 13; Gal. v. 16, 24; Rom. xiii. 14). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The completing work of the Holy Spirit:*—The acceptance of Christ does not prevent the death of the body. The destruction of the body by death is complete; but is it destroyed for ever? 1. Infidelity affirms that when you are dead that is the end of you. 2. Science teaches that the substance of the body can never be annihilated. 3. The Bible declares that the body shall be raised up at the last day. I. THE AGENT. The same power that raised up Jesus. II. ITS ORDER. 1. Regeneration. 2. Sanctification. 3. Resurrection. III. A COMPLETE SALVATION CHRIST BRINGS TO US. 1. It justifies us before the law. 2. It includes the redemption of the body. 3. It provides for the reunion of body and soul. 4. It establishes personal identity

for ever. 5. It makes certain the reunion and recognition of friends throughout eternity. IV. PRESENT PRACTICAL BEARINGS. 1. We should now seek after the only possible antidote to spiritual death, with all its glorious provisions for time and eternity. If the Spirit of Christ dwell in us, we have nothing to fear from sin and death. 2. The Spirit comes only to those who welcome His coming and cherish His indwelling. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The resurrection of the body*:—Our attention is not directed to the awakening produced by the trump of the archangel, but to the quickening produced by the Spirit of God. We have to consider here the completion of our freedom from the law of sin and death. Observe—I. THAT BY THE RESURRECTION THE LAST LINK OF THE CHAIN OF CORRUPTION WILL BE FINALLY BROKEN. The work of salvation is an ordered scheme, every step of which is arranged by infinite wisdom. God first uncloses the fingers of sin on the spirit, and at last frees the body from its fatal grasp. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." What if the order had been reversed? Why, then the spirit would have been placed beyond that discipline through which its purification is now being carried on. A body fit only for heavenly service would not be fit for earthly pain, sorrow, and death. II. THAT THIS EMANCIPATION IS TO BE EFFECTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is Spirit operating, not on spirit—as in conversion—but on the body. It is the same Spirit, and it follows that it is even part of the same work. The work is effected by the Spirit dwelling in us. There is in the believer a Divine seed, which is destined to break forth from amidst the corruption of the grave into beauteous life. III. THAT THE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS IS ASSOCIATED WITH THAT OF CHRIST. The relation is that of cause and effect, type and fulfilment, pledge and redemption. "Because I live, ye shall live also." (*P. Strutt.*) *The resurrection maintained*:—First, to speak of Christ's resurrection. If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead. This is a circumlocution whereby we have described unto us God the Father, under this notion of raising up of Christ. For the first, the Person here signified or implied, that is God the Father. Indeed, the whole Trinity of Persons had a share in this performance. But yet it is here ascribed to the Father, as that Person who is usually expressed to be the Fountain of the Godhead, as from whom all the actions of the Deity do originally flow and proceed. The second thing, which is here chiefly considerable, is the action attributed to this Person, and that is, the raising up of Jesus from the dead. Jesus Christ, He is thus risen. This is a main article of our Christian faith. The ground of this dispensation is first of all taken from the nature and condition of Christ Himself, who was such an One as death could not long keep in bondage to itself (Acts ii. 24). Secondly, He is therefore risen to manifest the completeness of that redemption which He had wrought for us, and to declare us absolved and acquitted in the sight and presence of God (chap. iv. 25). The use of this doctrine in hand is especially to oppose it to the scandal and reproach of the Cross. The second is the Spirit's inhabitation in those who are the members of Christ. If or forasmuch as this Spirit dwelleth in you. Thus it makes much for the honour and dignity of the servant of God, that He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain should vouchsafe to take up His residence in such narrow rooms as our hearts. And, further, it also minds us of our duty: so to carry and behave ourselves as fit temples of the Holy Ghost to reside in, and to be continually offering up of sacrifices of praises unto Him. The second, which is principally considerable of us, is the inference in these, "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." First, to look upon this passage in its simple and absolute consideration, "He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will also quicken and raise up us, who are," &c. And here, again, two things more: first, the state or condition itself which is here propounded. And that is the resurrection of the saints and true believers. "He shall quicken your mortal bodies." Secondly, the conveyance of this state or condition unto them, or the grace of conferring it upon them by or because of His Spirit, which dwelleth in you. First, to speak of the former—viz., the state or condition itself which is here propounded, and that is the resurrection of the saints. "He shall quicken your mortal bodies"; that is, He shall raise you from death to life. It is that which hath been set forth unto us and shadowed under sundry resemblances—of Aaron's dry rod budding forth and flourishing; of the prophet slain by the lion, but not devoured; of Enoch's translation; of Elijah's rapture; of Elisha's sepulchre reviving a dead man that was cast into it. And it is very suitable and agreeable to reason rightly qualified, though it does not depend upon it. First, to reason that it may be so in regard of

the possibility. It is no way opposite or repugnant to this. Let us consider what our bodies were made of and fetched out of at first, and then it will be no difficulty at all. He that thoroughly believes the creation need never to doubt of the resurrection. Could God make the body out of the dust? and cannot He then restore it from the dust? Secondly, it is also in the equity of it, as that which should be; that so there may be an execution of the just judgment of God upon either part of man which hath done either good or evil. Thirdly, it is so also in the necessity of it, as that which must be; and here are divers and sundry things considerable of us as very much making for it. First, from the covenant of grace, "I will be thy God," &c. Now to be our God is to be the God of our whole persons; not only of our souls, but of our bodies too (Matt. xxii. 32). Secondly, from the work of redemption, which extends to the destroying of death as the last enemy, and to get the conquest and victory over that. Thirdly, from the resurrection of Christ Himself: He is risen in His body, therefore we also shall rise in ours. Fourthly, from the work of the Spirit. The Spirit of God, which is in us, He does certify and assure us hereof—namely, by these gracious effects of His wrought in our souls; while He raises us from the death of sin, He will also raise us from the death of the grave. He that hath done the one, He is ready also to do the other for us. Hence is the Spirit of God called the earnest and pledge hereof unto us (2 Cor. v. 5). This doctrine of the resurrection is more particularly considerable of us in the expression which is here in the text fastened upon it; whilst it is said that "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." And here, again, two things more. First, to speak of the cause of it. He that raised up Christ from the dead; where the resurrection of Christians seems to be made an effect, and consequent of the resurrection of Christ. And so indeed it is, and that according to a threefold influence—first, of merit; secondly, of actual efficacy; and, thirdly, of example. The ground and reason of all is this: because Christ is the Root and Head of all believers, as Adam was of all mankind. And so much may be spoken of the first particular which is here considerable of us, and that is the cause of our resurrection: in these words, "He that raised up Christ from the dead." The second is the carriage of it in these: "shall quicken your mortal bodies." He shall quicken our mortal bodies by making them absolutely immortal. And so now I have done with the first branch in this second general—to wit, the state or condition itself which is here propounded; and that is the resurrection of the saints and true believers, in these words: "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies." The second is the conveyance of this state and condition unto them, or the ground of conferring it upon them, in these words: "By," or "because, of His Spirit that," &c. I read it both ways, either "by" or "because," according to the different translation in the text and in the margin, and each of them different, according to different copies in the original. We may, if we please, take it either way. First, take it in the textual translation: "By His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Where we see how the dwelling of God's Spirit in the children of God is the means and cause and conveyance of resurrection to such as are His children. They rise, but they rise by the virtue of the Spirit of God that dwells in them; and that because they rise in reference to their relation to Christ, as we showed before. But, secondly, we may, if we please, take it also in the marginal translation, which is for, or because, of the Spirit that dwelleth in you, as denoting not only the cause from which, but also the reason for which, this resurrection is conferred upon them. First, I say here is that which is implied: that the Spirit of God dwells in the children of God. The second is that which is inferred: that because and in regard of the Spirit of God dwelling in them, therefore their bodies should be raised and restored again to life. This follows from hence, because the Holy Ghost will not quit His own interest, nor lose anything of that which belongs unto Him, which He should do if the bodies of the saints lay still in their graves, or were wholly annihilated and brought to nothing. The second is conditional, or connective with the words which went before in the beginning of the verse: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up," &c., where resurrection to eternal life is made dependent upon the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in such persons as shall so rise. The consideration of this point may be useful to us, to a twofold purpose. First, as matter of comfort to the saints and servants of God. Secondly, here is matter of terror to all wicked and reprobate persons in regard of the different dispensation of it from that of the children of God. First, as to the manner of it. Whereof the one shall be with rejoicing, the other with horror. Secondly, in regard of the end

of it. The godly, they rise that they may receive their crown and garland. But the wicked, they rise that they may receive their punishment and torment. Thirdly and lastly, in regard of the cause and proceeding of it. The godly, they rise by virtue of their union with Christ as His members, and by virtue of their relation to the Holy Ghost as His temples; but the wicked, they rise by virtue of God's curse upon them and designment to everlasting destruction. The godly, they rise by the power of Christ as a Mediator; the wicked, they rise by the power of Christ as a Judge. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*)

Ver. 12. **Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh.**—*The Christian—a debtor* :—I. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS. We are debtors—1. To all times. (1) To the past. To such who have preceded us we owe the purity of the Church. Shall we not, in some degree, repay the immense debt of our obligation by seeking to make the future also debtors to us, that our descendants may acknowledge that they owe us thanks for preserving the Scriptures, for maintaining liberty, for glorifying God? (2) To the present. We are living in a most marvellous age. We have around us appliances for doing good, such as never before. We have a work to do, as great as our forefathers, and, perhaps, far greater. (3) To the future. Who can tell the fearful consequences to future generations if we now betray our trust? Sow well, for others must reap. You are fountains for coming generations; oh, be careful that your streams are pure. 2. To all classes. There are some that always get well paid for what they do, whose claims, therefore, need no advocacy. I will only mention one class—the poor. Charity to them is a debt, and God requires us to remember the poor. The rich are indebted to them, for while the one hoard wealth the other make it. But in the case of the believing poor, their claim upon us is far more binding. When I think how the poor toil day after day and receive barely enough to keep their souls within their bodies, and how frequently they serve their Church, unhonoured and unrewarded, I cannot but say that we are their debtors in very large degree. We little know how many a blessing the poor man's prayer brings down upon us. 3. To our covenant God; that is the point which swallows up all. I owe nothing to the past, future, rich, poor, compared with what I owe to my God. We are all born God's creatures, and as such we are debtors to obey Him. When we have broken His commandments we are debtors to His justice, and owe him a vast amount of punishment which we are not able to pay. But in the case of the Christian, Christ has paid the debt. I am a debtor to God's love, to God's power, to God's forgiving mercy, and are we not His sons, and is there not a debt the son owes to the Father which a lifetime of obedience can never remove? Remember again, we are Christ's brethren, and there is a debt in brotherhood. II. WHAT OUGHT WE TO DRAW FROM THIS DOCTRINE. 1. A lesson of humility. If we be debtors we never ought to be proud. 2. How zealous we should be for our Master! Though we cannot pay all, we can at least acknowledge the debt, and, if we cannot pay Him the principal, yet to give Him some little interest upon the talent which He has lent to us, and those stupendous mercies which He has granted to us. If we all believed this, how much easier it would be to get our Churches into good order! I go to one brother and say, "There is such-and-such an office in the Sabbath school; will you take it?" "Well, sir, I really work so hard all the week that I cannot." There, you see, that man does not know that he is a debtor. I take him a bill to-morrow morning, and he says, "Do you come begging?" I say, "No; I have brought a bill." "Oh, yes," he says, "I see; there is the cash." Now that is the way to act. Conclusion: Be just before you are generous, and especially before you are generous to yourselves. Take care that you pay your debts before you spend money upon your pleasures. If it is robbing man to spend the money in pleasure wherewith we ought to pay our debts, it is robbing God if we employ our time, our talents, or our money, in anything but His service, until we feel we have done our share in that service. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *We are not debtors to the flesh* :—The word "flesh" may be taken in its physical consideration. There is a debt which every man in a sense does owe unto it. We may be said to be debtors to the flesh, that is, to our bodies, in sundry regards: as to feed them, clothe, and to nourish them. No man ever yet hated his own flesh (Eph. v. 29). And there are some kind of people in the world which are scandalously debtors to it: as, for example, your misers and muck-worms, which pinch and straighten themselves even where God has enlarged them; live poor, that they may die rich. And so likewise not only your covetous, but your superstitious persons, which need-

lessly, and out of a conceit of merit, macerate their flesh, and put a piece of religion in abstaining from such kind of meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth, as it is in 1 Tim. iv. 3. The denial of the flesh, in this sense, is the withholding of a debt from it which is due unto it. Indeed, as to the pampering and inordinate setting out of our bodies, so we are not debtors unto them. A Christian owes his flesh no such special or extraordinary service as this is. And the reasons hereof is taken from the nature and conditions of the body, considered in itself, which, as it is styled in the verse before, is corruptible and mortal. And then, besides, the great impediments which it does cause and contract to the soul, from the inordinate serving of it, whereby it is made so much the more unfit for the duties and exercises of religion, taken in its physical consideration, so far forth as it does denote the body, or outward man. The second is by taking it in the moral. The flesh, that is sin and corruption: and so it seems principally to be understood here in this place. Christians, they are by no means debtors to the fulfilling of their lusts. First, we are not debtors to the flesh, nor have any cause to do service to that, because we have received no answerable benefit from it. A debt it is upon consideration, and does usually and for the most part imply some benefit received. We never got a farthing by sin, any of us, in all our lives. All that we get by sin is nothing but shame and loss. Therefore it is not we that are debtors to it, but it is it, indeed, rather that is a debtor to us, in all those fair promises which it hath some time made unto us, whilst it has performed none. Secondly, as we are not debtors by receipt, so neither are we debtors by promise. That is another way sometimes of coming into debt. Though a man have nothing which he hath received from another, yet if he hath promised him, and bound himself to him, he becomes a debtor to him notwithstanding. There is no man that is a true believer, and that has given up his name to Christ, who has made any promise to sin for the gratifying of it in any particular. Thirdly, there are too many of us who are, as I may say, aforehand with the flesh, in the days of vanity and un-conversion, therefore not debtors to it. If ever they owed anything to it, they have paid it over and over again, and more than enough (1 Pet. iv. 3). Fourthly, we are not debtors to the flesh, because the flesh and we are at absolute enmity and opposition one to another. We have killed and crucified the flesh, as many of us as belong to Christ, therefore we are no longer debtors to it. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). Now, therefore, we are not to conceive as if we owed anything to it. Why, thus it is now with us in regard of the flesh. It concerns us all we can to spoil it, and to divest it of that which it has, therefore we are not to think that we should owe anything to it. Fifthly, we are absolutely freed and discharged from the exactions of it. It has no part or share in us, nor anything at all to do with us, therefore we are not debtors to it (Rom. vi. 28). Those who are regenerate and born again they are made free from sin, and so nothing engaged to the services of it. Sixthly and lastly, we are not debtors to the flesh, because the flesh is not a warrantable creditor for any to be indebted unto. Where there is nothing due, there is no man can be said to be a debtor. Now for the flesh, it is a cheater, and an usurper, and an oppressor. The consideration of this point serves to this purpose: First, to discover to us the sad and miserable condition of all such persons as are out of Christ. There is no man so deeply engaged as that man who is in thraldom to his lusts; and he has all the properties of a sad debtor upon him. First, he is a servant to it; this is the property of a debtor; the borrower is a servant to the lender, as Solomon speaks. He that committeth sin is the servant of sin, so says our Saviour. Why, thus now is every carnal and unregenerate person to his lusts; he is a slave and servant to them, and they lead him whither they please. He that is a debtor to one lust, he shall be a slave to many more with it, which will engage him occasionally from it. Thus he who is a debtor to ambition and pride and vain glory in the world, he is a debtor occasionally to flattery and falsehood and sinful correspondences, for the promoting of such ends to himself. He that is a debtor to covetousness, he is a debtor consequently to cozenage and fraud and oppression, and such causes as these for the satisfying of that humour in him. And he that is a debtor to wantonness and lasciviousness and drunkenness and intemperance, and the like, he is a debtor also to other sins which have an affinity and agreement thereunto. Thus lust is not a single debt, but involves many others besides together with itself, which is a special misery considerable in it. Secondly, another misery in a debtor is that he labours all for another many times and not for himself. He is not only

a servant but a drudge. Those that are addicted and given up to such affections as these are, they can have time and leisure for little else but the following of them, whereas in the meantime their inward man it lies waste, and those means which God has appointed for the advancing thereof are neglected accordingly. Thirdly, another inconvenience of debtors is restraint and want of freedom. Lastly, he that is a debtor to sin, he is the worst kind of debtor of all, because the more that he pays to it the more he still comes in debt to a greater Creditor, and runs in arrears with Him, who will be sure at last to call him to a most strict account about it. And so now I have done with the first general part of the text, which is the negative in that which is expressed, "We are not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh." The second is the affirmative, as that which is implied. But we are debtors to the Spirit, to live after the Spirit. First, for the Creditor: the Spirit. Every Christian is a debtor that is bound and engaged to do this. And first of all, as it denotes the third person in the Trinity, which was spoken of in the verse immediately preceding. Every Christian is a debtor to the Holy Spirit, and that in these respects. First, as the beginner and worker of all grace in him. Secondly, we are engaged to the Spirit, not only as the first beginner, but also as the further increaser of those graces in us which are begun. Thirdly, as our Comforter in afflictions: we are debtors to the Spirit thus. Lastly, as the continual suggester of good thoughts unto us, and restrainer of us from evil. But, secondly, we may take it as denoting the regenerate part in us, in reference to a spiritual life. And thus in this sense are we debtors to the Spirit also. First, we are debtors to the spirit, that is, to the spiritual part in us; in regard of what we have not paid already. There is no man, whoever he be, but he is behindhand, as I may say, to the spirit in this respect. He has not bestowed that time, and pains and endeavour upon his heart, and soul, and spirit as he should, and as it hath become him to do. Secondly, we are debtors to the spirit, in regard of what we ought and are bound to pay unto it. It is a debt which lies upon us to lead a godly and holy life: and that in sundry respects. Thirdly, we are debtors to the Spirit, from the great benefit which does accrue and come to us herefrom, and which we have already had experience of. Let us consider how far we have discharged this debt which we are so much engaged in. Let us cast up our reckonings and see what we have expended answerable to what we have received. Set creditor on one hand and set debtor on the other, as we use to do in other matters. We are debtors to the Spirit, and He will not be put off with such payments as belong rather to the flesh. Were it not a strange thing for a debtor to mistake his true creditor—to run and carry that to one man which belonged rather to another? Why thus it is with many people in regard of their debts for their souls. They are debtors to the Spirit, of their health, of their strength, of their time, of their parts, of their estates, and of all they have. And they offer the payment hereof all to the flesh. What an incongruous thing is this? Therefore I say still, let us be careful to discharge our proper duty in that particular. And to set this so much the more upon us, let us consider these things with ourselves. First, the power of the Creditor. And if we neglect or refuse to pay Him, He knows how to help Himself. No securing or saving themselves from Him who is able to meet with them. Secondly, the strictness of the Creditor. That is another thing considerable likewise. He is one that is exact in His demands, which should make us in our returns to be so likewise. Thirdly, let us further consider to this purpose the great advantage of paying, and the special benefit which comes to us by it, while being debtors to the Spirit we are careful to be payers too. We have a threefold accommodation from it. First, a further entrusting and committing of more unto us. Such debtors as are not careful to pay, there is nobody will trust them with any more. Secondly, further enablement. The more we are careful to pay the more we shall be able to pay. Every new performance is a preparation and disposition to another. To him that thus hath shall be given. Thirdly, peace of conscience and satisfaction and tranquility of mind. Debts they are commonly troublesome, and do much disquiet the minds of those who are entangled with them. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *A debtor to the flesh*:—At the time this Epistle was written, and among the people to whom it was addressed, the creditor exercised over the debtor a power which the humanity of modern times has abolished. The unfortunate man who was insolvent was at the mercy of his creditor, and might be treated as he chose. It has long been a question whether, according to the Roman law, the creditors had not the right of cutting the man's body in pieces in proportion to the amount of their claims; and there can be no doubt that the debtor's person as well as his property, his

family as well as himself, were liable to be apprehended and disposed of; just as we read in the parable, where the king is found ordering that the servant who owed him ten thousand talents should be sold, with his family and all that he had, that payment might be made. In this sense, therefore, the debtor of the flesh would have been a man over whom the flesh had established an absolute power; whose mind as well as body were devoted to its service, and bound to do its will—who, if he laboured, was to labour that he might make "provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof"; who, if he rested, was to rest that he might indulge it in all its inclinations more freely; who, if he thought, was to be thinking about things to be had in the body, or, if he spoke, was to be speaking of them, and was to show a distaste for thought and conversation of a higher, purer character. There are many who are debtors to the flesh; who acknowledge the obligations, and show no inclination to be released from it. Listen to the voice of the world. Hear how the young are told that they ought to enjoy themselves while they are able, and that no one can condemn them if they do so. Hear how those who are more advanced are told that in dress, furniture, table, amusements, they ought to do what others do, and that they ought not to give offence by adopting a more Christian course of life than that which their neighbours lead. And when this language of the world comes to be translated into the words of the text, is it not equivalent with saying, "We are debtors to the flesh, to make provision for its indulgence; we are debtors to the flesh for everything we enjoy or desire; and therefore we are bound to do all we can, in order to fulfil its purposes and gratify its wishes"? "Therefore," as the apostle continues, "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." If you have persuaded yourselves that you must owe to the flesh the happiness you wish for, and if, acting under this impression, that you are "debtors to the flesh," you determine to "live after the flesh," death will soon come and put an end to all these dreams you have been cherishing; but long before death comes to chill your mirth, long before those rosebuds are withered with which you have been crowning yourselves, a deadness of heart shall come over you, a deadness to all spiritual things, which shall be the pledge and token of eternal death. (*H. Raikes, M.A.*) *Debtors to the flesh*:—I. THE OBLIGATION DUE TO THE BODY. We are in the flesh, and the flesh has claims which rest upon Divine appointment. 1. Observe the form in which the apostle puts the matter. We may be debtors to the flesh, but not to live after it. The duty we owe it is not that of servants to a master, but of a master to his servants. We are debtors in respect to food, medicine, raiment, shelter, temperance and cleanliness. And to those who belong to us after the flesh we are debtors for earthly things; and he that careth not for them is worse than an infidel. 2. Let us go further. Our bodies are the Divine workmanship, and their faculties are of God's making and giving. Why? Not that they should run away with us or rule us, but that they should be subject to us. II. THE LIMIT OF THE OBLIGATION. "Not to live after the flesh." Men live after the flesh—1. When the flesh is made the chief object of care, and this we are not obliged to do by any Divine law. 2. When we allow carnal indulgence to interfere with Christian duty. 3. When we decline bodily suffering in the cause and at the call of God. 4. When we are guided by a carnal policy in the conduct of life. III. THE DIFFICULTY OF THE OBLIGATION. We shall find the flesh so tyrannical that to keep within the actual limit of obligation is no easy matter. To mortify the deeds of the body thus becomes an important duty. This mortification is evangelical in motive, spiritual in nature, gradual in consummation. IV. THIS MORTIFICATION IS AT ONCE THE TEST OF SPIRITUALITY OF MIND AND THE FRUIT OF THE EFFECTUAL WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Salvation is not only a work for us, but in us. 1. The Great Helper. We are not left to ourselves. 2. But a helper implies our own activity. 3. This proclaims the energy and reality of the spiritual life. (*Percy Strutt.*) *Believers not debtors to the flesh*:—I. NOT FROM RELATIONSHIP. The flesh is no part of our original nature. II. NOT FROM GRATITUDE. Its effects upon us have been only evil. III. NOT FROM DUTY. It is opposed to God, who commands us to crucify it. IV. NOT FROM INTEREST. Only misery and death ever to be reaped from it (Gal. vi. 8). We are debtors to the body, which is God's creature (Acts xxvii. 34; Eph. v. 29), but not debtors to the flesh, which is Satan's production (Matt. xiii. 38; 1 John iii. 8). We are debtors to the body to satisfy its wants, but not to the flesh to gratify its lusts (chap. xiii. 14). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The Christian a debtor not to the flesh, but to the Spirit*:—You take a wild briar from the hedge, and plant it in your garden; upon that briar you graft the choicest rose, and the result is—what? not two distinct identities, the briar

flourishing as a briar, and the rose as a rose, nor the briar being completely absorbed into the rose, but two distinct natures forming one individuality, of which one represents the original individuality of the briar, while the other the imparted nature of the rose. This original individuality is only to be allowed to express itself through the imparted nature. All self-assertion on the part of the original briar stock, as distinct from the new nature engrafted upon it, is to be rigorously repressed. Neglect this process of repression, and the briar may make shoots below the graft; and as these shoots develop themselves the rose nature begins to lose ground, and suffers in foliage and flower, until, if the process be only allowed to go far enough, the rose is extinguished, the old briar is supreme. Yet observe: the briar itself is not repressed; it is allowed to develop itself in accordance with the laws of its own nature, but only through the rose. None of its personal rights or functions are to be interfered with; it is not to be robbed of the enjoyment of full vital vigour; but all this is to go to the production of a flower worthy of your garden, instead of the scanty and quickly-fading bloom of the hedge-rose. What is it that produces the standard rose? Not the rose without the briar; not the briar without the rose, but the rose and the briar united in one. In that standard rose, Christian, behold a picture of thyself if Christ is formed in thee! Thy individuality is not to be repressed; no healthy function of thy nature is to be laid aside. Yet is it necessary that you should be prepared to mortify the deeds of the body, or the old nature may assert itself apart from all reference to the new. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." Do you ask how? I reply that the same Spirit which has already introduced the new nature, and united Himself, provides the pruning-knife. "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." We are debtors, not to the old briar-stock apart from the rose, for what did that ever bear that was worth gathering? what fruit had we but those things whereof we are now ashamed? the end of those things was death. But we are debtors, not only to that God whose sovereign love has made us what we are; not only to that Saviour who has redeemed us from the slavery of sin; not only to that Spirit who has condescended to make our body His temple; but we owe it to our new selves—that self into which the new Adam has been grafted, and wherein the new Adam claims to have His way; we owe it to that sense of harmony which pervades the once distracted elements of our nature; to that calm which has taken the place of our former disquietude; to that joy which has already furnished us with a foretaste of heaven; that we should be true to the instincts of our new life, and to the laws of our renovated nature! To forget this solemn debt is to turn our backs on all that makes life profitable, is to give ourselves over to spiritual bankruptcy; to recognise it and pay it with loyal and grateful devotion, is to secure boundless resources of infinite wealth. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"; and he who dies is stripped of all: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"; and he who thus lives, lives in the enjoyment of all. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *The believers' obligation*:—I. THE SOLEMN OBLIGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. We are debtors; but the flesh is not our creditor. Do we owe anything to sin, the parent of all woe? To Satan—who plotted our temptation and accomplished our downfall? To the world—ensnaring, deceitful, and ruinous? No; to these, the allies of the flesh, we owe nothing but hatred and opposition. And yet the saints of God are "debtors." 1. To the Father, for His electing love, His unspeakable gift, His spiritual blessings in Christ. 2. To the Son. He was the active agent in our redemption. He left no path untrodden, no portion of the curse unborne, no sin unatoned, no part of the law uncancelled, nothing for us in the matter of our salvation to do, but simply believe and be saved. 3. To the Holy Spirit, for leading us to Christ; for dwelling in our hearts; for His healing, sanctifying, comforting, and restoring grace; for His influence which no ingratitude has quenched; for His patience which no backsliding has exhausted; for His love which no sin has annihilated. We owe Him the intellect He has renewed, the heart He has sanctified, the body He inhabits, every breath of life He has inspired, and every pulse of love He has awakened. II. THE DUTY TO WHICH THAT OBLIGATION BINDS THEM. Holiness, or the mortification of sin, the opposite of "living after the flesh," a subject strangely misunderstood to mean a mere maceration or mortification of the body, the mere excision of outward sins, or the destruction of sin altogether. True mortification is—1. An annulling of the covenant with sin: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," no union, "but rather reprove

them." "What have I to do any more with idols?" The resources of sin must be cut off: "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Whatever tends to, and terminates in, the sinful gratification of the flesh, is to be relinquished. 2. A crucifixion: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." Death by the cross is certain, yet lingering. III. THE TWOFOLD AGENCY BY WHICH THE WORK IS ACCOMPLISHED. 1. "If ye." The believer is not a cipher in this work. His usefulness, his happiness, his hope of heaven, are all included in it. The work of the Spirit is not, and never was designed to be, a substitute for the personal work of the believer. "Work out your own salvation." Let us, then, be cautious of merging human responsibility in Divine influence; of exalting the one at the expense of the other; of cloaking the spirit of slothfulness beneath an apparently jealous regard for the honour of the Holy Ghost. Is no self-effort to be made to dethrone an unlawful habit, to resist a powerful temptation, to dissolve the spell that binds us to a dangerous enchantment, to unwind the chain that makes us the slave of a wrong inclination? Oh, surely, God deals not with us as we deal with a piece of mechanism—but as reasonable, moral, and accountable beings. "I drew you with the bands of a man." 2. And it infinitely transcends the mightiest puttings forth of creative power. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify." 1. This He does by making us more sensible of the existence of indwelling sin, by deepening our aspirations after holiness, by shedding abroad the love of God in the heart. But above all, by leading us to the Cross, and showing us that, as Christ died for sin, so we must die to sin, and by the self-same instrument too. 2. The Spirit effects it, but through the instrumentality of the Atonement. There must be a personal contact with Jesus. This only is it that draws forth His grace. (*A. Winslow, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.**—*Sin and death, or grace and life*:—I. IF SIN LIVE IN US, WE SHALL DIE. 1. To live "after the flesh" is to obey the orders of our corrupt nature; to gratify its sinful desires without regard to or in contradiction of the will of God. And this will appear if we consider—(1) The actions of a carnal man (Gal. v. 19; Eph. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 10). (2) His words (Matt. xii. 34; Eph. v. 4; James iii. 6). (3) His thoughts (Prov. xxiii. 7; Matt. xv. 18; Psa. x. 4; Phil. iii. 19; 1 John ii. 15). 2. Now, mark the consequence of living after the flesh; "ye shall die!" (ver. 6; 1 Tim. v. 6; Eph. ii. 1; Rom. vi. 2). What else could be reasonably expected? There are but two eternal states, and every man is training up for one of these. The carnal man is unfit for heaven; for all the joys and employments of the blessed are spiritual. II. IF SIN DIE IN US, WE SHALL LIVE. 1. To mortify sin is to put it to death, as the magistrates put a felon to death by due course of justice; he is suspected, apprehended, tried, and executed. Crucifixion is the manner of killing it which God has appointed (Gal. v. 24). This is—(1) A violent and painful death. (2) A scandalous death. (3) A slow and lingering death. 2. By what means may we effectually mortify sin? "Through the Spirit." We must first have the Spirit, that we may experience His sanctifying power. The Spirit helps us to mortify sin—(1) By enabling us to discover it, and by showing us its abominable nature; filling our souls with a sincere dislike to it, and a holy determination to destroy it. (2) By giving us faith, and leading us to Christ for pardon, righteousness, and strength. 3. This promised help of the Spirit does not exclude the use of means on our part. The Spirit so works in us, as also to work by us. The duty is ours; the grace is His. 4. Thus doing, we "shall live." There is no condemnation to persons of this character. This is an evidence that they have "passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). They live indeed, for Christ liveth in them. They live to God; and in this, their gradual sanctification, consists their meetness for heaven, where sin shall be all done away. But, oh sinner, what will be the end of thy present pursuits? (chap. vi. 21). (*G. Burder.*) *Grace the only source of goodness*:—I. WITHOUT GOD, ENDLESS CONFLICT. 1. "The body" or "the flesh" (chap. vii. 25; Gal. v. 17), or "the earthly members" (Col. iii. 5; Rom. viii. 23). (1) Is regarded as the source of—(*a*) Our animal appetites (Gal. v. 19, "fornication," &c.). (*b*) Our selfish passions (Gal. v. 20, "hatred," &c.). (*c*) Our mental perversities (Gal. v. 20, "idolatry," &c.)—all those false notions which are called (Eph. ii. 3) the working of the understanding that judges according to sense, as distinguished from the pure reason (chap. i. 21). (2) All these workings of "the flesh" are sinful, *i.e.*, abnormal, contrary to the end for

which God has made us" (chap. vii. 14, 18). 2. "The spirit," "the mind," "the inward man" (chap. vii. 22, 23) is the source of our—(1) Moral principles (chap. vii. 22; Matt. xxvi. 41). (2) Social affections (Gal. v. 22). 3. These workings of "the Spirit" are in endless conflict with the workings of the flesh (Gal. v. 17; Rom. viii. 7–25), but with no sufficient power to overcome them (chap. vii. 18, 19; Matt. xxvi. 41); so that the result is only self-contradiction, self-condemnation, misery, and death (chap. vii. 24). II. WITH GOD, FINAL VICTORY (vers. 2–4). "The deeds of the body," or "works of the flesh" (Gal. v. 19), mean the products of our lower nature, whether of thought, or feeling, or act. To "mortify," "crucify" (Gal. v. 24), "deaden" them (Col. iii. 5), is to reduce them to impotence. Observe the antithesis: If ye put to death your animal nature, you yourself, who are spirit, shall live. And this death of sin is to be effected by the life of God in the soul. 1. Raise us above sin. God's Spirit in us raises us into the region of spirit. And in this atmosphere sin cannot reach us (1 John v. 18). The thought of sin is most alien when the thought of God is most vivid. In fellowship with holy men, how hateful sin appears! How much more, therefore, when in fellowship with the Holy One? Aaron down in the plain was soon seduced from God's commandments. Moses in the mount grasped them firmly with both hands. Whence the importance of prayer (Matt. xvii. 21). 2. Hearten us against sin (ver. 15). Knowing that we are on God's side, we know also that God is on our side (Gen. vi. 24; Numb. xix. 9; 2 Kings vi. 16; Isa. xli. 10). And so the animation of Moses fills us: "Fear not! Stand still, and see the salvation God can work" (Exod. xiv. 13, 14). Jesus, full of the spirit of Sonship, put back easily all the suggestions of the tempter. 3. Make us triumphant over sin. The things impossible to man by himself are possible to him with God (1 John iv. 4; Eph. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 13). (*Preb. Griffith.*) *Mortification a Christian duty*:—In the text itself there are two general parts considerable. First, a conditional threatening or dreadful commination upon supposition of miscarriage: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." When it is said of such persons that they shall die, we must take it in the full latitude and extent of death, that is—First, as to temporal death, or natural, which consists in the mere separation of soul and body. This it holds good, according to a twofold account. First, in the course of God's justice, who hath so ordained it and appointed it (chap. i. 32). Secondly, from a connection of the cause with the effect. Sin, and especially a living and conversing in the ways of it, brings death. Secondly, spiritual death, which consists in deprivation of grace, and holiness, and peace, and spiritual comfort. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Thirdly, there is another death, and that is death eternal. The separation of soul and body from God for ever in hell. And this is also consequent upon living after the flesh. The second is the conditional promise or comfortable intimation upon supposition of repentance and new obedience in these: "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh," &c. Wherein again we have four particulars. First, to speak of the duty itself, which is mortification. "If ye," &c. This is a duty which lies upon every Christian, to exercise and inure himself to mortification, that is, to the killing and crucifying of sin in him. For the better opening of this present point unto us, there are two things especially which are here to be declared by us. First, wherein this mortifying of sin, whereof we now speak, does mainly and principally consist. And this we may take according to these following explications. First, it does imply an active and spontaneous opposition of sin of our own accord. Secondly, it does imply difficulty and trouble in the performance of it. Dying, it is usually with some pain: as being that which nature does struggle with and strive against, especially violent death and that which follows upon killing. This, it is painful, especially. Created nature does not more abhor natural death, the death of the body, than corrupted nature does abhor this mystical death. The killing of sin. Oh, it is that which a carnal person cannot endure to hear or think of. This arises from that strength and settlement which sin hath in the heart. As we see it is again in nature, that those who have the strongest constitutions, they have commonly the painfullest deaths. Even so is it likewise in grace: those who have the strongest corruption, they have the hardest mortification. Thirdly, this mortification, it does imply a weakening of the power and vigour of sin in us. That look as a body which is dead, it is thereby made unserviceable and unfit for the actions of life. So a man also, that is spiritually mortified, sin is in him made unactive and unfit for the former services and performances which proceeded from it. Fourthly, it implies universality, that is, a resisting of all kind of sin, without exception. Killing, it

is a destroying of life in every part. There must not be only a restraining of some sins, but a fighting against all. Where any one reigns there is no true mortification. Fifthly and lastly, it implies continuance and the often renewing of this act time after time. The second is the grounds or reasons which do make for the performance of it, which may be reduced to these heads. First, the nature of sin and the thing itself, which is to be mortified, and that is our mortal and deadly enemy. "If a man find his enemy," says Saul, "will he let him go well away?" Enmity, it invites destruction as well as threatens it. Secondly, there is reason for it also from that power which is wrought in a Christian by Christ's Spirit tending thereto, and the special virtue which is contained in the death and sufferings of Christ to this purpose. Because ye are dead and risen with Christ, therefore "mortify your earthly members," &c. Thirdly, it is requisite also from that obedience which we owe to God in the whole course of our lives. No man can be alive to God, that is, perform lively service to Him, but he that is first dead to sin, that is, that hath sin and corruption first crucified and mortified in him. Fourthly, as an evidence of our justification and the forgiveness of our sins unto us. No man can be so comfortably assured that his sin is pardoned that does not find his sin mortified. Wherever sin remains in the power of it, it remains also in the guilt of it. To quicken and provoke us so much the more hereunto, let us take in these considerations with us. First, the command of God, who has laid this duty upon us. Secondly, our own interest and the great good which we reap from it, both in point of grace and comfort, and at last of salvation itself, as it follows afterwards in the text, where it is said, "Ye shall live." Thirdly, the evil of the contrary, and the great disparagement which lies upon sin unmortified. Sin it is an odious business in many respects, and hath sundry inconveniences with it. First, there is no true pleasure or contentment in it. Secondly, sin is also insatiable, and the more that men give way unto it the more it prevails still upon them. Thirdly, sin is deceitful and dangerous. It makes us slaves to Satan; it makes us enemies to God; it crucifies Christ; it fights against the soul. Now for the right performance of this duty, and that we may do it so as we should do, it is requisite for us to take notice of these three following rules, or directions, which conduce hereto. First, there must be a steadfast purpose of opposing and resisting of sin with might and main. Secondly, there must be a diligent heed for the avoiding of all occasions of sin and all inducements which lead thereunto. Thirdly, there must be a conscionable use of all such means as serve to the subduing of sin in us. What are they? First, a sober and moderate use of the creatures in those things which in their own nature are lawful and warrantable. Secondly, prayer and fasting; that is another help likewise. Thirdly, and principally, an act of faith in the death and sufferings of Christ. The second is the object of this duty, or the matter which it is conversant about. And that is here expressed to be the deeds of the body. What is the meaning of this? that is, indeed, the sins and miscarriages of the whole man. We are not here to take it in the limited sense only, but in the extended. This work of mortification, it begins first of all in the inward man, and so ends in the outward; only the outward is here mentioned and named. And it is said the deeds of the body expressly, because the body it is that wherein sin does especially show and discover itself; whereas the mind is not so easily discerned in the corruptions of it. So 2 Cor. v. 10. The things which are done in the body, though comprehending the soul likewise, the actions of the whole person; and Col. iii. 9, the old man with his deeds. The third particular is the principle whence this duty doth proceed in us, or the means whereby we perform it. And that is here expressed to be the Spirit. "If ye by the Spirit," &c. By the Spirit we are here to understand the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit which is called so emphatically. Mortification of sin is the proper work of this Spirit in us, and is effected in no other way. The same Spirit that is active in quickening of us and in infusing of grace into us; the same Spirit is also active in mortifying of us and in killing of sin in us. This must needs be so upon these following considerations. First, from the strength and power of sin, and that rooting which it hath in the soul. None can overcome the strong man, but some one that is stronger than he indeed is. Secondly, from the proper means of the killing of sin in us, which, as we showed before, is the application of Christ's death unto us. Now, this is done only by the Spirit which is active in us to this purpose. Thirdly, from the covenant of grace which God hath made with all believers, which is to bestow His Spirit upon them to this purpose, as Ezek. xxxvi. 27. The fourth, and last, is the benefit or reward consequent upon it. That is in

these words, "Ye shall live." It holds good in all the notions and specifications of life whatsoever. First, of natural life, "Length of days is in her right hand" (Prov. iii. 16). Secondly, of spiritual life, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith," &c. Thirdly, of eterna life (chap. vi. 22), "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." And Gal. vi. 8, "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Mortification*:—I. THE ACT—"Mortify." 1. Sin is active in the soul of an unregenerate man. Justification supposeth guilt, sanctification filth, mortification life, preceding those acts. 2. Nothing but the death of sin must content a renewed soul. No indulgence to be shown to it; not the loss of a member, but the loss of its life. As nothing but the death of Christ would satisfy the justice of God, so nothing but the death of sin must satisfy the justice of the soul. 3. "Do mortify." The time present. As sin must have no pardon, so it must have no reprieve. Dangerous enemies must be handled with a quick severity. 4. "Do mortify." It notes a continued act. It must be a quick and an uninterrupted severity. II. THE OBJECT—"The deeds of the body." 1. Mortification must be universal; not one deed, but deeds, little and great. Though the main battle be routed, yet the wings of an army may get the victory. 2. The body signifies corrupt nature, deeds are the products of it; all the sparks issue from the furnace within. 3. The greatest object of our revenge is within us. Our enemy has got possession of our souls, which makes the work more difficult. An enemy may better be kept out than cast out when he has got possession. III. THE AGENTS—"ye," "the Spirit." 1. Man must be an agent in this work. We have brought this rebel into our souls, and God would have us make as it were some recompence by endeavouring to cast it out. 2. Through the Spirit. (1) Mortification is not the work of nature; it is a spiritual work. We must engage in the duel, but it is the strength of the Spirit only can render us victorious. The duty is ours, but the success is from God. We can sin of ourselves, but not overcome sin by ourselves. (2) The difficulty of this work is manifested by the necessity of the Spirit's efficacy. Not all the powers on earth, nor the strength of ordinances, can do it. IV. THE PROMISE—"Ye shall live." 1. Heaven is a place for conquerors only (Rev. iii. 21). He that will be sin's friend, cannot be God's favourite. There must be a combat before a victory, and a victory before a triumph. 2. The more perfect our mortification, the clearer our assurance of glory. The more sin dies, the more the soul lives. 3. Mortification is a sure sign of saving grace. It is a sign of the Spirit's indwelling and powerful acting, a sign of an approach to heaven. (*S. Charnock, B.D.*) *The mortification of sin*:—I. WHAT MORTIFICATION IS. 1. A breaking of the league naturally held with sin (Eph. v. 11; Hosea xiv. 8). 2. A declaration of open hostility. When leagues between princes are broken war ensues. This hostility begins in cutting off all the supplies of sin (chap. xiii. 14, &c.). 3. A powerful resistance, by using all the weapons of the Christian armoury (Eph. vi. 13, 14, &c.). 4. A killing of sin. II. HOW WE MAY JUDGE OF OUR MORTIFICATION. 1. Negatively. (1) All cessation from some particular sin is not a mortification. It may only be—(*a*) An exchange. It may be a divorce from a sin odious to the world, and an embracing another that hath more specious pretences. (*b*) A cessation from some outward gross acts only, not from a want of will to sin. There may be pride, ambition, covetousness, uncleanness, when they are not externally acted; which is more dangerous, as infectious diseases are when they are hindered by cold from a kindly eruption, and strike inward to the heart, and so prove mortal. (*c*) A cessation merely because of the alteration of the constitution. Lust reigns in young men, but its empire decays in an old withered body; some plants which grow in hot countries will die in colder climates. Ambition decays in age when strength is wasted, but sprouts up in a young man. A present sickness may make an epicure nauseate the dainties which he would before rake even in the sea to procure. (*d*) A cessation may be forced by some forethoughts of death, some pang of conscience, or some judgment of God; which as a pain in one part of the body may take away a man's appetite, but when removed, his appetite returns. (*e*) A cessation from want of opportunity. (2) Restraints from sin are not mortification of it. (*a*) Mortification is always from an inward principle, restraints from an outward. A restraint is merely a pull back, by a stronger power, but mortification is from a strength given, a new mettle put into the soul (Eph. iii. 16). (*b*) Mortification proceeds from an anger with, and a hatred of, sin, whereas restraints are from a fear of the consequents of sin; as a man may love the wine, which is as yet too

hot for his lips. (*c*) Mortification is a voluntary, rational work of the soul; restraints are not so. 2. Positively. The signs are—(1) When the beloved lust doth not stir upon a temptation that did usually excite, as it is a sign of the clearness of a fountain when after the stirring of the water the mud doth not appear; or as it is with a man that is sick—set the most savoury meat before him, if his appetite be not provoked, it is an argument of the strength of his distemper, and where it is lasting, of his approaching death. None will question the deadness of that tree at the root which doth not bud upon the return of the spring sun; nor need we question the weakness of that corruption which doth not stir upon the presenting a suitable temptation. (2) When we meet with few interruptions in duties of worship. Easy compliance with diversions is a sign of an unmortified frame; as it is the sign of much weakness in a person, and the strength of his distemper, when the least blow or jog makes him let go his hold of anything. (3) When we bring forth the fruits of the contrary graces. The more sweet and full fruit a tree bears, the more evidence there is of the weakness of those suckers which are about the root to hinder its generous productions. III. THE REASONS WHY THERE CAN BE NO EXPECTATION OF ETERNAL LIFE WITHOUT MORTIFICATION. An unmortified frame is—1. Unsuitable to a state of glory (Col. i. 12). Conformity to Christ is to fit us for heaven. He descended to the grave before He ascended; so our sins must die before our souls can mount. It is very unsuitable for sin's drudges to have a saint's portion. Every vessel must be emptied of its foul water before it can receive that which is clean. No man pours rich wine into old casks. 2. Such as God cannot delight in. To delight in such would be to have no delight in his own nature. To keep sin alive is to defend it against the will of God, and to challenge the combat with our Maker. 3. Against the whole design of the gospel. Rather than sin should not die, Christ would die Himself; it is therefore a high disesteem of Christ to preserve the life of sin, and if we defend what He died to conquer, how can we expect to enjoy what He died to purchase? For what the grace of the gospel doth more especially teach, read Tit. ii. 4; Psa. v. 4. It is an inseparable character of them that are Christ's, that "they have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Conclusion: Let us labour to mortify sin. If we will not be the death of sin, sin will be the death of our souls. 1. Implore the help of the Spirit. 2. Listen to His convictions. 3. Plead the death of Christ, the end of which was to triumph over sin. 4. Often think of Divine precepts. 5. Be jealous of our own hearts. Venture not to breathe in corrupt air, for fear of infection. 6. Bless God for whatsoever mortifying grace we have received. (*Ibid.*) *Life in mortification of the flesh*:—I. WHAT IT IS TO MORTIFY. This word occurs but twice in the whole Scriptures—in the text, and in Col. iii. 5. 1. "To mortify" is now commonly used in a far less extreme sense than its original signification. Thus we speak of mortified pride, which has been simply disappointed of its passing object; whereas to mortify is to be in a process of death, though joined to something living—as a diseased limb may be mortified, while the other parts of the body are healthy; and it is only by the process of the healthy part of the body casting off from itself the mortified flesh, that the whole system can escape dissolution. In this sense we are to understand the mortification of the carnal and ungodly desires, which the power of Divine grace, the vital energy of the new creature, will enable it to cast from itself, and thereby save the soul alive, which the process of moral putrefaction had otherwise corrupted and slain. Hence the striking force of the injunctions—"Crucify the flesh"; "put away the old man"; "cast out the bondwoman"; "cut off the offending right hand," or "pluck out the right eye." 2. Then to mortify sin is not to deal equivocally with it, to fight against its practices and leave untouched the principle, as Saul slew the Amalekites, but spared Agag. To mortify sin is not merely to smite and oppose it, but to put it to death—to have "no confidence in the flesh"—to "yield no member to uncleanness"—to "deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts"—to "avoid the very appearance of evil"—to "let it not be so much as named among you as becometh saints." It means, that "if sinners entice, we are to consent not"; but in every sense to "be not overcome with evil," but to "resist the devil, and he will flee from us," clinging hard and fast by "the God of peace, who shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly." II. WHAT IS TO BE MORTIFIED? "The deeds of the body"—that is, not one deed, but all, whether of the inward or of the outward man. This may be illustrated by the injunction—"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out"; not that Jesus would have us literally maim the body which He created perfect. But as He had just been speaking of the adultery of the eye, as

distinguished from, yet identified in guilt with the actual sin, and there called it "the adultery of the heart." His meaning is, that we should begin the cure of sin at the seat of the disease, the corrupt heart—that we should destroy the fruits of sin by plucking up the lust at its roots. What so delicate, so useful, or so expressive a feature as the right eye! But if rather than sin, and imperil the whole body, the right eye is to be plucked out, then we learn that the tenderest affections and the most necessary comforts that would impair the beauty of holiness are all to be sacrificed. Again, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." The right hand is the emblem of dignity—Joseph sits at the right hand of Pharaoh; of power—"Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things"; of friendship—"To me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship"; of covenants—"Though Coniah were the signet on My right hand"; of industry and business—"Let my right hand forget her cunning." If, then, the "right hand" that casts a stumbling-block in our way is to be "cut off," then is the place of secular dignity to be resigned, if we find it lifting up our hearts above humility. And the post of power must be renounced if we discover that it has led us to forget our weakness apart from God. And the bond of friendship, if it has led us to soften down the points of distinction between the worldling and the believer, must be broken. And the covenant with ungodliness must be dissolved. Even industry in business may be in our way, and if so we must consent to mortification here. Better cut off the hand than lose the head; rather maim the body than mar the soul. If religion be worth anything, it is worth everything; therefore sacrifice anything but Christ. III. BY WHOM THE DEEDS OF THE BODY ARE TO BE MORTIFIED? There are two agents—the one active, the Holy Spirit; the other passive, the believer himself. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify." We can do nothing without Him; He will do nothing without us. IV. THE ANIMATING RESULT OF THE SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT WITH THE FLESH. "Ye shall live" a life of grace and holiness, of estrangement from the world and communion with God; of happiness, usefulness, and comfort on earth, and of glory and blessedness in heaven. (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *Higher or lower: which shall win:*—1. We shall all agree, who have tried to do right and avoid wrong, that there goes on in us a strange struggle. We wish to do a right thing, and at the very same time long to do a wrong one, as if we were a better and a worse man struggling for the mastery. One may conquer, or the other. We may be like the drunkard who cannot help draining off his liquor, though he knows that it is going to kill him; or we may be like the man who conquers his love for drink, and puts the liquor away, because he knows that he ought not to take it. We know too well, many of us, how painful this inward struggle is. We all understand too well how Paul was ready at times to cry. "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We can understand too the parable of Plato, who says, that the soul of man is like a chariot, guided by a man's will, but drawn by two horses—the one horse white, beautiful and noble, well-broken and winged, always trying to rise and fly upward with the chariot toward heaven; but the other black, evil, and unmanageable, always trying to rush downward, and drag the chariot and the driver into hell. 2. In the text St. Paul explains this struggle. First, there is a flesh in us—that is, an animal nature. We come into the world as animals do—eat, drink, sleep as they do—have the same passions as they have—and our carnal bodies die exactly as they die. But are we nothing more? God forbid. We know that to be a man we must be something more than a mere brute—for when we call any one a brute, what do we mean? That he has given himself up to his animal nature till the man in him is dead, and only the brute remains. Our giving way to the same selfish, shameless passions, which we see in the lower animals, is letting the "brute" in us conquer. The shameless and profligate person—the man who beats his wife—or ill-treats his children—or in any wise tyrannises over those who are weaker than himself, gives way to the "brute" within him. He who grudges, envies, tries to aggrandise himself at his neighbour's expense—he too gives way to the "brute" within him, and puts on the likeness of the dog which snatches and snarls over his bone. He who spends his life in cunning plots and mean tricks, gives way to the "brute" in him, just as much as the fox or ferret. And those, let me say, who, without giving way to those grosser vices, let their minds be swallowed up with vanity, always longing to be seen and looked at, and wondering what folks will say of them, they too give way to the flesh, and lower themselves to the likeness of animals. As vain as a peacock, says the old proverb. And what shall we say of them who like the swine live only for eating and drinking and enjoyment? Or what of those who like the butterflies spend all their time in

frivolous amusement? Do not all these in some way or other live after the flesh? And do they not fulfil St. Paul's words, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die"? 3. But some one will say—"Of course we shall all die—good and bad alike." Then why does our Lord say, "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die"? And why does St. Paul say, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live"? Let us look at the text again. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." If you give way to those animal passions you shall die; not merely your bodies—they will die in any case—the animals do—for animals they are, and as animals die they must. But over and above that, you yourselves shall die—your character, your manhood or your womanhood, your immortal soul will die. There is a second death to which that first death of the body is a mere trivial and harmless accident, and that may begin in this life, and if it be not stopped and cured in time, may go on for ever. 4. This is the dark side of the matter. But there is also a bright side. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If you will be true to your better selves, if you will listen to and obey the Spirit of God, when He puts into your hearts good desires, and makes you long to be just and true, pure and sober, kind and useful. If you will cast away and trample under foot animal passions, low vices, you shall live. *You* shall live, your very soul and self for ever—all that is merciful, kind, pure, noble, useful—in one word, all in you that is like Christ, like God, that is spirit and not flesh, shall live for ever. So it must be, for "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Those who let the Spirit of God lead them upward instead of letting their own animal nature drag them downward, are the sons of God. And how can a son of God perish? How can he perish, who like Christ is full of the fruits of the Spirit?—of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance? The world did not give them to him, and the world cannot take them from him. They were not bestowed on him at his bodily birth—neither shall they be taken from him at his bodily death. 5. Choose, especially you who are young and entering into life. Remember the parable of the old heathen. Choose in time whether the better horse shall win or the worse. And let no one tell you, "We shall do a great many wrong things before we die. Every one does that; but we hope we shall be able to make our peace with God before we die." That kind of religion has done more harm than most kinds of irreligion. It tells you to take your chance of beginning at the end. Common sense tells you that the only way to get to the end is by beginning at the beginning, which is now. Do not talk about making your peace with God some day—like a naughty child playing truant till the last moment, and hoping that the schoolmaster may forget to punish it. (*Charles Kingsley, M.A.*)

Ver. 14. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**—*The leading of the Spirit*:—We are led not as brute beasts, but as reasonable creatures; not as though we do nothing, but lest we should do no good thing. Neither are we led against our will, but in the leading made willing to be led; so willing, that when God hath once breathed His grace unto us, we cannot resist, but earnestly desire to be led. And yet is not the nature of the will overthrown. But as orators by their eloquence do rule in the mind of their auditors, so God much more effectually draws us to desire Christ, and affect the gospel. If a covetous man were offered to take what he would of a heap of gold, no man doubts but he would gladly embrace such occasion, though simply and absolutely it were in his power to refuse it. So our Heavenly Father doth so commodiously show us the riches of His grace, so lovingly doth He invite us to receive it, and so aptly doth He exhort us, that He doth persuade us, without any impairing of our wills; so a beast with provender, children with nuts, and every one is led or drawn by his pleasure. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The leading of the Spirit*:—I. IT LEADS THE WILLING. 1. "Led." Not drawn by rope, not hauled, but led. 2. Yea, more—gladly led. It is not the leading of the sulky horse behind the dray, pulling and being pulled, but of one following along with dangling halter. It is not the picture of him who says, "my name is down on the church-book—that is enough," but of him who says, "Here am I, Lord; send me." This is the test of our discipleship—if we go gladly. II. LEADERSHIP OF THE SPIRIT IS POSSIBLE. There are those who doubt this. They say, "How can God influence us this way or that?" Well, look at the things that do influence us. Sometimes we are all down with the blues. It is not that we are weaker than usual, but some influence from the outside world is moving upon us. The market has gone wrong, politicians are sending the

country to ruin, &c. At other times other influences come to us. The silent trees swaying gently in the wind, or the smooth surface of some quiet lake soothes us; and if the things of nature can so affect us, cannot the Creator? Then surrender to Him. Open your heart, and He will come in and reign. III. GOD WILL LEAD HIS CHILDREN. The other night you heard a faint knock at the door, and when it was opened there stood a timid little beggar girl with a pinched, wan face, and as you looked down at her she said something about bread. By and by the door burst open and in came a great big boy. He bounded across the room, jumped upon your knee, flung his arm around your neck and, plunging his hand into your pocket, helped himself. So we who are led by the Spirit do not go to God as beggars, but as His own sons, whom He receiveth as a father receiveth his children. Conclusion: 1. Led by the Spirit! So let us live, work, believe, enjoy and triumph by the Spirit. 2. He comes into our hearts as the old warriors used to go into a city. When they had broken through the wall they marched straight for the citadel. Merchants, when they entered, went about, this way and that, through the streets. But the conqueror went first to the citadel, and, when he had taken that, he sent one platoon down this street to clear out the enemy there, and another down that street to drive out that body, until all were driven out; then he had the city in his grasp, and he ruled over it. So when the Spirit comes into our hearts it goes straight to the conscience and lays hold on that, then it sends a truth down this way to drive out this passion, and another that way to subdue that jealousy, and another that other way to quell that rebellion. Then, when all is driven out, He makes His abode in that heart, and becomes its counsellor, guide and ruler for ever. (*C. H. Fowler, D.D.*) *The leading of the Holy Spirit*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE ACT. 1. Distinctions premised. (1) It is either common or peculiar. There is a leading which extends to all creatures. For all of them, by His Divine power, are to the glory of the Creator and the good of the universe. This also may be said to extend to all men; as He, the first Cause and Sovereign (Acts xvii. 28), in a common and providential way, orders all their several actions. Now, most certainly, this is not that "leading" in the text, for many are thus "led by the Spirit" who yet are far from being "the sons of God"! The leading here intended is, therefore, peculiar to God's people. (2) The special leading of the Spirit is extraordinary or ordinary. Prophets and apostles were "led by the Spirit" as they were immediately inspired and guided by Him in their work (2 Pet. i. 21). But this was extraordinary, and so limited and temporary. The latter leading appertains to all God's children, and at all times. (3) This act of the Spirit may be considered either as it is exerted at conversion or after. He leads at and in order to conversion; as He irradiates the mind, inclines the will, spiritualises the affections, and so leads the whole soul to God and Christ. Then He leads all along in the whole course of a Christian's life. (4) There is the having of the Spirit, and the leading of the Spirit (ver. 9). Now, although these be inseparable, yet they are distinct. To "have the Spirit" is to be made a possessor of Him in His indwelling in us; to be "led by the Spirit" is our partaking of His directive influence, after we are made possessors of Him. 2. The special acts included in the Spirit's leading. (1) Something on the Spirit's part. (*a*) His special guidance (Isa. xxx. 21, xlviii. 17, lviii. 11, lxi. 8; Psa. xxv. 5, xxxvii. 23, lxxxiii. 24, cxliii. 10). What the cloud was to the Israelites, what the guide is to the traveller who knows not his way, that the Spirit of God is to believers. (*b*) His powerful inclination. He leads not only by a naked guidance or directive light (Col. i. 9; Eph. v. 10), but also by the efficacious inclining of the heart, the bowing and bending of the will, the overpowering of the affections, to close with and follow His guidance in the doing of what is good, and in the shunning of what is evil (Psa. cxix. 35, 36). (*c*) His co-operation and corroboration. When one leads another both have their proper action and motion, and both unite and concur therein (Isa. xxvi. 12; Phil. ii. 12, 13). So His leading resembles the mother's or nurse's leading the child. They take it by the hand, hold it up, join their strength with its weakness; and so they enable it to go (ver. 26; Eph. iii. 16). (*d*) His Agency. Where He governs, there He leads. It is like a general leading an army: they are subject to his will, steered by him in their motions, as the ship is by the pilot, or the chariot by him that drives it. (2) Something on the creatures' part. And that is their yielding up of themselves to this guidance. Without this, it is not "leading"; for that imports motion after something that goes before. And that motion must be voluntary, or else it is being dragged, not "led" (Isa. ii. 3; Cant. i. 4). 3. Four things opened about

the Spirit's leading. (1) What the Spirit leads unto—truth and holiness (John xvi. 13; Eph. v. 9; Psa. xxiii. 3). This holiness includes holy affections, the exercise of the several graces (2 Thess. iii. 5), and the avoiding and mortifying of sin (chap. viii. 13). (2) The rule by which He leads—the written Word (Prov. vi. 22, 23; Psa. cxix. 105, 133; Micah vi. 8), which is the Christian compass by which he must steer his course, the star that must direct him in all his motions (Isa. viii. 20). The Spirit gives light and life to the Word; and the Word gives evidence that the guidance is from the Spirit. (3) The manner of His leading. (*a*) With power and efficacy. The person led shall certainly follow Him (Ezek. xxvi. 27; Jer. xxxi. 18). (*b*) With all sweetness and gentleness. The will is determined, but so as that not the least violence is done to it, to the infringing of its liberty (Psa. cx. 3; Hosea ii. 14). (4) The extent of His leading. (*a*) In regard of the subject or person led. It extends to the whole man; first to the soul, understanding, will, and affections, and then to the body, yea, to the whole conversation. (*b*) In regard of the object or matter that the Spirit leads unto. The whole duty of a Christian; to all that he is to know, believe, and do. (*c*) In regard of the degree and measure of it. All have the thing in the necessary and substantial part of it, yet some have more and some less. II. SOME PRACTICAL INQUIRIES ABOUT IT. 1. What inducements are there to excite men to attain and live under this leading? (1) The excellency of the thing. The person leading, the great Spirit of God; the act, Divine and supernatural leading; the object, the loving of God, delighting in God, conformity to God. (2) The necessity of it. What becomes of the blind man that has none to guide him? of the weak child that has none to uphold it? (3) As the natural guide is defective and insufficient, so there are other guides which are destructive and damnable. Such as Satan, depraved nature, indwelling sin, the flesh, the world. (4) Weigh the way and manner of the Spirit's leading—(*a*) With great exactness and wisdom (Isa. xi. 2; Psa. xxxii. 8). (*b*) With infinite truth and faithfulness (Prov. iv. 11; Gen. xxiv. 27, 48; Psa. cvii. 7). (*c*) Safely, in reference both to the way and to the end (Psa. lxxviii. 53). (5) The blessings that result from this leading. (*a*) Inward peace and comfort. (*b*) A readiness to all duties of holiness. (*c*) Sonship to God. (*d*) The glory and blessedness of heaven (Psa. lxxiii. 24). 2. How may this leading of the Spirit be attained? (1) There must be the having of the Spirit before there can be the leading of the Spirit. Therefore attend upon the gospel, by which He is conveyed. (2) The first leading of the Spirit must be had before the secondary leading. He must first lead you to God by conversion. (3) Be willing to follow the motions of the Spirit. (4) Let your dependence be upon God and His Spirit for guidance (Psa. xxv. 9; Prov. iii. 5, 6; Job xviii. 7; Prov. xx. 24). (5) Pray much for this grace of the Spirit (Psa. cxliii. 10). 3. What duties are incumbent upon those who are led by the Spirit? (1) They should more and more follow the leadings of the Spirit. (*a*) More exactly (Numb. ix. 18, 21). (*b*) More fully (Numb. xvi. 24). (*c*) More uniformly and constantly. (*d*) More readily and freely. (*e*) So as to make further progress in the way. (*f*) With stronger resolution and purpose of heart. (2) Let it be your great and constant care and endeavour to get the Spirit's leading continued to you. (3) Labour after the having of the leading of the Spirit in a higher degree and measure. (4) So live as that it may appear to others that you are led by this Spirit. (5) Be very thankful for this glorious mercy. 4. May such who are led by the Spirit fetch comfort from it? Undoubtedly—(1) It is a clear evidence, a deciding argument, of your being the sons of God. (2) As it is certain evidence of sonship here, so it is a certain pledge of heaven and salvation hereafter. (*J. Jacomb, D.D.*) *Leadings of the Holy Spirit* (Isa. xlii. 16, and text):—Both Isaiah and St. Paul affirm the reality of a very intimate and tender connection between good men and God. There is a leading and a being led—with a privilege mysteriously grand, growing out of that relation. So far the two writers agree. What is it, then, that distinguishes them? I. ISAIAH REPRESENTS THAT MORE ADVANCED CULTURE, IN THE ELDER CHURCH, where the original meaning of the revelation at Sinai had begun to come out into a clearness approaching that of the gospel-day. More confiding impressions of the unseen Father were certainly stealing into the soul. Hence comes the promise of Divine guidance, personal and gentle. 1. There is no one that has not found out by rough experience that there are crooked things in his life which need to be made straight, and dark places which need to be made light. This common need of heavenly leading puts us into one company with those Hebrews, and makes us prize the promise that was so comforting to them. 2. This instinct which desires

and follows leadership is nearly universal, and religion employs it to train our best attachments and confidences up to heaven. With all his self-reliance and self-will man likes to trust and follow a leader. It appears among bands of youth, in exploring parties in political combinations and social reforms, and especially in the military spirit. 3. The next step shows us this guiding love of the Heavenly Father as independent of anything that we think, or do, or feel. It leads us in paths that we had not known. It deals with us as a mother handles her child just beginning to know only her face or her voice (see Isa. xlv. 5). We were too infantile in the childhood of our spiritual life to know God when He took us up. Who of us cannot recall some trying time when the utter dismay came over him of not knowing what way to take—the sun gone down, human helpers away or feeble, human advisers indifferent or undecided? But God was there before us, and when we waited on Him we found He was waiting for us; and then, very often, the one path which, of all those that opened, was the least inviting was the one into which He led our unwilling feet. 4. God goes invisibly before His child, like the good shepherd of the Eastern pastures, to reassure the alarmed and doubting, to take the briers and stones and to scare the beasts out of the way, to straighten what is crooked, to hold a lamp over the dark passages among the rocks, to lead those that have faith enough to be willing to be led in paths that they have not known. II. FROM THIS PROMISE WE PASS OVER TO THAT GIVEN US BY ST PAUL. 1. We see at once that there is an advance into another plane of religious thought. Instead of Jehovah we are told of "the Spirit." Then, instead of being taught of a mere outward change wrought by this leading, there is a transformation of our whole interior nature and condition. They who were before merely creatures and servants, or children only as by creation, become children in a new and profounder way. Nothing is taken away that Isaiah had said, only much is added. 2. What is signified by being "led by the Spirit"? In the Greek there are two terms for "leading." The one signifies a violent and rather irregular act of propelling a body—a driving or pushing on as by winds or waves. This St. Peter uses when he speaks of the moving of the minds of the Old Testament saints by the mind of God. The other, employed in the text, refers to an even, constant, unbroken force, acting not less powerfully because it acts gently and steadily; the leading of a Spirit who abides, always at His gracious work on the heart, in His chamber within it, and does not come and go. You can illustrate this by any mother walking with a little child or shepherd with sheep. The hireling, who only follows after, and, when the charge wanders or falls into danger, hurries up and catches hold irregularly, pushing the body here and there over a hollow or through a thicket, does not lead as that blessed Comforter leads. "He shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth," &c. 3. What, then, is the peculiar privilege of those who are so led? "They are the sons of God." How can it be? There is one only-begotten Son of God, becoming also the Son of man, born of Mary, our humanity being for ever taken up into His Divinity and glorified by it. It is only by our spiritual union with Him, that we, in a secondary sense, yet a most vital and precious one, are made also "sons of God." Hence the expressions "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" and "Holy Spirit" are often used as equivalent. Christ gives the Comforter. When He is received into the heart a new nature is born; a Son of God, in the image of Christ. Here "the Spirit" is not a mere influence exerted on character as by a foreign benefactor; it is an inwrought and essential principle of the believer's life. He is a new creature, a son. And as there are two New Testament terms in the original, to signify two kinds of leading, so there are two to signify children. One has reference to mere natural descent or begetting, irrespective of any tender, filial feeling. The other, used when sons of God in Christ are intended, includes an affectionate and sacred dependence, or lovingness of the child's and the parent's heart. The tree may take an influence from the sun, and that foreign influence tends to make the tree tall, vigorous, green, and fruitful. But the tree is not the child of the sun. 4. With this comes a special characteristic of our service to Christ. It is not a service of compulsion or restraint, rendered "grudgingly or of necessity." It is labour in a free and joyous spirit, such as befits the thankful receivers of an unspeakable gift in its true character. Wise employers always select workmen that love their work. This distinction between sonship and servantship runs through all that pertains to a Christian's obedience. *(Bp. Huntington.)*

Led by the Spirit:—I. WHAT IS IT TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT? 1. Our answer must depend on our idea of the nature of the Spirit of God and His relations to us.

Men speak of the Spirit as a mere influence, an effect of the outgoing of Divine energy. But, according to the New Testament, the Spirit of God is God, regarded especially as within us and in communion with our spirits. His presence is not discerned by mystic signs: we do not see it in a burning bush or in cloven tongues of fire, we do not hear it in a mighty rushing wind, or in a still small voice; but as we do not see the air above us, nor even hear it in the calm of summer, yet we perceive its existence by the gentle stirring of the trees, the strong flight of birds, the slow sailing of great clouds; so the unseen and silent Spirit reveals His presence by the life He brings, the influence He exerts. 2. The leadership of the Spirit must be regarded as the influence which is thus exerted over the souls of men, and freely yielded to by them. All who choose to follow are led. It depends upon our will and action (ver. 13). It implies following the Spirit—(1) As a guide for the intellect—seeking light in prayer, and humbly searching the inspired Scriptures. (2) As a leader for the will, and yielding self-will to the voice of God in the conscience and in revealed law. (3) As the loving presence of God, with the over-ruling of earthly passion by the love of God. II. THE PRIVILEGES OF DIVINE SONSHIP TO WHICH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SPIRIT INTRODUCES US. By nature we are all God's children, and cannot cease to be so. Yet we may be practically orphans when we wander far from our Father and live in rebellion against Him. To be reconciled to God is practically to be made sons again in a fuller sense than that in which unfallen man was a son in the ignorance and tutelage of childhood. St. Paul regards this as an adoption (ver. 15), St. John as a second birth (John i. 12). The effects of this are many and great. 1. Liberty in deliverance—(1) From the bondage of sin. (2) From the slave-like obedience of the subjects of mere law (2 Cor. iii. 17). 2. Security from fear, either—(1) Of God as an avenging judge, or—(2) of any evil in life, since now we are safe in our Father's care (ver. 15). 3. Restoration of the love of God in our hearts. We now cry, "Abba, Father." This restoration is the source of our deepest joy. 4. Heirship of glory (ver. 17). The son is not simply saved, he is honoured. The returned prodigal is not treated as a hired servant, but as a privileged child (Luke xv. 22, 23). (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *The guidance of the Spirit:*—Man is a traveller to the eternal world. Left to self-guidance he possesses vast and uncontrollable powers of self-destruction. What is he without a guide in the wilderness, a pilot on the ocean? Some recognise no other spirit, and are guided by no other spirit, than the spirit of the world—*i.e.*, by the "god of this world." I. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SPIRIT FOR THIS GUIDANCE. 1. He knows the path to heaven—all its intricacies and dangers: the sunken rock, the treacherous quicksand, the concealed pit, the subtle snare, the windings, and intricacy, and straitness of the way. It is utterly impossible, then, that He should mislead. 2. He knows His own work in the soul. All its light and shade, its depressions and revivings, its assaults and victories, are vivid to His eye. Dwelling in that heart He knows where wisely to supply a check, or gently to administer a rebuke, or tenderly to whisper a promise, or sympathetically to soothe a sorrow, or effectually to aid an incipient resolve, or strengthen a wavering purpose, or confirm a fluctuating hope. II. WHAT IS IT TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT? 1. It assumes—(1) The existence of spiritual life in those He leads. He does not undertake to lead a spiritual corpse, a soul dead in sins. The leading of the Spirit, then, is His acting upon His own life in the soul. (2) Entire inability to lead themselves. What can we see of truth, of providence, of God's mind and will, of ourselves? 2. It involves leading as—(1) From ourselves—from all reliance on our own righteousness, and strength. But this divorce from the principle of self is the work of a life. And who but this Divine Spirit could so lead us away from self, in all its forms, as to constrain us to trample all our own glory in the dust? But more: He leads us from an opposite extreme of self—from a despairing view of our personal sinfulness. How many walk in painful and humiliating bondage from not having thus been sufficiently led out of themselves! Thus from sinful self, as from righteous self, the Spirit leads us—(2) To Christ. Are we guilty?—the Spirit leads us to the blood of Jesus. Are we weary?—the Spirit leads us to abide in Jesus. Are we sorrowful?—the Spirit leads us to the sympathy of Jesus. Are we tempted?—the Spirit leads us to the protection of Jesus. Are we sad and desolate?—the Spirit leads us to the tender love of Jesus. Are we poor, empty, and helpless?—the Spirit leads us to the fulness of Jesus. The holy Spirit is our Comforter, but the holy Jesus is our comfort. (3) To truth—"He shall guide you into all truth." Though many claim Him as their Teacher, He disowns them as His disciples. Tossed from opinion to opinion, perplexed by conflicting creeds, are you anxiously inquiring, "What is truth?"—

commit yourself to the guidance of the Spirit. He can harmonise apparent contradictions, reconcile alleged discrepancies, clear away overshadowing mists, and place each doctrine, precept, and institution clear before your mind. (4) To all holiness. As the "Spirit of holiness," it is his aim to deepen the impress of the restored image of God in the soul, to increase our happiness by making us more holy, and to advance our holiness by making us more like God. All His unfoldings of Christ, views of God, rebukes, joys, have this for their object—the perfection of us in holiness. (5) To all comfort. If sorrows abound, consolation much more abounds, since "the Comforter" is the Holy Ghost. He comforts by applying the promises—by leading to Christ—by bending the will in deep submission to God—and by unveiling to faith's far-seeing eye the glories of a sorrowless, tearless, sinless world. (6) To glory. There He matures the kingdom, and perfects the building, and completes the temple He commenced and occupied on earth. In conclusion: Beware of being guided by any other than the Spirit of God. The temptation is strong of being biassed by the profound research, the distinguished talents, the exalted piety, and admired example of men. But this must not be. It is inconsistent with the honour that belongs, and with the love that we owe, to the Spirit. "Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *The leading of the Spirit an evidence of Divine sonship*:—I. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT. He—1. Leads and instructs in the way of salvation (John xvi. 7-10). He is infinitely wise, powerful, good, &c., and therefore His guidance will be perfect. 2. To a perception of our lost and ruined condition. The methods are various—meditation, personal affliction, the prayers of Christians, some sermon, &c. 3. To contrition. Sin now appears in all its hateful qualities and effects; as that which has offended God, which condemns, curses, and defiles the soul. The Spirit leads to "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation," &c. 4. To a discovery of Christ as the Saviour (John xvi. 13, 14). He removes "the veil on the heart," dispels prejudice, and affords that inward and Divine light by which alone Christ is perceived for saving purposes (Gal. i. 16). (1) Christ's greatness and dignity. Sinners have very mean thoughts of Christ. (2) The power of Christ to save, as the end of the law for righteousness, the great atonement, our "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." 5. To the exercise of saving faith in Christ. 6. So He renovates the mind, deadens the soul to sin, and disposes it to holy obedience and love (Tit. iii. 4, 5). II. THE PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S PEOPLE: "They are the sons of God." Consider—1. The names by which they are distinguished—"sons and children of God," a "chosen generation," a "royal priesthood," "kings and priests unto God." 2. Their liberty. They were under the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law, and consequently the sting of death. 3. "All things are theirs." 4. Christ is engaged to protect and defend them. 5. They have free and certain access to God as their Father (chap. v. 2; Eph. iii. 12). 6. They enjoy a title to an everlasting inheritance (Gal. iii. 29: Rom. viii. 17; 1 John iii. 1, 2). III. THE PEOPLE OF GOD CHERISH AND ENJOY THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT, AND THEREBY EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD. By the Spirit sinners not merely become children of God, but followers. 1. They are sensible of their ignorance and weakness, and recognise the enlightening and strengthening energy of the Spirit. 2. They are careful not to "quench" or "grieve" the Spirit (1 Thess. v. 19; Eph. iv. 30). 3. They pray for that influence. 4. In the discharge of all their duties they seek His aid. 5. They have the inward witness of the Spirit (ver. 16), and the "fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22). (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*) *The leading of the Spirit the secret token of the sons of God*:—I. WHITHER DOES THE SPIRIT OF GOD LEAD THE SONS OF GOD? 1. To repentance. 2. He leads them, while they think little of themselves, to think much of Jesus. If the Holy Ghost has never made Christ precious to you, you know nothing about Him. 3. When the Spirit has glorified Jesus He leads us to know other truths. He leads the sons of God into all truth. On the other hand, truth is like a closed chamber to the unregenerate man. 4. The children of God are led not only into knowledge, but into love. The Spirit causes every true-born son of God to burn with love to the rest of the family. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." And not only so, but He leads us into intense love for the souls of sinners. If any man shall say, "It is no business of mine whether men are lost or saved," the Spirit of God never led him into such inhumanity. 5. The Spirit leads the sons of God into holiness. If you are proud, covetous, lustful after worldly gain, false in your statements, and unjust in your actions, the Holy Ghost never led you there. If I find a child of

God mixing with the ungodly, using their speech, and doing their actions, I am persuaded the Holy Ghost never led him there. But if I see a man devout before God, and full of integrity before men, I know that the Spirit of God is his leader. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." 6. Into vital godliness—the mystic essence of spiritual life. For instance, the Holy Ghost leads the saints to prayer, which is the vital breath of their souls. 7. Into usefulness, some in one path, and some in another, while a few are conducted into very eminent service. If you are doing nothing for Jesus the Spirit of God has never led you into this idleness. II. HOW DOES THE SPIRIT LEAD THE SONS OF GOD? 1. We cannot explain His mode of operation, but probably it is somewhat in the same way in which our spirits operate upon other men's spirits. We act upon matter by machinery, but upon mind by argument, by instruction, and so we endeavour to fashion men as we desire. (1) One great instrument which the Holy Ghost uses upon the mind is the Word of God. Quote chapter and verse for an action, and, unless you have wrested the passage, you may rest assured you have acted rightly. (2) The Spirit also speaks through His ministers. The Word preached is often blest, as well as the Word written, but this can only be the case when the Word preached is in conformity with the Word written. (3) He directly, apart from the Word, speaks in the hearts of the saints. There are inward monitions which are to be devoutly obeyed, guidances mysterious, which must be implicitly followed. There will come to you sometimes, you know not why, certain inward checks, such as Paul received when he essayed to go into Mysia, but the Spirit suffered him not. At another time a proper thing comes upon you strongly that it is to be done at once, and for some reason you cannot shake off the impression. Do no violence to that impulse. 2. Note that the Spirit "leads." The text does not say, "As many as are driven by the Spirit of God." No, the devil is a driver. Whenever you see a man fanatical and wild, whatever spirit is in him it is not the Spirit of Christ. III. WHEN DOES THE SPIRIT LEAD THE SONS OF GOD? 1. He would always lead them, but, alas, there are times when they will not be led. They are wilful and headstrong, and start aside. 2. The healthy condition of a child of God is to be always led by the Spirit of God. Not on Sundays only, nor alone at periods set apart for prayer, but during every minute of every hour of every day. We ought to be led by the Spirit in little things as well as in great. If only one action apart from the Spirit were suffered to run to its full results, it would ruin us. A pilot who only occasionally directs the ship is very little better than none. Child of God, the Spirit must lead you in everything. 3. "Well, but," say you, "will He?" Yes. When you are in difficulties, consult the Holy Spirit in the Word. If no light comes from thence kneel down and pray. Cast yourself upon the Divine guidance, and you shall make no mistake. The Lord will never let a vessel be dashed upon the rocks whose tiller has been given into His hands. Conclusion: Use the text—1. As a test. Am I a child of God? If so, I am led by the Spirit. 2. As a consolation. If you are a child of God you will be led by the Spirit. 3. As an assurance. If you are led by the Spirit of God then you are most certainly a son of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sons of God led by the Spirit of God*:—The Spirit is everywhere present. He controls all the operations of nature. He operates on the minds of men, endowing and controlling them. He specially operates on the children of God—1. In renewing them. 2. In imbuing them continually with a new life. 3. In determining their inward and outward life. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT? It is not by blind suggestions or impulses. It is not by a miraculous or abnormal operation, directing what text the eye shall fall upon. The Spirit is the determining principle of the life, and His leading—1. Is consistent with our rational nature, liberty, and responsibility. 2. Mingles with our consciousness, and determines it, but cannot be distinguished from it. 3. Is not always irresistible. Hence men are said to resist, grieve, quench the Holy Spirit. II. THE RESULT OF IT. 1. The knowledge of the truth—not by inspiration or revelation, but illumination. 2. The love of truth, or the conformity of our hearts to the standard of God's will. 3. The conformity of our outward life to the will of God. (1) It leads to the government of the tongue, the control of the passions, the ordering of the conduct. (2) It gives right views and motives to determine us in all emergencies. (3) It enables us to choose that Christian work for which we are best qualified. III. WHY ARE THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT THE SONS OF GOD. 1. What is meant by the sons of God? Those who—(1) Partake of His nature by regeneration. (2) Are adopted into His family and made the objects of His parental care and heirs of His kingdom. (3) Governed by a filial as opposed to a slavish spirit. 2. Why are such led by the Spirit? Because

(1) Submission to the spirit of our whole inward and outward life is the only evidence of our sonship. (2) The Holy Spirit is in His nature the Spirit of adoption. He is not a servile Spirit, but the Spirit of the Son, and therefore sent into sons. Those only who are actuated by this filial Spirit are the sons of God, *i.e.*, are such in their inward character and temper. (3) In so far as sonship involves the idea of exaltation, power, blessing, &c., the indwelling of the Spirit is the immediate source of all these distinctions. IV. THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS ON OUR PART IN ORDER TO THIS GUIDANCE. 1. We must renounce our own guidance and that of others, whether of the world, Church, or individuals. 2. We must submit to, and have full faith in, the guidance of the Spirit. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

The sons of God led by the Spirit of God:—I. A PRIVILEGE—to be the sons of God. The glory of children is their fathers (Prov. xvii. 6); but the privilege is not only of honour but of profit (ver. 17). All God's children are heirs, as all are partakers of the Divine nature. They have—1. A spiritual right to all the creatures—"All things are yours." 2. An interest in God Himself, and in His promises, mercies, &c. 3. Right to guardianship of angels (Psa. xci. 11; Matt. xviii. 10; Heb. i. 14). What a safeguard against the powers of darkness! 4. A claim to eternal glory (Col. i. 12; Matt. xxv. 34). In comparison with this how poor the thoughts of men! "How may I get a good bargain, enjoy myself, be revenged on my enemy?" rather than, "How shall I become a child of God?" II. THE QUALIFICATION. "So many as are led," &c. It is not enough to be the sons of God, unless we know ourselves to be so. 1. How shall we know ourselves to be the sons of God? There are many signs besides the one here mentioned, as—(1) Every child is like His Father. It is not so in carnal generation always. But you must try your spiritual sonship by this rule—your Heavenly Father is holy (1 Pet. i. 15, 16), merciful, righteous, slow to anger, abhors all manner of evil; are we like that, or the reverse? (2) Bears a filial love to His Father. His love to us is infinite (Psa. ciii. 13); what return do we make? We can perhaps talk largely of our love, but if we loved Him could we estrange ourselves from His interest, hear His sacred name blasphemed, &c. (3) Reverence Him. (*a*) As for his actions, he dares not do anything wilfully that would displease Him (Mal. i. 6). (*b*) As for his sufferings, he receives them submissively as corrections. (4) Depends on His provision, expecting such patrimony as He shall bestow upon him, and waiting for it patiently. (5) Is led by His Spirit; which brings us to—2. What it is to be led by the Spirit of God. In leading there must be a hand to guide and a foot to follow; good motions on God's part, and motions to good on ours. Every man is led by some spirit; one by a spirit of error (1 Tim. iv. 1), another by the spirit of giddiness (Isa. xix. 14), another by the spirit of bondage, another by the spirit of the world (1 Cor. ii. 12), and all, besides, by the unclean spirit. Let us see, then, how a man may know that he is led by the Spirit of God. He leads—(1) In a right way, the way of God's commandments. All other ways are crooked, as deviating from the straight line of righteousness. (2) By a just rule—the Word of truth. Uncertain and variable traditions, private and ungrounded revelations which cross this recorded will of God, are the deceitful guides of the spirit of error. (3) Sweetly and gently. Those who are carried with furious impetuousness are not led by the spirit of meekness. (4) Progressively, from grace to grace and virtue to virtue, whereas passion goes by sudden flashes. (5) To life, whereas other spirits, the flesh included, lead to death. III. THE CONNECTION OF THIS QUALIFICATION WITH THE PRIVILEGE. How far does the leading of God's Spirit evince our sonship. If we would have a comfortable assurance we must be led by the Spirit in—1. Judgment (John xvi. 13), *i.e.*, into all saving and necessary truths; so as to free us from gross ignorance and error. 2. Disposition. If the Spirit have wrought our hearts to be right with God in all our affections we may be assured that we are His sons. 3. Practice (Ezek. xxxvi. 27). (*Bp. Hall.*)

The sons of God led by the Spirit of God:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT? It is as if a blind man had asked the way to a certain city, and one had not only told him of it, but taken him by the hand to lead him therein. Or it is as if a little child in the dark had not only asked direction from his father, but had seized that father's hand, so to trust implicitly to his guidance (see also Psa. xxiii. 2-4; cxliii. 10). This leading by the Spirit is—1. A practical thing. If the Spirit leads us it is to govern and control our words and actions (Titus ii. 10-15; Isa. xlviii. 17, 18; Gal. v. 16-25; 1 John iii. 1-10). 2. A work of inward influence and sweet secret suasion of all our moral being. True, there is a law, but it is a law of liberty—a commandment which love delights to obey. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," not licentiousness; that liberty which consists not

of freedom from moral obligation, but of disposition to comply with such obligation (Psa. cxix. 32). 3. Thorough and perfect, steadily and continuously maintained. Do not confound with it transient emotions, occasional convictions, fitful resolutions, and short-lived periods of a reformation of life. 4. "According to the Scriptures," and is maintained through the habit and exercise of prayer. Here is nothing mystical, fanciful, fanatical. All is sober and rational, as it is sacred and solemn. II. THE HIGH PRIVILEGE OF THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. They are the sons of God (2 Cor. vi. 18). God is our Father—1. Nominally. He calls us His children, and we may call Him our Father. A formal act and covenant of adoption is entered into, whereby our Maker assumes in our favour a parental position and name, and we are permitted to believe in His paternal relation to us, to talk about it, and to act upon it (John i. 12, 13; Gal. iv. 4, 5; 1 John iii. 1). 2. Really God does more than call us children. He makes us so. We are His by regeneration as well as adoption, by a new birth as well as by a new title. Just as children resemble their parents in physical form and feature, and so prove themselves partakers of their nature, so do the sons of God resemble Him in moral lineaments, in spirit and disposition, and thus prove themselves partakers of His nature. 3. Effectively. Our Father treats us as His sons. He feels a parent's sympathy for us, and He fulfils all a parent's duty. He provides for us, defends us, extricates us out of our difficulties, instructs us, corrects us, makes us privy to His plans, and will eventually take us home to Himself, that we may dwell for ever in our Father's house. Conclusion: 1. If led by God's Spirit, rejoice in the thought of your Divine sonship. 2. As God's children let us evermore seek to be led by His Spirit. (*T. G. Horton.*) First, to take notice of the property itself here mentioned which is to be led by the Spirit of God, where we may observe that there is such a thing indeed in the world as this is, which some persons are partakers of. There is a twofold leading by the Spirit; the one is common and ordinary, the other is special and peculiar. Now this is considerable with a double reference, either first of all to our first conversion; or, secondly, to our following conversation. There is the leading and guiding of the Spirit, which is requisite and necessary for Christians in each of these conditions. First, to look upon it in order to our first and primitive conversion. The children of God they are led on by His Spirit in this. And there are three things which do make up this unto us. First, information, or discovery of such and such truths in the proposition. Secondly, illumination, or enabling of the mind to conceive and apprehend those truths which are thus discovered. Thirdly, inclination, or bowing of the will and affections to close and comply with such truths and motions which are apprehended. The Spirit of God does all these three in the work of conversion. The second is the communication of this property to a diversity and plurality of persons—"As many as are led." From whence we may observe this much, that this being led and acted and guided by the Spirit of God, it is not only the property of one or two particular persons, who are singular and alone by themselves, but it is the condition of a whole society and generation of men. There are many of them that are thus led (John i. 12; Acts ix. 42; Gal. vi. 16; Phil. iii. 15). There is a variety and diversity of such persons as are thus guided and carried. First, in a succession of times, in one age after another. There have been always men guided by God's Spirit, and still are, and always will be. There were so in the times of the prophets, and there were so in the times of the apostles, and there are so still in ours, and will be further to the end of the world. And secondly, for one and the same time. There are many that go the same way and are in the like manner inclined. That as some thrive in wickedness, so others should thrive in goodness; and as Satan enlarges his kingdom, so the Lord also should increase His. This may therefore take off the slander which is cast upon religion as a private and singular business, as the invention only of some few persons, which they take up to themselves. No, it is no such matter; there are multitudes and varieties of them. The third is the consent or correspondency of this conduct in this variety, where many and different persons are intimated to be guided by one and the self-same Spirit. Grace is one and the same for substance in all sorts of Christians, and they are led by the same Spirit of God, which is the worker and preserver of it in them there where it is wrought. "We having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written" (2 Cor. iv. 13). "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been made all to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). This appears to be so in regard of the same effects, which it works in several persons. Where we find the same operations we may conclude there are the same principles. Again,

they are not neither after one and the same manner. Grace, though it be in all one for substance, yet it is not in all one for modification, for the ordering and disposing of it. And lastly, it should very much persuade and prevail with Christians to mutual love and charity to one another, forasmuch as they are all led by the same common Spirit. The second is the predicate, or consequent, in the privilege belonging to these persons. It may further be cleared to us upon these considerations. First, such as are led by the Spirit they are undoubtedly the children of God, because they have the seed of God remaining in them, as the apostle John declares it of them (1 John iii. 9). Secondly, those that are led by the Spirit, they are made conformable and like unto God, and have His image stamped upon them. Thirdly, they are members of Christ. Whosoever belong to Christ, who is the natural Son of God, they are consequently themselves the adopted sons of God. And this are they which are led by His Spirit. Now for a further clearing of this point still unto us, we may moreover take notice of it in a twofold illustration; the one as holding indefinitely, and the other as holding exclusively. Indefinitely, if they be led by God's Spirit, they are His children, let them be who they will be. Exclusively, if they be not led by His Spirit, whatever they be else they are none of His children. First, take it indefinitely. If they are such as are led by God's Spirit they are His children, let them be who they will. And that again in a twofold explication. First, in the indefiniteness of nations; and secondly, in the indefiniteness of conditions. This word, as many, it carries each of these latitudes in it. This teaches us likewise to own religion wheresoever we find it, let the persons in other respects be what they will be. The second is as it may be taken, exclusively. If they be not led by His Spirit, whatever they be else, they are none of His children. This proposition here before us is to be understood convertibly and by way of reciprocation. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God. And again, as many as are God's children, they are such as are led by God's Spirit. Whosoever are none of the former they are none of the latter. There's nothing less than the conduct of God's Spirit which will entitle one to a state of adoption. And here again two more. First, who are led by a different spirit, and they are excluded as defective. Secondly, as are led by an opposite spirit, and they are excluded as destructive. Now this being led of the Spirit of God may be very much judged of by us from these observations. First, by our delight in the Word of God, and our conformity and agreeableness to that. Secondly, by the goodness of the ways themselves in which we converse, we find these two joined together (Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 28). Thirdly, by our cheerfulness and activity in the ways of God. And then lastly, as a concomitant, and that which is annexed hereunto. If we be led by the Spirit we shall be tender of grieving the Spirit, and doing anything which may be offensive to Him. There is no wise man who would offend his guide whom he depends upon for safety and direction. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The nature and tokens of the Spirit's operation*:—I. WHAT IT IS TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT; or what it is that the Holy Spirit does for the furthering our salvation. Our Lord, taking His leave of His disciples, consigned them, as it were, over to the care and guidance of the Holy Ghost (John xvi. 13), who would guide them into all truth, and abide with them and the Church for ever (John xiv. 16; Acts i. 5–8). This, however, is not to be so understood, as if the Holy Ghost were now our sole conducter, exclusive of the other two Divine Persons (John xiv. 23; Matt. xxviii. 20). Such guidance (which often goes under the name of grace) is ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it is the common work of all. And yet the Holy Ghost is emphatically styled "the Spirit of Grace," as being more immediately concerned in the work of grace. He gives—1. Illuminating or enlightening grace, inasmuch as He instils good thoughts and salutary instructions; opening the understanding to receive them (Psa. cxix. 18; Acts xvi. 14). 2. Sanctifying grace, when He rectifies the heart, inclines the will, and meliorates the affections (Phil. iii. 13). This is distinguished into preventing, assisting, perfecting; being considered, first, as laying the early seeds of that spiritual life; next, as contributing to its growth; and lastly, as adding the finishing hand to it. 3. The grace of true devotion, attended with deep compunction of heart (ver. 26). II. IN WHAT MANNER DOES HE OPERATE AND EFFECTUATE WHAT HE DOES. 1. Ordinarily in a gentle, moral, insinuating way, and not by mechanical, irresistible impulses, such as would take away human liberty, or reduce men to intelligent clockwork, or reasoning machines. For upon that supposition every good work, word, or thought, would be so entirely God's, that no part of it would be ours. The operations of

God's Holy Spirit, then, only prepare us for godliness, or incite us and enable us thereto; the rest must come from ourselves. Accordingly, men are capable of resisting, grieving, and even quenching the Holy Spirit. 2. To be a little more particular, the Holy Spirit works upon the mind by proper applications to the reason and conscience, the hopes and fears; suggesting what is right and good, and laying before men, in a strong light, the happiness to be obtained by obedience, and the misery consequent upon disobedience. And one very considerable article of Divine wisdom and goodness lies in the providential ordering affairs so as to serve the purposes of grace; not exempting good men altogether from temptations, but so restraining, limiting, and governing the temptations, that they shall not press harder, or continue longer, than may best answer the design of God's permitting them. III. BY WHAT MARKS WE MAY DISCERN WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES UPON US, AND WHEN WE ARE LED BY HIM. 1. These appear chiefly either in checks of conscience dissuading us from evil, or in godly motions, inciting us to what is right and good. For though what passes within us of that kind is not distinguishable by the manner of it from the natural workings of our own minds, yet revelation, in conjunction with our enlightened reason, assures us that every good thought, counsel, and desire, cometh from above. 2. But before we draw such conclusion with respect to any particular thought, special care should be taken that we proceed upon sure grounds; otherwise we may be apt to ascribe the rovings of fancy, or mere dreams of our own, to the Holy Spirit of God. Some very good men have been observed to make it a rule in cases of perplexity to lean to that side wherein they find most ease to their own minds. But sometimes it happens that a person may be under the influence of unperceived prejudices, or passions, which warp him to a side. And therefore there is no safe and certain rule to go by in such cases, but a strict examination into the nature and quality of the action. And if, upon reflection, we find that what we are inwardly dissuaded from is really evil, or what we are inwardly prompted to is really good, then may we safely and justly ascribe such motions to the Holy Spirit of God. As to our judging of our whole conduct, and whether, or how far we are conducted by the Holy Spirit, we have a safe rule to go by—God's commandments (1 John iii. 24; Gal. v. 22-25). IV. THE USE AND IMPROVEMENT TO BE MADE OF THE WHOLE. 1. To be ever mindful of the world of spirits whereunto we belong; and particularly of that blessed Spirit who presides over us, and whose temple we are, while we behave as becomes us. 2. To pray that the Spirit of God may alway dwell with us, and to take care to avoid all such practices as may offend the Holy Spirit. 3. Since the benefit of all depends upon our own willing compliance and hearty endeavours, let us make it our constant resolution to attend the motions, and to obey the suggestions of God's Holy Spirit, and so to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. (*D. Waterland, D.D.*) *Sons of God*:—By nature we are children of God, but we do not occupy the place of children. The prodigal was still the child of his father, but he was away from his father. I. THE NATURE OF THIS SONSHIP. 1. A renovated heart. 2. Leading by the Spirit of God. (1) To clear views of the truth. (*a*) By understanding the Bible. (*b*) By comprehending the meaning of Divine providences. (2) To safety. He who is led does not lead. Some Christians think themselves wise enough to instruct God as to the experiences through which they should pass. 3. Peculiar love. Say what we will about universal charity, we love our children with a special love. 4. Heirship with Christ; sharers of His glory. II. ITS DUTIES. 1. Reverence. 2. Trust. 3. Obedience. 4. Maintenance of the family honour. 5. Resignation. A true son will let God have His way. III. HOW ARE WE TO BECOME SONS OF GOD. By our natural birth? By hearing His Word? By admission into His Church? No; John gives us the answer (John i. 12). Conclusion: 1. To all those who come home the door is open. 2. God takes great delight in being loved. 3. We come to God through prayer, then find provision, then protection. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *The sons of God*:—I. THE DESCRIPTION. We might almost have called it a picture. We are all travellers, and every step of our journey is under the guidance of influences which never cease to operate upon our character. Some are guided by the spirit of the world, some by the spirit of self-dependence, some by the spirit of superstition; but the children of God are led by the Spirit of God. 1. Why does the Spirit lead them? Because—(1) They need guidance. Neither in thought nor action are we competent to take a single step by ourselves; and yet every step we take brings us nearer to God or takes us farther from Him. (2) Other guides are ready to lead astray. 2. Where does the Spirit lead them? Not in the paths where the garments will be defiled;

not into the scenes of worldly dissipation and amusement, but often through many obstacles—(1) To the Cross, where they find rest to their souls. (2) To the closet, where they may find communion with their heavenly Friend. (3) To the house of God. (4) To the Lord's table. (5) To duty. (6) To conflict. (7) To heaven. 3. How does He guide them? By an inward impulse and by an outward ministry, and by these conjointly. II. THE PRIVILEGE. "The sons of God." This privilege—1. Commences with adoption. Adoption is the taking and treating a stranger as one's own child. It is a mere act of grace. 2. Is effectuated by regeneration. For it is in nature as well as in name that believers become the children of God. 3. Is sustained by Divine nourishment. There is milk for babes, and meat for strong men. 4. Is confirmed by Divine instruction. The world is converted into a vast school for the benefit of the Church, as the wilderness was when God brought His people out of Egypt (Deut. iv. 36, xxxii. 10). 5. Is manifested by Divine resemblance. 6. Is witnessed by the Divine Spirit. 7. It is the pledge of the highest glory. (*P. Strutt.*) *Sons of God*:—I. THE CONDITION ON WHICH WE ARE "SONS OF GOD." 1. Not mere creatureship. The stars, the birds, the flowers, are God's creatures. 2. Not mere resemblance. Even fallen men are made in the image of God, and have a potential likeness to Him. 3. But filial disposition. Men are the special creation of God; may have a special resemblance to Him; may have affection, not fear; may cry "Abba, Father." II. THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE "SONS OF GOD." There is—1. The witness of God's Spirit. 2. The testimony of the spirit of man. III. THE RESULTS OF OUR BEING "SONS OF GOD." 1. We are heirs of God. 2. We are joint-heirs with Christ. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The sons of God*:—I. THEIR SPIRIT is—1. Obedient. 2. Confident. 3. Loving. II. THEIR ASSURANCE is—1. Divine. 2. Unquestionable. III. THEIR PROSPECTS. 1. Glorious. 2. Certain. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The condition and privilege of a son of God*:—I. HIS PRESENT CONDITION. He is "led by the Spirit of God." 1. There are two things which may render it necessary for a person to be led, defect of vision or circumstances of peril. A blind man is under the necessity of being led, in order that he may be preserved from the dangers into which he would be otherwise betrayed. 2. Or a man may be exposed to such perils that it is necessary that he should put himself under the guidance of some one who may enable him to detect and overcome the danger. Both these, in a moral point of view, coalesce in the case of every one by nature. (1) Our moral eyesight is blinded. The reason of man is perverted; it is clouded by prejudice; it attaches undue weight to things that are of no importance, and overlooks the things which are of first-rate importance. Spiritual truth we are utterly unable to perceive. The various sciences have distinct nomenclatures which they who are not initiated do not understand. Now, gospel truth is just as unintelligible to one who has not been renewed by the Spirit of God. Mr. Pitt was once taken by Wilberforce to hear William Cecil; that statesman listened attentively, and when he was retiring, upon being asked by his friend how he liked the statements he had heard, the honest answer was, that he could not understand one single sentence. Why? Not that the preacher had clothed the truth in unintelligible language, but in the language of Scripture, inspired by the Spirit of God, and therefore in a language which that statesman was unable to comprehend because it was to be spiritually discerned. (2) And our way is encompassed with peril. (*a*) We are treading, as it were, upon the margin of eternity, and in an instant we might be summoned to stand before the bar of judgment. (*b*) We are surrounded with a host of spiritual beings, who are continually operating against our safety. (*c*) The world around us is continually placing temptation in our way. (*d*) We have a traitor within. Now, if all this be the case we need a leader such as the Spirit of God. 2. How is it that the Spirit of God leads? (1) By unfolding the meaning of the written Word. That Word is our great sheet-anchor in the present day, and we have an infallible interpreter thereof in the Spirit who indited it. (2) By the various providences of which Christians are the subjects in their passage through life. He who will watch for providences shall never want a providence to watch. It is true that we have not a visible pillar of cloud and of fire; yet if we will only attentively listen to the voice of God's providence often we shall find it true—"Thine ear shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand or to the left." 3. How is it to be known whether a person is led of the Spirit? The marks are—(1) Separation from the world. (2) Obedience to God's will. (3) A single eye to God's glory. II. HIS PRIVILEGE. 1. As relating to the present life. (1) He may look up to God as his reconciled Father in Jesus. (2) Trials may befall him; but he knows that "all

things work together for good to them that love God." God loves him too well not to try him. Thus he can look upon his trials with thankfulness, believing that they shall work out for him, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (3) He may come to God with the confidence of a child. (4) As his course draws nearer and nearer to eternity it grows brighter and brighter. 2. And as for his privileges in eternity, "Eye hath not seen" &c. (*Bp. R. Bickersteth.*) *The happiness of the sons of God*:—1. They are led by His Spirit. 2. They bear the name of children (vers. 14, 16). 3. They speak the language of children (ver. 15). 4. They render the obedience of children. 5. They feel the confidence of children. 6. They participate in the inheritance of children. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The character and privileges of true Christians*:—I. THEIR CHARACTER. They are "led by the Spirit of God." This implies—1. An active and progressive, not a passive and stationary life. 2. Something altogether different from abandonment to natural impulses. 3. A contrast with the leading of the spirit of the world, which conducts so many astray. 4. Guidance by means of the revealed Word of God, yet due to a Divine and supernatural influence. 5. Issues in progress in the way of holiness and obedience which leads to life eternal. II. THEIR PRIVILEGES. They are regarded and treated by God as His sons. This involves—1. Their regeneration and adoption by Divine grace. 2. Participation in the Divine character and likeness. 3. Favour and fellowship. 4. Heirship. They are joint heirs with Christ, and the time shall come when they shall enter upon a heavenly and immortal inheritance. (*Clerical World.*) *Four important questions*:—1 How may I became a child of God? 2. How can I know that I am a child of God? 3. How must I prove that I am a child of God? 4. What advantage have I as a child of God? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. **For ye have not received the spirit of bondage . . . but . . . the Spirit of adoption.**—*The spirit of bondage and of adoption*:—I. THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE. Much of the bondage of our fallen nature is not the work of the Spirit of God at all. Bondage under sin, the flesh, worldly customs, the fear of man—this is the work of the devil. 1. But there is a sense of bondage which is of the Spirit of God. The bondage of—(1) Conviction of sin. (2) Assurance of punishment for sin from which there is no escape. (3) The feeling of the inutility of the works of the law. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." 2. The result of this spirit of bondage in the soul is fear. There are five sorts of fears, and it is well to distinguish between them. (1) The natural fear which the creature has of its Creator, because of its own insignificance and its Maker's greatness. From that we shall never be altogether delivered. (2) Carnal fear: *i.e.*, the fear of man. From this God's Spirit delivers believers. (3) Servile fear—the fear of a slave towards his master, lest he should be beaten when he has offended. That is a fear which should rightly dwell in every unregenerate heart. (4) If servile fear be not cast out it leads to a fourth fear, namely, a diabolical fear; that of devils who "believe and tremble." (5) Filial fear which is never cast out of the mind. This is "the fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom." When the spirit of bondage is at work there is much of servile fear. The Spirit of truth brings this to us, because we are in a condition which demands it. Would you have the bondsman rejoice in a liberty which he does not possess? Is he not the more likely to be free if he loathes his slavery? 3. This bondage, which causes fear, breaks us off from self-righteousness, and puts an end to certain sins. Many a man, because he is afraid of the consequences, leaves off this and that which would have ruined him; and, so far, the fear is useful to him; and, in after life, will keep him nearer to his Lord. 4. In due time we outgrow this bondage, and never receive it again. Because we are made to be the children of God; and God forbid that God's children should tremble like slaves. II. THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. 1. The apostle said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage." If he had kept strictly to language he would have added, "But ye have received the Spirit of liberty." That is the opposite of bondage. But our apostle is not to be hampered by the rigid rules of composition. He has inserted a far greater word—"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption." If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 2. The apostle said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Should he not have added "but ye have received the Spirit of liberty by which ye have confidence"? He says a great deal more, "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father." This is the highest form of confidence. 3. The Spirit of adoption is a spirit of gratitude. Oh, that ever the Lord should put me among the children! 4. A spirit of child-likeness. It is pretty, though sometimes sad, to see how children imitate their

parents. III. THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER. Whenever the Spirit of adoption enters into a man it sets him praying. And this praying is—1. Earnest, for it takes the form of "crying." 2. Natural. For a child to say, "Father," is according to the fitness of things. 3. Appealing. True prayer pleads the fatherhood of God. 4. Familiar. Slaves were never allowed to call their masters "abba." That was a word for free-born children only: no man can speak with God as God's children may. Distance is the slave's place; only the child may draw near. 5. Delightful. "Abba, Father"—it is as much as to say—"My heart knows that thou art my Father." IV. THE SPIRIT OF WITNESS. In the mouth of two witnesses this shall be established. 1. The man's own spirit. God's own Word declares, "To as many as received Christ to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"; now, I have received Christ, and I do believe on His name: therefore I have the right to be one of the sons of God. That is the witness of my spirit: I believe, and therefore I am a child. 2. The witness of the Holy Spirit, which works—(1) Through the Word of which He is the Author. (2) By His work in us. He works in us that which proves us to be the children of God; and what is that? (*a*) Great love to God. None love God but those that are born of Him. (*b*) Veneration for God. We fear before Him with a childlike reverence. (*c*) A holy confidence. By His grace we feel in days of trouble that we can rest in God. (*d*) Sanctification. (*e*) Besides which, there is a voice unheard of the outward ear, which drops in silence on the spirit of man, and lets him know that he has, indeed, passed from death unto life. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Spirit of bondage and adoption*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY "THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE"? 1. A distressing apprehension of danger, arising from the conviction of sin, which is one of the first effects of the law upon the conscience. 2. A sense of our lost and undone condition. A sense of sin is generally attended with a sight of wrath, and a conviction of the worth of the soul; and where the one is deeply felt, the other is greatly feared. Hence the anxious inquiries of the Philippian jailor, and of the multitudes under Peter's sermon. 3. Apprehensions respecting present judgments. Unpardoned guilt fills the mind with continual terrors (Job xv. 20–24). 4. An habitual fear of death. 5. The expectation of future punishment. 6. The conviction of utter inability to extricate himself out of his present situation. II. Inquire IN WHAT RESPECTS BELIEVERS ARE DELIVERED FROM THIS, SO AS NOT TO BE AGAIN IN FEAR. Though believers are not wholly exempt from a spirit of bondage—1. They seldom feel it in the same degree, nor do they feel it for long. 2. It does not arise from the same source as before, and therefore is not of the same nature. The terror which a sinner feels is from God, but that which a believer often experiences is the work of Satan, taking advantage of a constitutional melancholy, or of some adverse dispensation. 3. They are relieved and sustained by the hopes and promises of the gospel. 4. This servile spirit—(1) Is by no means adapted to the present dispensation, and therefore believers cannot be said to have received it, as forming any part of their real or proper character (2 Tim. i. 7). (2) Is also highly injurious to the practical part of religion. The more we walk in the light of God's countenance, the more readily shall we run in the way of His commandments. III. WHAT IS THAT "SPIRIT OF ADOPTION" WHICH BELIEVERS HAVE RECEIVED. 1. The Spirit of adoption is distinct from adoption itself, and is not essential to its existence. 2. Of those who enjoy the Spirit of adoption, some have more of it, and others less. 3. The same saints do not at all times enjoy the same measure of this Spirit, but differ as much from themselves as they do from one another. 4. Wherever this Spirit is received, it must be considered as the fruit of sovereign grace. 5. It more especially consists in the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. The Spirit is not only a witness to Christ without us, but to Christ within us; and therefore when our conscience bears us witness in the Holy Ghost, it is to be acquiesced in as a faithful and unerring report; for if conscience itself be as good as a thousand witnesses, how much more when its decisions are made under the influences of the Spirit of God. 6. The Holy Spirit in becoming a Spirit of adoption, imparts to the adopted a temper suited to that relation. IV. THE BLESSED EFFECT ARISING FROM OUR HAVING RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION: Hereby we cry, "Abba, Father." Prayer is the very breath of a child of God; the first effort of Divine grace in the heart. The cry of "Abba, Father," now proceeds from the fulness of his heart, and this includes in it the following particulars—1. Familiarity and holy boldness at a throne of grace. 2. A comfortable persuasion of the love of God towards us. 3. Reverence and honour (Mal. i. 6). 4. Trust and confidence in God, as our Father and our Friend.

5. Great earnestness and importunity (2 Kings ii. 12). (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The Spirit of bondage and the Spirit of adoption*:—I. WHAT IS "THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE"? 1. There are many of you who love money, pleasure, vanity, sin. And yet there are times when you tear yourselves away to say your prayers—to come to church; to read a chapter in the Bible; but whilst engaged in these exercises you long for them to be over. But why do them at all? "Because it is our duty. We know these things must be attended to; if we neglect them we shall go to hell." Then, I need not describe to you "the spirit of bondage"—you feel it. 2. But perhaps "the spirit of bondage" is still more strikingly displayed in those who are just awakened to a sense of their sins. And what does the poor trembling sinner do to mend his case? Labours with all his might to make himself acceptable to God; multiplies his prayers and duties; resolves to mortify his sins. And yet, alas! he goes about feeling that he has undertaken a work which is far beyond his strength. And why has the Lord so ordered it? Evidently to teach the humbling lesson of man's utter inability to save or sanctify himself (see Gal. iii. 23, 24). II. WHAT IS THE "SPIRIT OF ADOPTION"? 1. Adoption is an act whereby one person takes another into his family, calls him his son, and treats him as such. Thus Moses was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and Esther was the adopted daughter of Mordecai. Adoption, then, in a spiritual sense, is that act of grace whereby God chooses into the dear relation of His children every true believer in His Son. The very term implies that they were by nature not His children. No; they were strangers and enemies when He took them in. 2. But a man who adopts a stranger for his child cannot bestow on him a spirit suitable to that relationship. He may give him a son's portion, but he cannot give him a son's feelings. Now this is what the Lord does. He gives them "the Spirit of adoption." He puts into them, by His grace, a fitness for their glorious relationship. They not only are the Lord's children, but they feel as such (ver. 16). Their former terrors drop away, for they view God now as their reconciled Father in Christ, and the uneasiness they felt at their inability to satisfy His law is now changed into a delightful confidence in the satisfaction which His Son hath wrought for them. And in consequence of all His love to them they love Him. They are followers—imitators—of God as dear children. "His commandments are not grievous to them," for they have now both the power and the will to follow them. 3. "Father" is the first word the infant lisps; and how continually it is running to its parent with that word upon its tongue. In beautiful allusion to this the child of God is represented as crying to his heavenly Parent, "Abba! Father!" (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *The Spirit of adoption*:—I. THE GIFT WHICH GOD CONFERS ON HIS CHILDREN. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption." 1. The Spirit of God seals the children of adoption. This serves to mark the particular property God has in believers; to distinguish them from others of the human family; and to preserve them for the end of their election and faith, even the salvation of their souls. 2. The Holy Spirit is to believers the witness of their adoption (vers. 16). It is reasonable that professors of religion should be anxious to ascertain their own state in God's sight. 3. The Holy Spirit communicates to believers the comfort arising from their adoption into God's family, *i.e.*, He discovers to believers the path of light; qualifies them for their present rank; and supports them during their pilgrimage. II. THE CHRISTIAN ENJOYS TRUE LIBERTY. Christian liberty is equally opposed to slavery and licentiousness. It is opposed to restraint and violence, but not to subordination and cheerful obedience. 1. They who are adopted into God's family are delivered from the dominion of sin. They now walk at liberty. They feel that they are free to serve God without the fear of wrath. They delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man. 2. Christians are delivered from the power of Satan. 3. Christian liberty implies deliverance from undue human influence (Psa. cxix. 45; Prov. xxix. 25). Independence of mind, and courage in Christian behaviour, are desirable objects. He who attains to them, puts his trust in God, and does not fear what man can do unto him. In matters of right and wrong, the Christian claims to himself, and allows to others, the right of private judgment; but he neither claims to himself, nor guarantees to another, the liberty of contravening in a single instance, the commandment of his God. III. CONSIDER THE EXPRESSIONS WHICH WE ARE ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION TO UTTER—"Whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The repetition, Father, Father, also evidences the earnestness with which a Christian, feeling his deliverance from bondage, recognises his present delightful relation to God as an adopted son. 1. The believer approves of his relation to God in Jesus Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." 2. The religious man is

soothed in all his afflictions when he contemplates the compassion of his Father who is in heaven. 3. God's children consider Him as their instructor (Psa. lxxi. 17; Isa. liv. 13). 4. God's children submit to such chastisement as He thinks proper to administer (Prov. iii. 11). 5. The children of adoption place themselves under the protection of their heavenly Father (Psa. xxxi. 5, 15). 6. By the Spirit of adoption, we are enabled to approach with boldness the throne of grace, in prayer to God (Eph. ii. 18). (*A. McLeod, D.D.*) *The spirit of bondage and the Spirit of adoption:*—I. The state of THE NATURAL MAN. 1. It is a state of sleep: the voice of God to him is, "Awake, thou that sleepest." 2. For this reason he is in some sense at rest: because blind he is secure, he cannot tremble at the danger he does not know. He has no dread of God, because he thinks Him merciful, and that he can at any time repent. 3. From the same ignorance there may arise joy either in congratulating himself on his own wisdom and goodness, or in indulgence of pleasure of various kinds, and so long as he doeth well unto himself men will doubtless speak good of him. 4. It is not surprising if thus dosed with the opiates of flattery and sin, one should imagine among his other waking dreams that he walks in great liberty, being free from all vulgar errors, prejudices, enthusiasm, &c. But all this time he is the servant of sin. He commits it every day. Yet he is not troubled. He contents himself with "Man is frail; every man has his infirmity." II. The state of a MAN UNDER THE LAW. 1. By some awful providence, or by His Word applied by His Spirit God touches the heart of the slumbering sinner, who awakes into a consciousness of danger—perhaps in a moment, perhaps by degrees. 2. The inward spiritual meaning of the law now begins to glare upon him, and he sees himself stripped of all the fig leaves he had sewn together—of all his pretences to religion or excuses for sin. He now, too, feels that the wages of sin is death. 3. Here ends his pleasing dream, his delusive rest, his vain security, &c. The fumes of these opiates being dispelled, he feels the anguish of a wounded spirit—he *fears*, indeed—God's wrath, death, &c., almost to the verge of despair. 4. Now truly he desires to break loose from sin and begins to struggle with it. But though he strive with all his might, sin is mightier than he. The more he strives the more he feels his chains. He toils on, sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning, until he cries, "O wretched man that I am," &c. This whole state of bondage is described in chap. vii. III. The state of a MAN UNDER GRACE. 1. His cry is heard and heavenly healing light breaks in on his soul—the light of the glorious love of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Overpowered by the sight he cries out, "My Lord and my God," for he sees all his iniquities laid on Christ and borne away; God in Christ reconciling him unto Himself. 2. Here end the guilt and power of sin. He can now say, "I am crucified with Christ," &c. Here ends the bondage unto fear. He cannot fear the wrath of God, for it is turned away; the devil, because his power is ended; hell, for he is an heir of the kingdom; death, for that is now but the vestibule of heaven. 3. And "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," liberty not only from guilt and fear, but sin. Henceforth he does not serve sin; being made free from sin he is become the servant of righteousness. 4. Having peace with God, and rejoicing in hope, he has the Spirit of adoption who sheds abroad the love of God and man in the heart, and works in him to will and do of His good pleasure. Conclusion: The natural man neither fears nor loves God; one under the law fears: one under grace loves. The first has no light, the second painful light, the third joyous light. He that sleeps in death has a false peace; he that is awakened no peace; he that believes true peace. The heathen baptized or unbaptized has a fancied freedom, the Jew or legalist a grievous bondage, the Christian the glorious liberty of the children of God. An unawakened child of the devil sins willingly; one that is awakened sins unwillingly; a child of God "sinneth not." The natural man neither conquers nor fights; the man under the law fights but cannot conquer; the man under grace is "more than conqueror." (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *The Spirit of adoption:*—1. In what sense are we to understand the word "spirit"? Our own spirit, inasmuch as it refers to that filial disposition which prompts us to cry, Abba, Father; yet also God's Spirit, because it is only by His power and inspiration that this temper of mind is produced or sustained (chap. v. 5). 2. To what does "again" refer? No doubt to the former dispensation, Judaism (see the argument in Gal. iv., especially verses 4-7 and 22-31, and again, Heb. xii. 18-24). 3. This Spirit of adoption is a spirit of—I. REVERENTIAL ADMIRATION AND LOVE. Who so good or wise in the eyes of a son as his beloved parent? Yet our filial partiality may be grossly mistaken.

Not thus is it with our regard for God. If His children, we learn to discern in Him every excellence, and each in its highest perfection and purest form. II. GRATITUDE AND PRAISE. The son acknowledges his obligation to his father, is ever grateful to him, and learns to speak of him with becoming expressions of thankfulness and filial pride. So it is with us and God. III. DEPENDENCE AND TRUST. While we acknowledge His kindness in the past, we depend on Him at the present moment, and we commit to Him all our care for the future. How little anxiety for the morrow has the confiding child. IV. MEEK SUBMISSION AND CHEERFUL OBEDIENCE. A father's will is law to a good son; and all that a father imposes or inflicts is submitted to without murmuring, from a persuasion of his wisdom and right to correct us when we do wrong, combined with a firm conviction that he seeks only our welfare and good. How much rather should we be in subjection to the Father of our spirits (Heb. xii. 5–10). V. COMMUNION AND FELLOWSHIP. It cries, "Abba, Father." It is natural for a son to seek his father's society, and to tell him all his wishes, all his wants. So do the sons of God come to Him in supplication and prayer (Matt. vi. 6.) Further, a good son is interested in his father's pursuits, knowing that he himself will be enriched by his father's successes and advanced by his father's promotion. So do we know, as God's children, that He conducts all the affairs of His empire for our honour and welfare, and we constantly pray, "Father, Thy kingdom come," &c. VI. CONFIDENCE AND HOPE. A child who incidentally does wrong can come to his father in penitence and sorrow, assured of readily obtaining acceptance and forgiveness. So likewise we can come to God when we have sinned against Him, believing that He will quickly restore us to His favour, and not vindictively cast us off for ever. Therefore, we shall at length be brought home to our Father's house above. A wealthy parent may send his child away for a season, and place him under tutors and governors, but it is to receive him back eventually with increased honour and joy. Thus will Jehovah act with regard to us. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Without fear*:—See yonder little bird. It floats fearlessly in the spray that arises out of the thunders of Niagara. It cleanses its plumage in that ever-ascending and radiant mist. It flies through the rainbow which spans that awful presence. It is not afraid. The colours of its wings are kindred to the tints in that rainbow. It sings its gayest songs as it darts back and forth in front of that terrible glory. It has no controversy with Niagara. It gains its living along its banks. It builds its nest and rears its nestlings in the tree that overhangs the cataract. The believer in revelation has ended his controversy with God, and is, like that flying, floating, singing bird, without fear. *The Spirit of adoption*:—The question has been raised whether this means the Holy Ghost, or a consciousness of being a child of God. It is both, and we cannot distinguish between the two. But we must not confound "adoption" and the "Spirit of adoption," though they are never very far apart. 1. "Adoption" is that act whereby we are received into the family of God. And the way in which this is brought about is thus: Christ is the one Son of God. Into the Son, God elects and engrafts members. As soon as the union takes place, God sees the soul in the relationship in which He sees Christ. He gives it a partnership in the same privileges. 2. But this "adoption," if it stood alone, would be no blessing. A rich man, well educated, "adopts" a poor illiterate child. The child moves in the social circle of his adopted father, and shares his wealth. Now, if his benefactor be a wise man, he will endeavour to give him a filial spirit, and the qualifications which are necessary for his elevation. But if not, the "adoption" will only issue in disappointment and unhappiness to all parties. 3. We cannot, therefore, sufficiently thank God that wherever He gives "adoption," He follows by "the Spirit of adoption." But, as in nature, as soon as ever a branch is grafted into a tree the sap begins to flow into that branch; and however dissimilar the graft to the parent stock, the passing of the graft into that stock gradually makes them one:—so in Christ, the "Spirit of adoption" following the "adoption," seals the union by making the affinity close, happy, and eternal! 4. Of all words that which comprises most of wisdom, tenderness, and love, is "Father." What a repose lies in that, "My Father." And as soon as the Spirit begins to work in a sinner's heart, the very first thing He plants there is, "I will arise and go to my Father," &c. And if only we could take in the simple conception that God is a "Father," well-nigh the whole work of our religion would be done. Thousands acknowledge it is true; but few think of how much has passed in the deepest councils and sublimest operations of God, that we might use that paternal function. All heaven had to come down to earth that we might stand to God again in that lost relation-

ship. The blood of Christ only could purchase it; and no man could ever frame his heart to conceive, or his lips to utter it, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. 5. Now let me examine what a "Spirit of adoption" is. It is not a spirit of doubt and anxiety, in which I say, "Does God really love me? Am I forgiven? How shall I overcome all my difficulties?" That is not what a little child ever feels, if he has got an affectionate father. The "Spirit of adoption" is all hope. Hence, prayer becomes a very bold thing where there is the "Spirit of adoption." A child does not ask a father as a stranger asks him. He goes as one who has a right. If he finds his father's door for a moment closed, see how he knocks. He does not want wages; but he receives rewards. All creation is his Father's house, and he can say, "Everything in it is mine, on to death itself." The "Spirit of adoption" longs to go home. For, if the love of an unseen Father has been so sweet, what will it be to look in His face? (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Spirit of adoption:*—We are not merely criminals unwhipped of justice, but since Christ has met the demands of the law for us we are entirely acquitted; and then there is implanted in us, by the Holy Spirit, the sweet, glad consciousness of sonship. I. Therefore THE COWERING FEARFULNESS OF SIN IS SUPPLANTED BY A LOVING FILIALNESS. Very beautiful is that word, "Abba" just here. It is a little up-thrusting of the Apostle's mother tongue. Though we be adepts in any other language, the speech we use to express overflowing feeling is always that which we learned at our mother's knee. And there is such a swell and throb of filialness in the apostle's heart toward the heavenly Father, that even though he must immediately translate it, there is no word to tell his consciousness of his close, free sonship but the word that used to be prattle on his lips when he was a child. So swept away is the bad fear which comes from sin, so dear and deep is his sense of a holy familiarity with God, that the only word that can in the least even shadow it forth is the nursery word back there in Tarsus, Abba. 1. How easy prayer is to a God, who thus reinstating us in sonship, will allow from us such address. 2. How "in everything" (Phil. iv. 6) may we make request of Him. II. THERE IS SUCH A THING AS AN ASSURANCE OF THIS SONSHIP. "The Spirit itself beareth witness." III. BEING THUS ADOPTED INTO SONSHIP WE ARE HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST. Then—1. I have title to illimitable Divine possession. 2. I may dismiss fear that I shall fail to enter upon my unimaginable wealth. IV. SUCH ADOPTION DOES NOT PRECLUDE THE NECESSITY OF DISCIPLINE. It compels it rather. For so great a destiny and glory I must be prepared. But there is this infinite solace under chastisement—it is not punitive; it is educative. Its intention is to fit me for the splendid destiny God intends for me. It is thus quite possible to be glad and thankful for my pain. (*Wayland Hoyt, D.D.*) *Adoption:*—The spiritual connection of the true disciple with God is repeatedly represented to us in Paul's Epistles under the figure of sonship. The idea of simple sonship, indeed, is brought prominently forward by St. John; as 1 John iii. 1; iv. 6; v. 9, 10, &c. But whereas St. John always represents this idea in its simplest form, St. Paul, and St. Paul only, describes this sonship more artificially as adoptive. This illustration is not taken from any Jewish custom; the law of Moses contains no provision for such a practice. Adoption was essentially a Roman usage, and was closely connected with the Roman ideas of family. The son was declared to be the absolute property of his father from his birth to his father's decease. In order to being adopted out of his own family into that of another man it was necessary that he should undergo a fictitious sale. But if a son had been thus sold by his father and had again recovered his liberty, he fell again under the paternal dominion, and it was not till he had been thus sold, *emancipatus*, three times, that he became finally free from this paramount authority. Accordingly, the adopter required that the fiction of sale should be three times repeated, before the son could be received into his new family, and fall under the dominion of his new father. When, however, these formalities had been complied with, the adopted son became incorporated into the family of his adopter, indentified, as it were, with his person, made one with him; so that on the adopter's decease he became not so much his representative as his second self, the perpetuator of his legal personality. He assumed, moreover, on adoption, the burdens or privileges incident to the performance of the rights of his new family. He relinquished his former rites, and attached himself to those of his new parent. All this appears to have been in the apostle's mind when he addressed the Roman disciples in this passage. The Spirit of God, he says, bears witness with our spirit, or confers upon us an inward persuasion, that we are now by adoption the children of God Himself, whereas we were before the

children of some other father—namely, the world or the Evil One. But henceforth we are relieved from the bondage of corruption, from the state of legal subjection to this evil parent, and admitted to the glorious liberty of the happy children of a good and gracious father, even God. And how was this escape from bondage to be effected? God paid a price for it. As the Roman adopter paid, or made as though he paid down a certain weight of copper, so God gave His Son as a precious sacrifice, as a ransom to the world, or the Evil One, from whom He redeemed His adopted children. Henceforth we became the elect, the chosen of God. The same illustration is indicated in Gal. iv. 3: "When we were children we were in bondage under the elements of the world," addicted to the rites of our original family; "but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son," &c. But now, after ye have known God . . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements," such as the *sacra* of your original family, "whereunto ye desire to be again in bondage" (Eph. i. 5). (*Dean Merivale.*) *Adoption, sacred and secular*:—Betwixt civil and sacred adoption there is a two-fold agreement and disagreement. They agree in this, that both flow from the pleasure and good will of the adoptant; and in this, that both confer a right to privileges which we have not by nature; but in this they differ: one is an act imitating nature, the other transcends nature: the one was found out for the comfort of them that had no children, the other for the comfort of them that had no Father. Divine adoption is in Scripture either taken properly for that act or sentence of God by which we are made sons, or for the privileges with which the adopted are invested. We lost our inheritance by the fall of Adam: we receive it by the death of Christ, which restores it again to us by a new and better title. (*J. Flavel.*) *A childlike spirit towards God*:—I. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TEMPER OF A CHILD OF GOD AND THE TEMPER OF AN UNREGENERATE PERSON. 1. Naturally fallen creatures have a "spirit of bondage"—the temper of a slave towards God. (1) All the systems of heathenism are marked by this spirit. The love of God never enters into them, but either their self-love is addressed by certain hopes which appeal to their natural feelings, or else they are under the constraining influence of a dread of those misfortunes which the gods are supposed to have the power and will to inflict. (2) Among Mohammedans we find the same spirit prevailing. They are sometimes told that, if they obey the admonitions of the Koran, they shall have a sensual paradise. They are more frequently told that, if they violate the same directions, they shall expose themselves to the anger of God. (3) In the Roman Catholic Church, although there may be sometimes a reference to the promises of the gospel, how much more frequently and powerfully the fear of its votaries is addressed. They dread the church censures, the indignation of their priest, and their fancied purgatory. Nay, they dare not approach the merciful Mediator unless there be some other mediator. (4) Nor is Protestantism by any means free from this unhappy spirit. For what is a fashionable religion but a compromise between men's passions and their fears? Anything of loving Him is often absolutely ridiculed. 2. Now, if we turn to this Book for the explanation of that universal feeling, we find that it is truly reasonable. The account which St. Paul gives of it in chap. vii. is applicable to all the world. It is obvious that, in proportion as this is comprehended, men must "fear." A man may sometimes contrive, either by forgetfulness of God, or by forming to himself false notions respecting God, to escape from the influence of fear, but then his mind is sunk into a state of torpor and death-like slumber. When once the light is let in on the understanding, and the man sees anything of the attributes of God and what they demand, and finds that he has violated all, and that his own nature is opposed to that Holy God, he "dies." In the language of the apostle, it is the law which "shuts us up," allows us no hope. 3. But when a man finds the gospel, that spirit is changed. Then all the sources of dread are gone. How can he dread God any more? Do you think that the poor prodigal, when, all ragged and worn as he was, he came back to his father's house, and felt his father's arms around him, and his father's kiss upon his pale and withered cheek—think you that he dreaded that father then? 4. And now the whole of the sinner's future course is characterised by love; he is no longer a slave, but he is become a child. This is seen doubtless, and seen very mainly, in the character of the Christian's obedience, which is now wholly changed. The child of God has the law written on his heart—loves every one of its requisitions, because he loves the wise and just Parent that enacted them—and would obey them all. His obedience is now unfettered, unrestricted, unreserved, cheerful, grateful, and generous. 5. The filial spirit prevails in the whole of the experience

of every one of the children of God. If he receives any temporal blessings, he receives them from the hand of his Father; if he looks at the promises of the gospel, they come to him as the promise of his heavenly Father; if he receives any of the painful events of life, it is a wise and gracious Father who has sent them, and it is his inclination and his pleasure to submit. So, likewise, this same filial spirit pervades all the exercises of religion; if others pray because conscience compels them to pray, the child of God rejoices that he may come to "his Father, who seeth in secret." If he looks forward to death, when no other being can go with him and sustain his faltering spirit, he feels his Father can; and when he looks to glory, it is with the same feelings; he is going to the house of his Father. II. THE ORIGIN OF THIS SPIRIT. It is characterised in our text as a gift; it is not spoken of as an attainment. "Ye have received." It is a gift received from God; therefore His favour and His blessing must have preceded it. If, then, we are told that the sinner must first love God, must first serve God, and then he may hope for the favour of God—this is just a sentence of despair to any man who knows himself. How can he love God? The source of that "Spirit of adoption" is in adoption itself, and the source of that adoption is the sovereign, unmerited, bounty and mercy of God. 1. Its meritorious cause is the Cross of Christ. There is no other reason why a sinner deserves to be a child of God but this, that Jesus Christ has deserved it. "When the fulness of the time was come," &c. 2. The instrumental cause is faith. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." 3. The Agent is the Spirit of God. He only it is who implants faith, and He it is who alone communicates "the Spirit of adoption." 4. The means is that view of the love of God which none but an adopted child can have. "We love Him because He first loved us." (*Baptist Noel, M.A.*) *The temper of gospel obedience*:—Consider this—I. BY WAY OF CONTRAST, as it is opposed to any form of obedience performed in a slavish and unready mind. 1. With the severe discipline of the law. On this point the apostle is the best exponent of his own views in that allegory of Agar and Sarah (Gal. iv. 22–26). To the same purport there is another illustration of the two dispensations, addressed to the same Church (Gal. iv. 3–7). These distinct tendencies of the two dispensations are discoverable in almost every circumstance. Contrast—(1) The method of their introduction, the thunderings of Sinai with the stillness of Bethlehem; the voice of the trumpet with the melody of angels; the blackness and darkness and tempest with the mild halo of glory which played aronnd the wondering shepherds as they kept watch over their flocks by night. (2) The miracles of the two dispensations. Look at the earth opening her month to swallow np the rebellious, the fiery serpents, the pestilence, and compare with these the blind receiving their sight, the multitudes fed with bread, and the widow receiving from death her child. (3) In their outward ordinances—those of the one multitudinous, obscure, oppressive; those of the other easy, refreshing, simple. Of course we do not mean that this servile temper extended to every individual worshipper. The Spirit is not bound. Enoch's was no servant's walk, nor could fear have wrought Abraham's faith. Neither do we speak disparagingly of that dispensation itself. The law is a system of progressive teaching (Gal. iv. 1, 2). We must be disciplined to habits of reverence and subjection. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. 2. With the service of the man who is trying to work out a righteousness for himself. This fault first discovered itself in the newly-converted Jews, who could but feel a rude shock to their ancient sympathies when they were required to pass from the pride-fostering works of the ancient ritual to the simple faith and self-abasing truths of the gospel. And many now feel the stirrings of an alarmed conscience, and are urged on by an unresting anxiety to feel that their souls are safe, and yet God is not satisfied with them, neither are they satisfied with themselves. Now what is the secret of such painful experience happening to men who are taking more pains to be miserable than it would cost them to be happy? They will be servants, and not sons; they will be labouring to obey, and not trying to believe. If, then, you are in earnest about your souls' salvation, take Heaven's simple answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Then the works will follow. But all attempts to get peace before or without this will be mere labour in vain. This one thing done, the whole character of our obedience becomes changed. It is not the spirit of bondage again to fear; it is the filial obedience of those who, having received the Spirit of adoption, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. II. BY WAY OF COMPARISON. Four marks of Roman civil adoption you will find exactly paralleled in the spiritual adoption. Did the child among the Romans share in the privileges of the natural children? It is

affirmed of the believer that "if children then heirs, heirs with God and joint heirs with Christ." Did the Roman bestow his own name on the child he adopted? "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name." Did the civil law exact from the adopted all honour and reverence to the parent? "If I be a Father, where is Mine honour?" "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints," &c. Did the new father engage to treat the stranger with parental care and kindness? "I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." From this view of the condition of the believer we may infer three characteristics of evangelical service. 1. Reverence. 2. Cheerfulness. No labour in the Lord can be in vain; no commandment of God can be grievous. 3. Confidence. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) **Whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**—*Abba, Father*:—I. THE FACT. "We cry, Abba, Father." 1. In one aspect this seems little. It is only a cry, a name named, and that a child's lisp of the first two sounds of the alphabet. True, but I am not anxious to get from you more than what all Christians confess. "We" cry, Abba, Father. Visions and revelations are exceptional, but we all cry, "Abba, Father." 2. This is not a small thing. It means carrying the clear proof of our being God's children. True, we are infants, but no infant would ever cry "Abba" unless it were a *child*. Here are weakness and strength, but the one is linked to the other by a bond that cannot be broken. And what a distance between us in our helplessness and God in His glory, but "Father" reaches all the way. *Only* a cry! God hears nothing else. Observe the refrain of Psalm cvii. Mark the reason why universal power is given to the Mediator (Psa. lxxii. 11, 12). 3. This cry is the product of the Holy Spirit (see also Gal. iv. 6). This is the Divine side of the matter, of which we have both the human and Divine sides in John i. 12–13). II. THE CONSEQUENCES. 1. You have the witness of the Spirit. The cry and the groaning (ver. 26) are His work; the natural man knows nothing of them. 2. You are heirs of God (ver. 19; Matt. xiii. 43). 3. You are joint heirs with Christ. (1) An interest in all His glory. (2) He has entered on the inheritance as our Forerunner (Heb. vi. 20). III. BUT WHAT OF THE PRESENT? "If we suffer with Him." Suffer we must; but—1. These pangs are hopeful; they are of birth, not death, and prove a heaven-sent longing after home and God. 2. The Saviour is with us in them. His Spirit causes them. Christ sympathises and succours (Heb. ii. 17, 18). (*A. M. Symington, D.D.*) *The Abba, Father*:—The expression is used once by Christ, twice by Paul. Why should the Saviour in Gethsemane employ two languages, and Paul when speaking of the free Spirit which animates believers? Is it conformity to the custom of giving to persons a variety of names? Or is the one name an interpretation of the other? Augustine and Calvin think that it is to show that both Jews and Greeks each in their own respective language would call on God as a Father. Dr. Morison says that "the dual form is delightfully fitted to suggest that in His great work Christ personated in His single self not Jews only, but Gentiles." And not only fitted, but designed. And so Paul may have caught the spirit and aim of the Master's words. And thus we have a speaking testimony to the fusion of Jew and Greek which prepared the way for the preaching of the gospel to the heathen. The idea of Father clasps not only the languages, but the people. What other word so fitted as a basis for all the nations to meet on and be made one! Grandly prophetic of the time, to bring about which the Saviour died and the apostle laboured, is "Abba, Father." The term illustrates how the idea of Fatherhood—I. Evokes THE DEEPEST FILIAL FEELING. In the only instances in which we have the words there is everything to justify this. It is the child-cry coming not from the surface, but from the depths. How much larger and more tender the word than master, magistrate, king, &c. II. Begets THE MOST CHILDLIKE FAMILIARITY. Only in the home circle can such feelings play. It is the child, not the subject or servant, that cries "Abba, Father." Refinement of feeling and manner is always beautiful in a child, but it is not natural that it should express itself in courtly language. The charm of the family is in the freedom which love imparts. The parental heart, shining like a warm sun in the centre of the home, draws young affection to it as the flowers turn to the heat and light. III. Stirs THE INTENSEST EARNESTNESS. So it did in Christ and Paul. There are moments in Christian experience when the language of familiarity rises into the language of anguish. Though in the Divine family, men are still on earth—not the most congenial place, and even Jesus seems to have had quite enough of it when He said, "And now I come to Thee." The definition suggests emphasis or urgency. As a child's whisper will sometimes wake the family, even the gentlest ruffle on the heart will not pass the heavenly Father's

notice. How much more shall a cry of anguish reach Him and bring Him to our relief. (*R. Mitchell.*)

Ver. 16. **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit.**—*The witness of the Spirit with our spirits*:—I. THE RESPECTIVE OFFICES OF THE TWO WITNESSES. 1. "The Spirit itself beareth witness." (1) The subject of the testimony is not that we have been awakened, that we have repented, that a number of moral changes have taken place in us, so that we may conclude that we are the children of God. Its direct and simple object is to assure us "that we are the children of God." (2) Of this the Spirit is the only competent witness. To this fact of our reconciliation to God, considered as a fact, our own spirits neither do nor can bear testimony. That the act of pardon takes place upon our believing in Christ; but this act of mercy is one which takes place in the mind of God. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." He, therefore, alone can be cognizant of the fact of forgiveness and adoption, to whom that fact is made known by the testimony of the Spirit. (3) How this testimony is borne may be difficult to describe, but it is that by which doubt is put away and the fact ascertained. For why else is a witness called in but to clear up some doubt? For what purpose do we bring forward witnesses but to come to the knowledge of some truth? Now, whatever be the method, the fact is communicated, and known, because communicated. 2. The witness of our own spirits. Why this? Certain it is that the Holy Spirit speaks with a voice by which the faithful soul cannot be deceived, yet there may be impressions not from Him, and which we may mistake for His sacred testimony. Against such delusion you must be carefully guarded. Nor are the means by which it may be detected difficult. Where the Spirit of God dwells He dwells as the author of regeneration. Of this change our own spirits must be conscious. If we love God and our neighbour, if we are spiritually minded, as having the fruits of the Spirit, then have we the witness of our own spirits to the fact that we have received the Spirit of God. II. THE ERRORS CONNECTED WITH THIS DOCTRINE INTO WHICH MEN HAVE SOMETIMES FALLEN. 1. That there can be no certainty of our being now in a state of salvation. Well, if this blessing be not attainable, the state of good men under the New Testament dispensation is far inferior to the state of good men under the Old. "Enoch before his translation had this testimony, that he pleased God." Now, what was there peculiar in the case of Enoch? See the filial confidence that Abraham had in God from the time that his faith was counted to him for righteousness. When David prays, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation," did he not recollect that joy in the salvation of God which he had previously experienced? We may say, also, that this notion is contrary to all the words of Christ and His apostles. When our Lord says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," can such words be reconciled with the idea of our being in a state of uncertainty? Remember that that uncertainty implies this, "I am uncertain whether God be my friend or my enemy." Now, if this be the only state into which religion brings us, with what truth can Christ be said to have given rest to the soul? 2. That there is a great danger of fanaticism in this, and that, therefore, it will be much more safe to proceed in the way of argument and inference. But upon this theory what are we to do with the text? There are certain fruits of the Spirit, it is said, by the existence of which in ourselves we are to infer that we are the children of God. What are these fruits? If you examine them you will find that several are such as must necessarily imply a previous persuasion of our being in the favour of God, communicated by God Himself (Gal. v. 22, 23). Love to God directly implies the knowledge of His love to us. So, too, as to peace. Can we have this before we know whether we are at peace with God? The fruits of the Spirit flow from the witness of the Spirit. 3. That this is the privilege only of some eminent Christians. But there is no authority for this in the Word of God. This blessing is as common a blessing as pardon; it is put on the same ground, and is offered in the same general manner. 4. That this is an assurance of final salvation. I find no authority for this in the book of God. We are called to live in the comfortable assurance of the Divine favour, and to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; but this conveys to us no certain assurance of final salvation. Conclusion: 1. This doctrine may well lead those of you to consider your own condition who feel that you are under the Divine displeasure, that you are living carelessly, and neglecting the great salvation. 2. The subject applies itself to those whose conscience is

burdened by the sense of guilt and sin. When once you get the faith that waits and pleads and prays it will not be long before God will hear your earnest prayer, and say unto you, "I am thy salvation." 3. Let those who have received the Spirit of adoption recollect both their privileges and their duties. Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, and of the blessings you profess to enjoy. (*R. Watson.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—In the text itself there are two general parts considerable. First, the witnesses mentioned. Secondly, the thing itself, which they bear witness unto. The witnesses mentioned they are two. First, our own spirit. We begin with the former of these parts, viz., the witnesses themselves here mentioned, which are here expressed to be of two sorts. Our own spirit, and the Spirit of God with it. Each of these do bear witness to the truth of adoption in those who are true believers. First, our own spirit; that is, the spirit of the children of God considered by itself. This is one witness to them of their condition in grace, and of their relation to God as their Father. Our own spirit is not to be taken in a corrupt sense for our carnal spirit. This is sometimes too much our own, and so denominated, but such as is no competent judge or witness of such a business as this we now speak of. Nor, secondly, is it to be taken in a common sense, for our mere natural spirit, our soul in its physical consideration, for there is a witness (as we acknowledge) even in that of civil and natural actions. But it is to be taken in a more refined and spiritual sense. Our spirit, so far forth as sanctified and renewed by grace, sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, and having His image stamped upon it, making up the regenerate part in us. This is our spirit in the sense of this scripture. Look, as this is the difference betwixt a man and other creatures, that he is able to reflect upon his actions, which another cannot; so this is the difference betwixt a Christian and other men, that he can reflect upon his own grace, which others are not able to do. The spirit of a regenerate person is a witness to him of his adoption. This is suitable and agreeable to other places of Scripture besides (2 Cor. i. 12; 1 John iii. 21). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 10). "My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," &c. (chap. ix. 1). For the better opening of this point unto us we must know that a man's own spirit does witness to him his adoption, or state in grace, according to a threefold reflection. First, upon his primitive conversion, and the manner and carriage of that. Secondly, upon his habitual disposition, and the frame and temper of that. Thirdly, upon his general conversation, and the ordering and regulating of that. By reflecting upon each of these, in the right and due observation of them, does a man's own private spirit and conscience witness to him that he is a child of God. The second is the Spirit of God, and more expressly the Spirit of adoption, which we find to be mentioned in the close of the preceding verse of this chapter. The Spirit itself, or the self-same Spirit. This bears witness of our adoption and state in grace. And it may be conceived to do so two manner of ways. We begin in order with the first of these testimonies, which is that which is distinct and immediate, wherein the Spirit of God does without the intercurrence or mediation of any discourse on our part, or argument on His, signify His love and goodwill to such persons as are partakers of it. This is the testimony which we are now to speak of. First, to speak of the nature of it; what or what manner of thing it is. Now for this it is nothing else but a gracious hint or intimation given to the soul by God, assuring our hearts and consciences of His favour and love towards us, and of our atonement and reconciliation with Him through the blood of His Son. "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," "I am thy salvation," "thou art Mine," and the like. It is not a violent ecstasy or rapture of soul beyond itself, as illuminatists and enthusiasts, and such kind of people as those are, are sometimes deluded withal, but a sober and judicious and composed frame of spirit, which lies not at all in the fancy, as the subject of it, but in the heart. To speak distinctly of it we may look upon it under a threefold property, or qualification. First, this manner of testimony of the Spirit is secret and inexpressible, a hidden mystery, and such as is easier felt than described; as a man that tastes honey sweet cannot make another to conceive the sweetness of it, therefore it is called the hidden manna (Rev. ii. 17). It is called unspeakable joy (1 Pet. i. 8; 2 Cor. xii. 4). Secondly, it is certain and infallible. This it is like the witness of a prince, which puts all presently out of controversy. Thirdly, this witness of the Spirit, it is moreover inconstant and various, *Rara hora brevis mora* (Bernard). And is not always or at all times alike vouchsafed to those that receive it, and are partakers of it. Now the second thing here considerable of us is the discovery

of it, whereby it may be known. This inquiry is very necessary for us in regard of the manifold mistakes and deceits which are in this particular. First, from the antecedents. In Eph. i. 13 it is said, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed." Sealing comes after believing, that so it may not be a seal to a blank. The Spirit's witness of our salvation is consequent to His work of our conversion. And there are two reasons for it. First, because this witness of the Spirit is an act of special favour, therefore it is such as belongs only to those who are friends, and in a state of actual reconcilement unto Him. Secondly, because the judgment, and so also the witness of God, is according to truth. Never is a Spirit of consolation where it is not first a spirit of renovation. Secondly, we may take notice of it in its concomitants, and those things which do usually attend it. At first a reverend esteem of the ordinances. And then it is also accompanied with humility and meekness of spirit, and a holy care and fear of offending. And again, there is a holy boldness and confidence at the throne of grace which does accompany this testimony of the Spirit. "Seeing we have such hope, we use great freedom of speech" (2 Cor. iii. 12). Thirdly, for its consequences and effects. They are also various. Joy in the Holy Ghost; contempt of the world; comfortable thoughts even of death itself. From these and the like discoveries may we discern the testimony of the Spirit to be such as it is. But moreover, to make all clear, we must further know this much, that the Spirit of God bears witness to itself in its witnessing to us. As it is infallible in regard of the matter of its testimony, so it is convincing in regard of the evidence and manner of its proceeding. And it shows itself to be far different from all delusions and mistakes whatsoever. And it is a sufficient witness to itself, though there were no other besides; as the sun which discovers other things is also seen by the same light itself whereby it discovers them. The second is the conjunctive, or concurrent testimony. As the Spirit witnesses to us, so it witnesseth with us. And with us, not only by the way of concomitancy, but by way of assistance. His testimony has an influence upon ours; that is, He helps us to witness to ourselves. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything to this purpose of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God (2 Cor. iii. 5). This is different from the former testimony of the Spirit of God in two regards. First, that in that He has no concurrence with us, neither are we, by way of activity, but merely passively any parties at all in it, but in this we are. Secondly, that in that He proceeds by way of simple assertion, but in this by way of argument and reason, clearing both the premises of the practical syllogism to us, and enabling us to infer the conclusion. Here we need His concurrence with us to help us out of those difficulties which are upon us. And this is that which through His grace and goodness we do receive from Him, as is here signified, while it is said that He bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. The second is the matter of this witness, or the thing itself witnessed unto. And that we have in those words, that we are the children of God. That there is such a thing as an assurance of our state in grace, and so of future salvation, here in this life. This it may be cleared upon these arguments which make for it, as first, from the description of faith itself in the highest notion and degree of it, which the Scripture does set forth to us, under terms of certainty and assurance, calling it the full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22); the full assurance of hope (Heb. vi. 11). Speaking of Abraham, it is said that he was fully persuaded (chap. iv. 21). Secondly, from the exhortations which are given to Christians to this purpose. For trial and self-examination. "Examine yourselves, prove yourselves, know ye not your own selves," &c. (2 Cor. xiii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 10; Heb. vi. 11). Lastly, this may be confirmed unto us from the manifest absurdity and inconvenience which does follow from the contrary doctrine. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—I. THE HIGH PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S PEOPLE. There is a sense in which all are His children, for "we are all His offspring." But all are not related to God as His children in the sense of the text. Certain Jews pretended that they were "the children of God." Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me"; but they loved Him not. Consequently He spoke still more plainly to them, "Ye are of your father the devil," &c. The same applies exactly to men in the present day. But let us observe what this high privilege denotes. 1. Distinguished honour. The Lord puts His name upon them. If this be our privilege we need envy none. The name of the ungodly, whatever rank they hold, shall be "blotted out." 2. Peculiar affection. There is no feeling so congenial to the heart of a father as affection for his children. 3. Constant care. 4. The most liberal kindness. "If ye, being

evil, know how to give good gifts," &c. II. THE WAY BY WHICH THIS PRIVILEGE IS ASCERTAINED AND ENJOYED. Two witnesses come forward—1. The testimony of conscience—"our spirit." Have you, or have you not, a persuasion in your own breast that you are a child of God? "If our heart condemn us," that is, if the verdict of conscience be clearly against us, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. But if our heart condemn us not," if its verdict be impartially in our favour, "then have we confidence towards God." 2. But, secondly, here is the testimony of the Spirit of God, and this is more particularly to be regarded; but when both agree then the case is beyond all reasonable doubt. Many a man, sinfully partial to himself, hath the witness of his own spirit that he is a Christian, while the Spirit of God witnesses no such thing. Let us, therefore, consider this witness. This is given in two ways. 1. In the Scriptures. The Word of God describes the children of God, the mind compares itself with this, and so far as an agreement really exists an inference friendly to ourselves is fairly drawn. 2. But there is the Spirit's witness by supernatural influence, or direct impressions on the mind. If Satan, that evil spirit "which now worketh in the children of disobedience," has a pernicious and destructive influence, much more the Holy Spirit of God for saving purposes. The Spirit's witness may be distinguished—(1) By what precedes it. In vain does any one pretend to it unless he be first experimentally acquainted with—(*a*) True repentance. (*b*) Unfeigned faith. (*c*) Sincere devotedness to God. (2) By what attends it. A high estimation of God's Word. (3) By what follows it. (*a*) Deep humility. (*b*) Holy jealousy of self. (*c*) Close walking with God. (*d*) Holiness. (*T. Kidd.*) *The witness of the Spirit:*—I. THE TESTIMONY. There must be a fact before there can be evidence. To be a child of God is a privilege marked—1. By its greatness. It is a great privilege that commences in adoption, that is effectuated by regeneration, sustained by Divine nourishment, confirmed by Divine instruction, manifested by Divine resemblance, and witnessed by the Divine Spirit. Now, God has said, "If any man provide not for those of his own household, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." We conclude that God, in proclaiming His own Fatherhood, will not be wanting towards the members of His own family. (1) He has a home for them (John xiv. 2). Wherefore He is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath provided for them a city. (2) He will provide for their pilgrimage and journey home. (3) He will afford them the special tokens of His love. "I will not leave you orphans." 2. By its distinguishing privilege. To be the children of God by adoption and grace is not a common privilege. 3. By its operative power. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The child of God longs to be like God. 4. By its evangelical influence. "Ye have received not the spirit of bondage." II. THE WITNESSES. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (John viii. 18). 1. Our own spirit. Not that it has always done so, nor that our actual safety is always in proportion to the assurance of safety. We may be safer than our fears will permit us to think. But there are times when our own spirit delivers no faint or hesitating testimony. "Should I thus love God if He were not more to me than He is to others? Should I thus run to Him in my sorrows, feel this delight in prayer, love His house, His day, His Word, His ministers—choose His people?" 2. But our hearts are deceitful. We need a second witness to confirm the testimony of our own. The Spirit is a fellow-witness. How does the Spirit bear witness? (1) By direct communication. But lest this should be thought to encourage a dreamy fanaticism—(2) By the doctrines and promises of the written Word. The voice of the Spirit within agrees with the voice without—to the law and the testimony. (3) By His effectual work as the Comforter and Sanctifier of the people of God, tempers, fruit. III. TO WHOM DO THESE WITNESSES TESTIFY? 1. To ourselves for comfort. We are hard to satisfy. He thoroughly pleads our cause and argues it to us. 2. To the Church for communion. 3. To the world for usefulness. (*P. Strutt.*) *The witness of the Spirit:*—The sin of the world is a false confidence—that a man is a Christian when he is not. The fault of the Church is a false diffidence—whether a man be a Christian when he is. The two are perhaps more akin than they look. Their opposites, at all events—the true confidence, which is faith in Christ; and the true diffidence, which is distrust of self—are identical. But there often is the combination of a real confidence and a false diffidence. Now this text is one that has often tortured the mind of Christians. Instead of looking to other sources to ascertain whether they are Christians or not, and then thinking thus, That text asserts that *all* Christians have this witness, therefore certainly I have it in some

shape or other; they say, I do not feel anything that corresponds with my idea of the witness of God's Spirit, and therefore I doubt whether I am a Christian at all. Note—1. OUR CRY "FATHER" IS THE WITNESS THAT WE ARE SONS. "The Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our spirit." It is not that my spirit bears witness that I am a child of God, and that the Spirit of God comes in with a separate evidence to say Amen; but that there is one testimony which has a conjoint origin; from the Spirit of God as true source, and from my own soul as recipient and co-operant in that testimony. 1. So far, then, as the form of the evidence goes, you are not to look for it in anything parted off from your own experience, but you are to try and find out whether there be a "still small voice," no whirlwind, &c., but the voice of God taking the voice and tones of your own heart and saying to you, Thou art My child, inasmuch as through Me there rises, tremblingly but truly, in thine own soul the cry, Abba, Father. 2. Then with regard to the substance of it, "The Spirit itself," by means of our cry, Abba, Father, "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." The substance of the conviction is not primarily directed to our relation or feelings to God, but to God's feelings and relation to us. The two things seem to be the same, but they are not. Instead of being left painfully to search amongst the dust and rubbish of our own hearts, we are taught to sweep away all that crumbled, rotten surface, and to go down to the living rock that lies beneath it. There is all the difference in the world between searching for evidence of my sonship and seeking to get the conviction of God's fatherhood. The one is an endless, profitless, self-tormenting task; the other is the light and glorious liberty of the children of God. II. THAT CRY IS NOT SIMPLY OURS, BUT IT IS THE VOICE OF GOD'S SPIRIT. 1. Our own convictions are ours because they are God's. Our own spirits possess them, but our own spirits did not originate them. This passage with Gal. iv. 6 puts this truth very forcibly. In the one text the cry is regarded as the voice of the believing heart; and in the other the same cry is regarded as the voice of God's Spirit. And these two things are both true; the one would want its foundation if it were not for the other; the cry of the Spirit is nothing for me unless it be appropriated by me. And the whole doctrine of my text is built on this one thought—without the Spirit of God in your heart you never can recognise God as your Father. There is no ascent of the human desires above their source. 2. But if this principle be true it does not apply only to this one single attitude of the believing soul, it comprehends the whole of a Christian's life. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit" in every perception of God's Word, in every revelation of His counsel, in every aspiration after Him, in every holy resolution, in every thrill and throb of love and desire. Each of these is mine, inasmuch as in my heart it is experienced and transacted; but it is God's, and therefore only has it come to be mine! And if it be objected that this opens a wide door to delusion, here is an outward guarantee. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." The test of the inward conviction is the outward life, and they that have the witness of the Spirit within them have the light of their life lit by the Spirit of God, whereby they may read the handwriting on the heart, and be sure that it is God's and not their own! III. THIS DIVINE WITNESS IN OUR SPIRITS IS SUBJECT TO THE ORDINARY INFLUENCES WHICH AFFECT OUR SPIRITS. 1. The notion often prevails that this Divine witness must needs be perfect, never flickering, never darkening. The passage before us gives us the opposite notion. The Divine Spirit, when it enters into the narrow room of the human spirit, condescends to submit itself to the ordinary laws and conditions which befall our own human nature. Christ came into the world Divine, but the humanity He wore modified the manifestation of the Divinity that dwelt in it. And not otherwise is the operation of God's Holy Spirit when it comes to dwell in a human heart. There, too, working through man, it "is found in fashion as a man." The witness of the Spirit, if it were yonder in heaven, would shine like a perpetual star; here in the heart on earth it burns like a flame, not always bright, wanting to be trimmed, and needing to be guarded from rude blasts. Else what does an apostle mean when he says, "Quench not the Spirit," "Grieve not the Spirit"? 2. And the practical conclusion that comes from all this is just the simple advice, Do not wonder if that evidence vary in its clearness and force. Do not think that it cannot be genuine because it is changeful. There are heavenly lights too that wax and wane; they are lights, they are in the heavens though they change. You have no reason to be discouraged because you find that the witness of the Spirit changes. Watch it, and guard it, lest it do. Live in the contemplation of the person and the fact that it calls forth, that it may not. You

will never "brighten your evidences" by polishing at them. To polish the mirror ever so assiduously does not secure the image of the sun on its surface. The only way to do that is to carry the poor bit of glass out into the sunshine. It will shine then, never fear. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—It is the high and distinguishing privilege of true Christians that they are the children of God; but there is a wide difference between possessing a privilege and knowing that we possess it. A man may have in law a clear title to an estate without feeling sure in his own mind that he has such a title. He may possess a real interest in some very beneficial concern, and yet may be ignorant of his claim, or perhaps have considerable doubts as to the justice of his pretensions. The text discloses the way by which the true Christian may attain to a strong and lively hope of his adoption—namely, through the testimony of the Spirit. What, then, is this witness of the Spirit? I. IT IS A PRIVILEGE WHICH THE SPIRIT OF GOD FREELY BESTOWS; which He confers or withholds as He sees fit. Some may wait many years before they are favoured with it, and may afterwards lose it. Nor is the Spirit less free as to the degree of the testimony. To one He bears a weaker, to another a stronger witness. II. IT IS A SECRET INWARD OPERATION of the Holy Ghost "with our spirit." Consequently it can be known only to the person to whom it is given. By his fruits others know him. III. IT PERFECTLY AGREES WITH THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD; for the Spirit cannot contradict Himself—*e.g.*, should a person pretend to have it whose life exhibited none of those marks with which Scripture distinguishes the children of God, it would be plain that he was mistaken in his pretensions. For could the Spirit witness to him a falsehood? IV. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SUDDEN AND VIOLENT IMPULSES, new revelations, sensible impressions, &c. Let us not deny or overlook the real operations of the Spirit of God; but let us not blaspheme Him, nor bring them into contempt, by ascribing to His agency effects which are proofs of nothing but of error, weakness, or imposture. V. WHEREVER THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS TO THE ADOPTION OF SONS, THERE HE HAS BEEN FIRST RECEIVED AS THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (ver. 15). (*E. Cooper.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—Christ taught the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and St. Paul taught the complemental doctrine of a direct personal witness of the same Spirit to the soul that had become renewed. The act of regeneration is succeeded by the act of confirmation; which is the Divine method in nature. Not only did God create the heavens and the earth, but He followed each act of creation with the assurance that it was "very good." It is quite true that the works of nature are continually vindicating their own goodness, and it is not less true that spiritual sonship is its own witness in the presence of all men; yet the soul which has passed through the agonies of penitence and reconstruction needs just that word of tender assurance and comfort which is expressed in the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. I. THIS WITNESS BRINGS WITH IT COMFORT. In all the great experiences of life we need a voice other than our own to complete the degree of satisfaction which begins in our own consciousness. In common affairs we may be strong enough without external encouragement; but when life is sharpened into a crisis we need something more than is possible to our unaided powers. There are times when we need to hear our own convictions pronounced by the voice of another. Let that second witness be greater than ourselves, and his testimony will bring with it proportionate comfort; let him be the wisest of men, and still the consolation is increased: let that witness be not a man, but God Himself, and at once we are filled with peace and joy unspeakable. II. Still, the very Divineness of this comfort clothes the witness with the severity of INEXORABLE DISCIPLINE. Sonship has responsibilities as well as enjoyments. "Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Will any man make the temple of the Lord a temple of idols? We are to walk in the Spirit; to mind the things of the Spirit; and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Otherwise there can be no comfort! If there is sweetness in the mouth, it is the taste of stolen honey. The comfort is not a spiritual luxury. The apostolic doctrine is that the promises of God should move the heart towards more and more purity (2 Cor. vii. 1). God's purpose as to character is growth. Let the sacred germ lie dormant in the heart, and the witness of the Spirit will decline in vividness and emphasis, and the germ itself will perish (Heb. vi. 4-6). Once interrupt the communion of the soul with the Father, and the soul may never be able to resume the fellowship: then (the apostle would say) "Pray without ceasing," if you would enjoy the permanent witness of the Spirit. Thus the argument arising out of Divine comfort in the human soul points steadfastly towards discipline (vers. 5, 13). III. YET WITH ALL THE COMFORT IS THERE

NOT AN ASPIRATION HARDLY DISTINGUISHABLE FROM DISCONTENT, AND WITH ALL THE DISCIPLINE IS THERE NOT A HOPE WHICH MAKES IT EASY? The explanation is found in the fact that the present enjoyment of the Spirit is but an earnest of the coming fulness (ver. 23). The Church by mistaking the "earnest" for the "fulness," runs the risk of stating incomplete truths as final revelations. The "earnest" of the Spirit constitutes a lien upon the future service of the receiver; if the service be unperformed, the "earnest" will be withdrawn; whereas, if the service be lovingly rendered with the whole might of the heart, the measure of the gift will be filled up even to the sanctification of the "whole body, soul, and spirit." What is delaying the outpouring of the fulness of the Spirit? There is, indeed, a still sterner inquiry, Is not the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church less distinct to-day than in the apostolic age? Can modern piety enrich its history with such a passage as Acts ii. 1-4, iv. 31? Is the Church baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire? Is it honourable to suggest that such manifestations were confined to the early Church? It was after those manifestations that the Apostle Paul described the measure of the Spirit already given as an "earnest," and if only an earnest where is the fulness which there is not room enough to receive? We may be said to receive more and more of the sun as noontide approaches, and to receive a "double portion" of the spirit of every author whose writings we study with admiring affection. Now, why has not a Church eighteen hundred years old a fuller realisation of the witness of the Holy Ghost than had the Church of the first century? Has the Church accomplished all the purpose of God, and passed for ever the zenith of her light and beauty? How, then, are men to know that they enjoy the witness of the Spirit? Partly by the anxiety with which they put the question, and partly, too, by the occasional comforts which suffuse the soul with inexplicable gladness, but mainly by the daily sacrifice of loving service, and by enrapturing expectation. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

The witness of the Spirit:—How much there is in this chapter as to the work of the Holy Spirit. He helps against sin (ver. 2). He leads and guides (ver. 14). He aids in prayer (ver. 26). And (text) gives believers a happy sense of their acceptance. Not, indeed, by voice from heaven, nor by angelic messenger (Dan. ix. 23), rather by revealing the Saviour's love and glory (John xv. 26), and by bringing peace-giving words to remembrance (John xiv. 26, 27). Let us now consider the great happiness of possessing this witness. I. IT COMFORTS IN TRIAL. How comforting to remember that these are a Father's dealings! (Heb. xii. 7; John xviii. 11). II. IT ENCOURAGES TO PRAYER. Let it fill the mind, and then we know we are welcome. What a difference does this make! III. IT RESTRAINS IN TEMPTATION. If we have a happy consciousness of our adoption, we shall fear to offend. We shall fear to bring a cloud over our joy. IV. IT STIRS UP TO ACTIVE SERVICE. Joy makes one active. V. IT SUPPORTS IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH. Under such circumstances the valley becomes illuminated. Death is then going to a Father—going to a proper home. (*J. Lancaster, M.A.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—I. THE WITNESSES. The text suggests that we are entering upon a calm judicial process, in which the verdict can be obtained only by the testimony of two witnesses of tried competency and proved faithfulness. 1. The importance of having the Holy Spirit as the chief witness will appear from the nature of the facts to be witnessed to—namely, that we are the children of God, &c. For on the authority of no mere man could I receive this testimony. Wise he might be, and holy; but the subject is beyond his province. Neither could I take the testimony of an angel. Note the requirements essential to the competency of our witness. The counsels of God's will, the goings forth of His love and peace, must be naked and open to the witness with whom we have to do. He must know when the act of grace went forth, when the wandering spirit turned, and when the heart surrendered. These are things which must be known to the Holy Spirit, because of Him and through Him are all these effects wrought. Are the eyes opened? It is His to enlighten. Is conscience awakened? It is His to reprove. Does the will yield? It is His to subdue. Is the heart at peace? It is His to seal. 2. The second witness is the spirit of the man himself—the responsive testimony of our own hearts echoing the silent utterances of the Holy Ghost, and giving us confidence toward God. This view of course supposes the witness of our own spirits to be of a derived and reflected kind. It is a witness to a witness—the interpreter of that testimony which is borne by the Spirit of God. Of themselves our own spirits can testify nothing. II. IN WHAT LANGUAGE DOES THE SPIRIT SPEAK, AND IN WHAT SIGNS DOES THE HEART MAKE ANSWER? The joint witness is to be looked for in the inward

peace arising from the discovery of certain tendencies and dispositions answerable to the state of sonship. And it is properly called a joint witness, because the same Spirit who forms these tendencies in us, also manifests their existence to us. We can only know that we are children when the Spirit reveals the existence of those moral dispositions which prompt us to act and feel as children, and these we find only in the written Word. But this still makes the Spirit of God the chief witness, because until He shines upon the Word it is a sealed book to us. But when He opens our understanding we find that the entrance of God's Word giveth light. And it is just the agreement between these two—the Scripture calling and the heart answering; the Spirit insisting on certain feelings, and our own spirits testifying that we have such feelings—that constitutes our double witness. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to My Word, it is because there is no life in them." But to what purpose does our text come in at the close of several of the most distinguishing marks of true grace which Scripture contains, if it be not to set the heart upon the inquiry whether, by the secret illumination of the Spirit, these marks be discoverable in ourselves? Now it is manifest that if these marks be found in us we have the witness of the Word to our adoption; and what is the witness of the Word but the witness of the Spirit, who both indited the Word and gave us understanding to comprehend the truth? Conclusion: The text describes a real blessing. It is no visionary good. Do not let any difficulties connected either with its manifestation or its source affect your possession of it as a great spiritual reality. It is a witness, and a witness to a great fact. The heart's peace, the soul's comfort, life's prospects, death's fears, all hinge and turn upon the clearness of this twofold testimony. It brings with it heaven's credentials; it is stamped with heaven's seal; it leaves behind it heaven's peace; it is the witness of the Spirit of God. (*D. Moore, M.A.*)

The witness of the Spirit:—I. THE GENERAL ATTAINABLENESS OF THE SPIRIT. The sense of adoption, so far from being heaven's far-off prize held out to the highest saints, is a near, present good which babes in Christ may grasp, which is offered to the prodigal first returning from his wanderings and to the publican first humbled for his sins. This fact will appear in the exhortations to this assurance (Heb. vi. 11, x. 22; 2 Pet. i. 10). To these add the passages holding out to the believer the promise of peace (Isa. xxvi. 3, xxxii. 17; Rom. v. 1). Such a peace, it is manifest, could never be ours while doubt and misgiving hung over the great business and design of our existence. Peace in duty, in suffering, in our spiritual approaches, in the contemplation of the great future, not only is set forth in Scripture as attainable, but is commonly made to give forth an utterance as plain as a testimony addressed to the ear. II. MUST IT BE ATTAINED? Let us ask, What is necessary to salvation? Faith, of course. But faith in what? In something done for us, or in something done in us? In the sufficiency of Christ's work, or in the sufficiency of our conscious interest in that work? The faith which justifies is an act of trust, exerted objectively upon the mediation of Christ, and justification is the instantaneous effect ensuing upon this act. But it may be long before we are made conscious of our new condition, or its resulting peace, *e.g.*, a ship is labouring, and ill-piloted, on a dangerous coast. A spectator knows that if she once make a certain point, her danger is over. She does make this point, and is safe; but the crew do not know she is safe, and therefore they continue to be afraid where no fear is. Her deliverance takes place before the comfort of deliverance. And just so it will often be in our spiritual deliverance. It is not that a man has not faith, but he has not the comfort of faith. Faith, justification, peace, is the declared order of the Divine procedure. Between faith and justification there is no appreciable interval; but between justification and peace there may be a long and trying interval. And, further, to make our salvation depend upon any form of inward testimony, is to make the trust of the believer turn in part upon something within, rather than turning absolutely upon the finished work of Christ. And the difference to our spiritual safety, whether we exercise faith in Christ immediately, or mediately on some inward feeling which unites us to Christ, is as great as would be the difference to a drowning man whether he laid hold on a rock, or merely on a loose weed which was growing to the rock. We may have the faith of reliance when we cannot get the faith of assurance; and when through the weakness of the flesh we cannot lay hold on the witness that is within us, we may yet be saved by laying firm hold on the hope that is set before us. III. HOW IS IT TO BE ATTAINED? 1. This witness is an impression of inward peace, the fruit of a certain comparison which the mind has been enabled by the Spirit to make between the statements of revelation and its own moral experience. But this done, the chief practical

directions for gaining an inward assurance are that we cultivate a believing contemplation of gospel truth, and institute a frequent and close examination into the state of our own hearts. 2. And then there must be much of self-examination followed up by the repairing of all conscious deficiencies, and the renouncing of all discovered faults. (*Ibid.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—I. To WHOM IS THIS WITNESS GIVEN? 1. True religion is not a set of creeds, defined and believed just as a man may believe in the North Pole or the law of gravitation. The sphere of religion is not in the man's head, but in the heart. Nor is it a matter of forms of worship—singing hymns or saying prayers or hearing sermons. These things may be gone through, and all the time the real man may be unmoved and asleep. It is precisely here that a great many people make a mistake. They are not satisfied with their religious life. That which they have is unreal, outside. So they either set to work to examine their creed, or else they change it. Or else they think the form of worship is at fault. And at last they are ready to give up all in despair. 2. The only religion that can satisfy is the work of the Spirit of God in our spirits. By all means see that your creed stands square with the Word of God, and seek the forms of worship that help you to get nearest to God. But be sure of this, that creeds however true, and forms of worship however solemn and impressive, can never give you the religious life. We must be born of the Spirit. The manner of this new creation may differ in a thousand ways. With some it may be gentle and gradual as the dawn of day; with others it may be as a day when the noise of battle rolled. 3. Although this life is begotten of the Spirit of God, yet is He to be willingly received and submitted to (ver. 14). Now to such there is given the witness of the Spirit. II. WHAT THIS WITNESS IS. 1. There is much significance in the emphatic assurance with which St. Paul speaks. He bids us take it for granted that if we are the children of God this witness of the Spirit is ours. Children do not know what the estate is worth, but they do know that it is theirs, and whatever there is in it belongs to them. Think of a child saying, "I am going to see what I am heir to," and spending all its time in prying into everything with a microscope to make sure that it is there. Since the realm of the religious life is in the spirit, do not let us be always analysing and defining and perplexing ourselves about all sorts of mysteries. There are some people who always begin to tell me their symptoms, and ask me what I think of them and what they ought to do. Well, forget that you have any constitution. Give up the luxury of a liver. Work hard at some outdoor work so that you have not time to think about yourself; and then when you get very hungry, eat; and when you have got very tired, sleep. There are spiritual dyspeptics, too, who are always talking about their symptoms, and who think they have not got any religion at all unless they are finding something to worry themselves and other people about. Come, let us be bold to say, "Well, whatever the witness of the Spirit is, if Jesus Christ is mine, this too is mine." And yet, on the other hand, let us honour the Giver of the estate by seeking to make the most of it; finding out how rich and blest we are. Now there are some who think of the witness of the Spirit as a kind of revelation from heaven, or a thrill of rapture—something which lifts us up above other people and singles us out as the favourites of God. If anything could make a man a Pharisee it is surely that. It is the very root of that Pharisaism which the Lord denounced. The witness of the Spirit is not *to* our spirits that we are the children. It is *with* our spirits that God is our Father. He is to take of the things of Christ and manifest them unto us. There is in Jesus Christ a sight of our sin that humbles and shames us, yet there is a sight of love that overwhelms us. The Spirit puts us in possession of that love as our own; and in loving tenderness the Father bends over us so pitiful, so careful for us that all the heart cries, "Abba, Father." A blessed consciousness is thus wrought within us, which has no room for pride, but only for self-forgetfulness, wonder, gratitude, and glad obedience. III. THIS WITNESS IS NO LESS DIVINE BECAUSE IT MOVES ON THE ORDINARY AND NATURAL LINES OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE. There are men and women who help to create within us a new experience. Their influence is at once distinct yet indistinguishable. We cannot mark exactly the influence, how it came and how it wrought. Now it is in this quiet and natural way for the most part that the witness of the Spirit is given. The idea is of a blending of spiritual influence. The Gulf Stream may be taken as a parable of this. For some eight months of the year our seas ought to be frozen over so that no ship could approach our shores. Our islands should be a rough rude tract of country where only the hardiest forms of life could survive—a land of forest where wild furry beasts should roam, and where the deep

snows should make agriculture almost impossible. What mystery is this which delivers us? Away in the distant southern world, in the fierce heat of the tropics starts the Gulf Stream. It gathers the warmth of the sun and sends it for thousands of miles across the seas to lave our shores. And thus the arctic winter is driven from us; and our ports are open all the year round; over us stretch the kindlier skies; about us blow the gentler winds; our fields are covered with grass, the valleys are thick with corn. But where is this Gulf Stream which does such wonders? Can you see it? No, we cannot see it, but it is there. The parable is a many-sided illustration of the truth. Of nature, of ourselves, we do dwell in a land of winter—frozen and well-nigh dead; without the energy to put forth any life of God. But lo, we know not how, but by the Holy Spirit of God there is breathed about us and within us the love of God, softening, transforming, bringing to us a new heaven and a new earth. And now do grow and flourish blessed things which before we knew not. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. (*Mark Guy Pearse.*) *The witness of the Spirit:*—I. THERE ARE MANY TERMS WHICH DESCRIBE OUR NATURE AND CONDITION WHEN WE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD. "The children of the world," "children of the night," "children of iniquity," "children of the devil," "children of wrath." II. CONTRASTED WITH ALL THIS THERE IS THE TEXT "CHILDREN OF GOD," they whose nature is derived from the parentage of heaven, whose character is formed by that nature, whose actions and prospects spring from that nature. 1. And this state is clearly set before us not as a thing that comes by nature, or by accident, or unawares. It is not that we are all the creatures of God; the pebbles are that. Nor is it that we are merely objects of the Divine benevolence; God is good to the worst man living. Nor merely that we are the offspring of God—those whose origin was from Him and who will always bear in them some characteristics of that origin, such as immortality, conscience, &c. The fallen angels have all that. "I know," said the Lord in speaking to the Jews, "that ye are the seed of Abraham," but then in the same breath He denied it. They were the offspring of Abraham, but they ceased to be his children, or they would have shown forth his nature. But God was "able of those stones to raise up children unto Abraham"; God was able to take those fallen Jews and restore them to the place that they had lost in the family of faith. And so with any unconverted man, any teacher who is teaching a pardon and a peace that he has never experienced; God is able out of the very stones to raise up children to God. 2. And this was the glory of our Saviour's mission among men that to them that received Him He gave power to become the sons of God: and to be constituted the children of God always implies the double idea of adoption and regeneration, the restoration of the soul to the favour of God, the restoration of the name to its place in the family roll. III. THIS GRACE, HOW SHALL WE TELL IT, OR WHO CAN TELL IT? 1. "Eye hath not seen," &c. Then should they remain unknown? It is very certain that the eye cannot see when God forgives the soul. You may hearken as you will, but you will never hear it. And as to the heart imagining it, it passes in another world. Am I to say, then, if I cannot see it or hear it, &c., I cannot believe it? The apostle meets you at once. He says, "The things of a man knoweth no man, save the spirit of man that is in him." A son was wandering disinherited in America. The father says to an uncle, "Will you be my executor?" "Yes, on condition that you restore the name of your eldest son." "He is dead," says the father. "He is not dead," says the uncle. "Put in his name and I will be your executor." The father puts in his name, and actually the boy is restored to his rights and titles of inheritance. He knows nothing about it. That mind of his father's is as much an invisible world to him as is God's to us. The only question is, Had his father any power of putting what was in his mind into the mind of his boy? No; because he did not know where his boy was, and the boy never got his inheritance, for the father again altered his will, thinking the boy was dead, and dead he was not. There is the simple case supposed in 1 Cor. ii. 11. Just as the spirit of the father knew the acts of the father, although the son did not, so doth the Spirit of God know the acts of God. But then the difference was this, that man's spirit did not search all things; it could not tell where his son was. But the Spirit searcheth all things, not only the deep things of God, but the deep things of your heart and your ways. "Eye hath not seen," &c., but God doth reveal them unto us by His Spirit. 2. A witness is simply one who has witnessed a transaction, and who bears witness of that transaction to another who did not witness it. How doth the Spirit bear witness? I do not know, any more than I know how the father held up his hand to write the

name of his son. I do not know how that is done. I know that you and I can do it. I do not know how it was that one day when in my house they were anxiously inquiring whether a certain ship from America was nearing the shore, a telegram came, and we knew the ship was there a couple of hours before the telegram came from the ship itself. Those that were on the ship had no means of communicating it; but the people on shore had seen, and they could send the news of what they had seen right into the minds of people here in London, and produced within those minds all the change and all the impression that was wanted to be produced by that piece of intelligence. So it is the mission and office of the Holy Ghost, as the revealer of Christ and of the Father, to uncover the pardoning countenance of God, and to make that countenance shine upon His forgiven child. Conclusion: If you need the Holy Spirit to bear witness with you that you are the children of God, the world needs a witness, and that witness you can give only in your actions, in your conduct. The world will not believe your word, and it ought not to believe your word if that word is not supported by your conduct and your character. But if your conduct and character bear upon them the Divine stamp, then your word will not be an empty sound. When you have made that impression upon the hearts of men, you have gone far towards testifying that there is such a thing as being a child of God. To the Church you can testify your sonship in Christ by the one proof of your love to the brethren. No other proof will avail. And if the Spirit is really bearing witness with your spirit that you are the child of God you will love Him, and loving Him you will take delight in pleasing Him; and you will love all that are begotten of Him; you will love His cause, His kingdom, His glory, and the witness of the Spirit filling your soul with light from above will illuminate your whole conduct, and that conduct shall be that of a child of the light. (*W. Arthur, M.A.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—I. THE THING TESTIFIED TO—that we are the children of God. There is the same difference between τέκνον and υἱὸς as there is between child and son; the former applies to either sex, and is more tender. We are born of God, *i.e.*, we are produced by Him. This does not refer to us as creatures, nor as rational creatures, but as regenerated; so that we are partakers of the Divine nature. 1. It expresses the relation in which we stand to God as the objects of His love and as loving Him. This filial spirit on our part includes—(1) Confidence in His love to us. (2) Reverence. (3) Zeal for His glory. (4) Devotion to His service. 2. It indicates the privileges arising from this relation. We are heirs of God, partakers of all the blessings which He has provided for His children. II. THE NATURE OF THE TESTIMONY. It is not involved in our filial feelings, but is—1. Direct or immediate. The Spirit assures us just as He produces the assurance of the truth. 2. Mysterious, but not more so than the operations of the Spirit, nor indeed than the action of mind on matter or of one created spirit on other created spirits. 3. Self-evidencing, *i.e.*, it reveals itself as the testimony of God. Just as the voice of God in the heavens, in conscience, in the law, in the gospel, reveals itself in His Word; so when the Spirit speaks to the soul it is known to be the Spirit. 4. Infallible, and produces assurance. This is not inconsistent with doubt and anxiety, because—(1) This witnessing is intermittent, more or less. (2) This voice of God may vary from the slightest, almost inaudible whisper, to the most clear and articulate enunciation. 5. Sanctifying. That is its nature. It produces that effect, just as fire burns, or light dispels darkness. It is never given where it is not true. And where it is true, where the soul is regenerated, then to banish doubt and fear and anxiety is to infuse new life and vigour. It is to give peace and call out graces. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—How many, not understanding what they spoke, have wrested this scripture to their great loss! How many have mistaken the voice of their own imagination for this witness, and presumed that they were the children of God while they were doing the works of the devil! These are the enthusiasts. Who, then, can be surprised if many reasonable men seeing the dreadful effects of this delusion should regard this witness as exclusively an extraordinary gift of the apostolic age? But we may steer a middle course, and keep a safe distance from enthusiasm without denying the privilege of God's children. I. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT WITH OUR SPIRIT. 1. The witness of our spirit. (1) The foundation of this is laid in those scriptures which describe the marks of the children of God. Every man applying these marks to himself may know whether he is a child of God. If he know—(*a*) "As many as are led by the Spirit of God" into all holy tempers and actions, "they are the sons of God." (*b*) I am thus "led by the Spirit of God"; he will easily conclude "therefore I am a son of God." Agreeable

to this are all those plain declarations of St. John in his First Epistle (chaps. ii. 3, 5, 29, iii. 14, 19, iv. 13, iii. 24). (3) But how does it appear that we have these marks? I would reply, How does it appear to you that you are alive, and in case, not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same consciousness you will know if your soul is alive to God; if you are saved from the pain of proud wrath and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit. 2. The testimony of God's Spirit is an inward impression on the soul whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses with my spirit that I am a child of God; "that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given Himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God." (1) That this testimony must needs be antecedent to the other appears from the fact that we must be holy of heart and life before we are conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy, and we cannot love Him till we know He loves us, which we cannot know till God's love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. (2) Not that the operation of the Holy Spirit is to be excluded even from the testimony of our own. He not only works in us every manner of good, but also shines upon His own work and clearly shows what He has wrought. Accordingly one great end of our receiving the Spirit is "that we may know the things which are freely given us of God." (3) If it be inquired how the Spirit bears witness, such knowledge is too wonderful for us. "The wind bloweth where it listeth!" But the fact we know, viz., that the Spirit of God does give the believer such a testimony of His adoption, that while it is present to the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship than he can doubt of the shining of the sun while he stands in the full blaze of his beams. II. HOW THIS JOINT TESTIMONY MAY BE DISTINGUISHED FROM—1. The presumption of the natural mind. The Scriptures abound with marks whereby we may distinguish the one from the other; and whoever carefully attends to them will not put darkness for light. (1) Repentance precedes this witness (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19), but the natural mind is a stranger to this. The being born again—that mighty change from darkness to light, death to life, &c. (Eph. ii. 1, 5, 6), must also precede; but what knoweth he of this? It is a language he does not understand. He has always been a Christian, and knows no time when he had need of such a change. (2) Humble joy in God accompanies it, and meekness, patience, gentleness, &c. But do these fruits attend the supposed testimony in the presumptuous man? The more confident he is of the favour of God the more does he exalt himself. It is also accompanied with the love which rejoices to obey (1 John v. 3; John xiv. 21). But this is not the character of the presumptuous pretender to the love of God. But how may one who has the real witness distinguish it from presumption? How do you distinguish day from night? or the light of a glimmering taper from that of the noonday sun? In like manner there is an essential difference between spiritual light and darkness, and between the light wherewith the Sun of Righteousness shines upon our heart, and the glimmering light which arises from "sparks of our own kindling." To require a more minute and philosophical account is to make a demand which can never be answered, or else the natural man would be able to discern the things of the Spirit of God. 2. The delusions of the devil. By the same fruits. That proud spirit cannot humble thee before God, or melt thy heart into filial love, or enable thee to put on meekness, &c. As surely, then, as holiness is of God and sin of the devil, so surely the witness thou hast in thyself is not of Satan but of God. (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *The witness of the Spirit*:—There are here—I. TWO PERSONS. 1. The Spirit. (1) He is God, and if so, equal to the Father and the Son. This is proved inasmuch as—(*a*) The essential name of God is given Him (Isa. vi. 9; *cf.* Acts xxviii. 25). (*b*) The Divine attributes—eternity (Gen. i. 2); omnipresence (Psa. cxxxix. 7); omniscience (1 Cor. ii. 10). (*c*) The works of God—creation (Job xxxiii. 4); miracles (Isa. lxiii. 14); the calling and sending of the prophets (Isa. xlviii. 16) and of Christ Himself (Luke iv. 18); prophecy (Acts i. 16); illumination (John xvi. 14); justification (1 Cor. vi. 11); conviction of sin (John xvi. 8); comfort (Acts ix. 31); resurrection (chap. viii. 11); the earnest and seal of our evidence (Eph. i. 13); spiritual refreshment (John iv. 14); zeal (Matt. iii. 11); prayer (Zech. xii. 10; Rom. viii. 26); gladness (Heb. i. 9); spiritual gifts (1 Cor. xii. 4). He is God, because the essential name of God is His; therefore let us call upon His name, because the attributes of God are His; therefore let us attribute to Him all might, majesty, dominion, &c., because the works of God are His; therefore let us co-operate with Him: then shall we be of the same spirit with Him. (2) He is a distinct person in the Godhead. He is not the highest and powerfullest working of God in man, not the breathing of God into the soul of man: these are only

His gifts and not Himself. It is not the power of the King that signs His pardon, but His person. (3) He proceeds from the Father and the Son (ver. 9; Gal. iv. 6). As to the manner of this, when we are able to tell how the Spirit proceeds which beats in our pulse, we shall be able to explain that. 2. Our spirit. The word is applied either to the soul itself, or to its superior faculties in the regenerate. In Heb. iv. 12 the soul is that which animates the body, and enables the senses to see and hear; the spirit is that which enables the soul to see God and hear His gospel (*cf.* 1 Thess. v. 25). The soul is the seat of affections, the spirit is rectified reason or the conscience (chap. ix. 1). II. THEIR OFFICE—to testify. 1. The testification of the Holy Ghost Himself. A witness ever testifies of some matter of fact. The Spirit here witnesses that we are the children of God. Now, if a witness prove that I am a tenant to such land or lord of it, I do not become so by this witness, but his testimony proves I was so before. I have, therefore, a former right to be the child of God—*i.e.*, the election of God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Ghost produces the decree of this election. And upon such evidence shall I give sentence against myself? I should not doubt the testimony of an angel, and when God testifies to me it is a rebellious sin to doubt. But though there be a former evidence for my being a child of God, a decree in heaven, yet it is not enough that there is such a record; it must be produced; and by that, though it do not become my election then, it makes my election appear. 2. But even that Spirit will not be heard alone. He will fulfil His own law "in the mouth of two witnesses." Sometimes our spirit bears testimony without the Spirit. The natural conscience has much to say about sin, and God and our relation to Him (Acts xvii. 28). And the Holy Spirit testifies when ours does not. How often He presents to us the power of God in the mouth of the preacher, and we bear witness to one another of the preacher's wit and eloquence, and no more! How often He bears witness that such an action is odious to God, and our spirit bears witness that it is acceptable to men! How often He bears witness for God's judgments, and our spirit deposes for mercy by presumption, or He testifies for mercy and ours for judgment in desperation! But when the Spirit and our spirit agree; when He speaks comfortably to my soul and my soul hath apprehended comfort; when He deposes for the decree of my election, and I depose for the seals and marks of that decree, these two witnesses—3. Induce a third witness—the world itself to testify what is the testimony of the text. III. THE TESTIMONY—"that we are the children of God." 1. The Holy Ghost could not express more danger to a man than when He calls him "the child of this world" (Luke xvi. 18); nor a worse disposition than when He calls him "the child of diffidence and distrust in God" (Eph. v. 6); nor a worse pursuer of that ill disposition than when He calls him "the child of the devil" (Acts xiii. 10); nor a worse possessing of the devil than when He calls him "the child of perdition" (John xvii.); nor a worse execution of all this than when He calls him "a child of hell" (Matt. xxiii. 15). 2. So it is also a high exaltation when the Spirit draws our pedigree from any good thing, as when He calls us "the children of light" (John xii. 36); "the children of the bridechamber" (Matt. ix. 15); but the highest of all is "the children of God." This is an universal primogeniture, and makes every true believer heir of the joys, the glory, the eternity of heaven. (*J. Donne, D.D.*)

The witness of the Spirit:—Sometimes the soul, because it hath somewhat remaining in it of the principle that it had in its old condition, is put to question whether it be a child of God or not; and thereupon, as in a thing of greatest importance, puts in its claim, with all the evidence it hath to make good its title. The Spirit comes and bears witness in this case. It is an allusion to judicial proceedings in point of titles. The judge being set, the person concerned lays his claim, produces his evidences and pleads them, his adversaries endeavouring all that in them lies to disannul his plea. In the midst of the trial a person of known and proved integrity comes into the court, and gives testimony fully and directly on behalf of the claimer, which stops the mouth of all his adversaries, and fills the man with joy and satisfaction. So is it in this case. The soul, by the power of its own conscience, is brought before the law of God; there a man puts in his plea that he is a child of God, and for this end produceth all his evidences, everything whereby faith gives him an interest in God. Satan, in the meantime, opposeth with all his might; many flaws are found in the evidences; the truth of them all is questioned, and the soul hangs in suspense as to the issue. In the midst of the contest the Comforter comes, and overpowers the heart with a comfortable persuasion, and bears down all objections, that his plea is good, and that he is a child of God. When our spirits are pleading their right and title, He comes in and bears witness on our side, at the same

time enabling us to put forth acts of filial obedience, crying, "Abba Father." (*J. Owen, D.D.*) *The witness of the Spirit abiding:*—Believers have a double testimony, one without, and one within; and this witness within us will go with us, which way soever we go: it will accompany us through all straits and difficulties. The external testimony may be taken from us, our Bibles, our teachers, our friends; or they may imprison us where we cannot enjoy them: but they cannot take from us the Spirit of Christ. This witness within is a permanent, settled, habituate, standing witness. (*Ambrose.*) *The witness of the Spirit instantaneous:*—The witness of the Spirit, from its nature as a witness, must be instantaneous. A witness deposes to a particular fact; and there must be a particular instant of time when his testimony is given. The mathematician slowly, by the use of single cyphers and symbols, works out his problems in order to find a result concerning which he is altogether in doubt; the chemist slowly and cautiously conducts experiments to find out the nature of substances concerning which he is totally ignorant; but a witness enters a court to depose to a fact of which he has already a full knowledge, and whose testimony the court is now waiting to hear. He who believes in Jesus Christ is in a scriptural condition to receive the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God; and the case neither requires nor admits that the witness should be gradually imparted. When a parent has forgiven his child he does not gradually reveal that fact to him, but gives immediate proof in his countenance and actions, if not in words, that he again loves him. (*S. Hulme.*) *The two witnesses:*—I. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. 1. Direct. 2. Divine. 3. Manner unknown. 4. Distinct from and anterior to the witness of our own spirit. 5. Attested by Scripture. 6. Confirmed by reason. 7. If no such witness, no assurance, all induction. II. THE WITNESS OF OUR OWN SPIRIT. 1. Inward consciousness. 2. Holy tempers. 3. Obedience. 4. Peace and confidence. 5. Flowing from repentance and faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The two witnesses:*—The witness of the Holy Ghost is the work of faith, the witness of our spirits the sense of faith wrought. This is better felt by experience than expressed by words, known altogether and only to them which have it. For me to speak of this to them which have it not, were as if I should speak a strange language. The witness is that "we are the children of God." Not that we shall be, or may be, but are. And what though my very name be not written in the Scripture, thou Thomas, thou John? It is not convenient. What a huge volume should the Bible be if every saint's name were there written! It is not necessary, because all particulars are included in their generals; as he that saith, "All my children are here," means every one in particular, though he name them not; so God, that saith all believers shall be saved, means every one as though they were named. And yet the Scripture doth speak in particular (chap. x. 9). When the law saith, Thou shalt not kill, steal, &c., every one is to take it as spoken to himself, as if he were named. Why should not such particulars in the gospel be also so taken? True, say the Papists, if you believe you shall be saved; but where does the Scripture say that you do believe? Ridiculous! The act of faith is not set down in the Scriptures, but the object. The faith which I believe is in the Bible. The faith whereby I believe is in my heart, and is not believed (for that were absurd), but known by feeling. We do not believe that we believe, but we feel it (2 Tim. i. 12). If man should witness, or an angel, there might be doubt; but when there is such a witness as is the Spirit we ought not to doubt. If a man of a weak brain were on the top of some high tower, and should look down, it would make him wonderfully afraid; but when he considers the battlements that keep him from falling his fear abates. So fares it with the regenerate when we look on our sins, and so down and down to hell. Alas! whose heart quails not? But when we consider the brazen wall of the love, truth, and promise of God in Christ, we may be assured without fear. Look upon thy defects, but forget not the truth and power of God. Pretend not the testimony of the Holy Ghost without thine own spirit: nor contrarily, for they go together. Faith, repentance, &c., are the testimony of God's Spirit; if from these thy spirit witnesseth, then it is current. But if thou beest a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker, unclean, &c., and sayest the Spirit witnesseth thy salvation, it is not God's Spirit, but a lying spirit, for such works are of the devil. God's Spirit indeed witnesseth; but the witness is that they which do such things shall be damned. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The Spirit testifying to the believer's adoption:*—Having affirmed the Divine relationship of the believer, the apostle now proceeds to adduce the Divine evidence of a truth so great. I. IT IS NOT STRANGE THAT THE FACT OF HIS ADOPTION SHOULD MEET WITH MUCH MISGIVING IN THE CHRISTIAN'S MIND. The very stupendousness of the relationship staggers our belief. To be fully assured of our Divine

adoption demands other than the testimony either of our own feelings or the opinion of men. Our feelings may mislead, the opinion of others may deceive. There exists a strong combination of evil tending to shake the Christian's confidence in the belief of his sonship. 1. Satan is ever on the watch to insinuate the doubt. He tried the experiment with our Lord (Matt. iv. 6). 2. The world, too, presumes to call it in question (1 John iii. 1). Ignorant of the Divine original, how can it recognise the Divine lineaments in the faint and imperfect copy? 3. But the strongest doubts are those gendered in the believer's own mind. There crowd upon it thoughts of his own sinfulness, and unworthiness of so distinguished a blessing. And when to this are added the varied dispensations of his heavenly Father, often wearing a rough garb, it is no marvel that, staggered by a discipline so severe, the fact of God's love should sometimes be a matter of painful doubt. II. BUT GOD HAS GRACIOUSLY AND AMPLY PROVIDED FOR THIS PART OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IN THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT. 1. The perfect competence of the Spirit is assumed. Who can reasonably question it? (1) Is verity essential to a witness? He is the "Spirit of truth." (2) Is it essential that he should know the fact whereof he affirms? Who so competent to authenticate the work of the Spirit in the heart as the Spirit Himself? 2. As to the truth thus witnessed, we are not to suppose that the testimony is intended to make the fact itself more sure; nor for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, still less for the satisfaction of God Himself, but for the assurance and comfort of our own hearts. 3. But the question arises, What is the mode of His testimony? Not by visions and voices; not by heats and fancies; nor by any direct inspiration, or new revelation of truth. By—(1) Begetting in us the Divine nature. (2) Producing in us spiritual fruits. (3) Breathing in our souls a desire for holiness, the Spirit conducts us to the rational conclusion that we are born of God. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *The believer's testimony*:—The value of any testimony is determined by the character of the person who gives it. To be spoken of for our knowledge by a fool is of idle account; whilst a word from the wise, how good is it! To be spoken of for our valour by a coward is a vain matter; whilst the commendation of the hero is of great moment. Now in this way the greatest and best of all testimonies are those to the soul of the believer by the Spirit of God. I. THE AUTHOR OF THE BELIEVER'S TESTIMONY—the Spirit! The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit. 1. Secretly in the sense which He conveys of our personal interest in the great scheme of Christ's atonement, by the gift of faith. 2. Openly before the eyes of the world, that the world may take knowledge of His work. II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TESTIMONY—"that we are the children of God." In what way does this testimony discover itself? There will be a filial—1. Love to God's person through Christ. 2. A trust and dependence upon His supplies. 3. Lowliness. 4. Fear. 5. Confidence in His wisdom. 6. Resignation to His will. 7. Obedience. 8. Likeness. 9. Delight in His presence. III. THE DEDUCTION FROM THIS TESTIMONY—"if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." 1. Not one in a family, but all heirs—not heirs who may lose their inheritance by premature death, or be defrauded of it, or have it wasted away by the delays and chicaneries of law, but an heirdom where the possession is certain as universal, and full as certain. 2. The heir of God! To the heir of a king what glorious expectancies are there!—of a throne, a crown, a treasury, a nation! But how poor are these to the objects before the heir of God! The heir of God!—of all things temporal, spiritual, and eternal, of all which God can devise and bestow for our good. IV. THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE TESTIMONY. It is a suffering condition—"if so be that we suffer with Him." The disciple is not above his Lord, nor the servant his master. V. THE EXALTATION OF THOSE WHO ARE AFFECTED BY THE TESTIMONY—"that we may also be glorified together." (*T. J. Judkin.*) *The evidence of Christian sonship*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Paul draws a distinction between God's Spirit and our spirit; it is not our spiritual life that bears this testimony, but the Spirit of God. There are those who conceive that a feeling suddenly rises in the Christian, which is a conviction of his election, and that this is the witness of the Holy Spirit. Hence men have waited for it with anxiety. Of course a sudden emotion may come, but to rely on any emotion is to rely upon our own spirit bearing witness with itself. Man is not saved by feeling that he is saved. Nor has he the witness of sonship by feeling that he is a son of God; but by the Spirit of God apprehending and quickening his soul. 2. The apostle is speaking of continued evidence. If men imagine that certain ecstatic spiritual emotions are proofs of the witness of sonship, the witness is fitful and transient; for the inner life is as full of changes as an April day, and if a man founds his assurance on this, he will to-day believe in his sonship, and

to-morrow utterly doubt it. Paul, in the former part of this chapter, has spoken of being freed from condemnation; of being spiritually minded; of being led by the Spirit; all these are continued facts of Christian life, therefore the witness of the Spirit is equally continued. 3. The ground on which Paul bases the evidence of sonship is that of a Divine Spirit, greater than the emotions of our souls, consciously acting upon us. But how do we know this? When we feel conscious not so much of possessing a life, as of a life possessing us. (1) This distinction holds through all the higher forms of human life. The man who proclaims the truth he holds is never the highest kind of preacher; he who speaks because the truth possesses him leaves an impress on the ages. The true artist is not the man who depicts his own ideas, but he who is filled by a mighty inspiration which compels him to paint the forms of beauty which he sees glowing around him. (2) Passing to the moral life, we find the same distinction. He who does right because he may give pleasure, and fears to do wrong because it is painful, is never, in the highest sense, a moral man at all; but he only is such who does right because filled with a life grander than his own. (3) So in spiritual life. When we are led by a Spirit of life greater than our own, we know that the Divine Spirit is acting upon us. That is a witness of sonship founded on the rock of God's eternal truthfulness. 4. The manner in which this evidence rises in the soul. Observe how the text is woven into the chapter. Paul speaks of the action of God's Spirit as—(1) Deliverance from the carnal (ver. 13). Here, then, is the witness—when the old affections are being uprooted and a deep desire is created after perfect purity. (2) The spirit of prayer (ver. 26). (3) The spirit of aspiration (ver. 23). The feeling that here there is no rest—the whole life becoming one prayer for more light, greater power, deeper love; not, mark, the cry for happiness, but the cry—"Nearer, my God, to Thee." II. ITS NECESSITY. 1. To enable us to enter into perfect communion with God. Till we can feel His power possessing us—till we can see His smile behind every sorrow, we shall fear Him. 2. To realise our spiritual inheritance. You know the feeling of sadness which comes when gazing at night into immensity—the thought that this short life will soon be over, and we shall be swept away and forgotten. Then how grandly comes the witness to our sonship, saying, "Thou cast down? Look up into immensity, it is all thine, fear not, thou art a child of the Infinite." 3. In order to comprehend the glory of suffering. Mark the connection in Paul's words between the sufferings of this life and the glory to be revealed hereafter, as if he had said, "As the suffering is great, so also shall be the glory." None but the man who has the "witness of the Spirit" is able to look through the sorrow to the blessedness hereafter. III. ITS ATTAINMENT. In order to acquire this witness, carry into action every spiritual power you possess—translate every emotion into life. Remember you have to "work together with God." Take care that you "grieve not the Holy Spirit." Feel that every point gained in spiritual life is a point to be maintained. Take care that when you are brought nearer to God by suffering, you do not allow yourself to fall back; if you do, the light of the Spirit will fade. "If then ye live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit." (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The sons of God*:—I. A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE. "We are the children of God." 1. This is an act of pure grace. No man has any right to be a son of God. If we are born into His family it is a miracle of mercy. 2. This is a great dignity. The archangels are the most favoured of God's servants, but not His children. Speak of pedigrees, thou, poor Christian, hast more than heraldry could ever give thee, or all the pomp of ancestry could ever bestow. II. A SPECIAL PROOF—"The Spirit itself beareth witness," &c. Notice that there are two witnesses. It is as if a poor man were called into court to prove his right to some piece of land which was disputed. He standeth up and beareth his own faithful testimony; but some great one of the land confirms his witness. 1. Our spirit bears witness—(1) When it feels a filial love to God; when we can boldly say, "Abba, Father." If I were not a child, God would never have given to me that affection which dares to call Him "Father." (2) By trust. In the darkest hour we have been able to say, "The time is in my Father's hands; I cannot murmur; I feel it is but right that I should suffer, otherwise my Father would never have made me suffer." "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." (3) And are there not times when your hearts feel that they would be emptied and void unless God were in them? You feel you must have your Father, or else the gifts of His providence are nothing to you. That is, your spirit beareth witness that you are the child of God. 2. The Holy Ghost graciously condescendeth to say "Amen" to the testimony of our conscience. And whereas our experience some-

times leads our spirit to conclude that we are born of God, there are times when the eternal Spirit descends and fills our heart, and then we have the two witnesses bearing witness with each other that we are the children of God. Perhaps you ask me how is this. (1) The Holy Spirit has written this Book, which contains an account of what a Christian should be, and of the feelings he must have. I have certain experiences and feelings; turning to the Word, I find similar experiences and feelings recorded; and so I prove that I am right, and the Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am born of God. (2) But, again, everything that is good in a Christian is the work of the Holy Ghost. When at any time, then, the Holy Spirit comforts you, instructs you, opens to you a mystery, inspires you with an unwonted affection, an unusual faith in Christ, these are the works of the Spirit. Now, inasmuch as the Spirit works in you, He doth by that very working give His own infallible testimony to the fact that you are a child of God. If you had not been a child, He would have left you in your natural state. (3) But I must go further. There is a supernatural way in which, apart from means, the Spirit of God communicates with the spirit of man. He assures and consoles directly, by coming into immediate contact with the heart. III. A NOBLE DIGNITY. 1. "Heirs of God" with Christ. (1) It does not always follow in human reasoning "if children, then heirs," because in our families but one is the heir. All God's children are heirs, however numerous the family, and he that shall be born of God last shall be as much His heir as he who was born first. (2) And see what it is that we are heirs of; not of God's gifts and God's works, but of God Himself. It was said of Cyrus that when he sat down at meat, if there were aught that pleased his appetite, he would order it to be given to his friends with this message, "King Cyrus found that this food pleased his palate, and he thought his friend should feed upon that which he enjoyed himself." This was thought to be a singular instance of his kindness to his courtiers. But our God doth not send merely bread from His table; He gives Himself—Himself to us. Talk we of His omnipotence?—His Almightiness is ours. Speak we of His omniscience?—all His wisdom is engaged in our behalf. Do we say that He is love?—that love belongs to us. 2. "Joint heirs with Christ." That is, whatever Christ possesses, as Heir of all things, belongs to us. He gives us His raiment, and His righteousness becomes our beauty. He gave to us His Person; we eat His flesh and drink His blood. He gives us His inmost heart, His crown, His throne. "All things are yours," &c. We must never quarrel with this Divine arrangement. "Oh," say you, "we never shall." Stay; for when all that is Christ's belongs to you, do ye forget that Christ once had a cross, and that belongs to you? "If so be that we suffer with Him that we also may be glorified together." IV. The SPECIAL CONDUCT naturally expected from the children of God. In the golden age of Rome, if a man were tempted to dishonesty, he would stand upright, look the tempter in the face, and say to him, "I am a Roman." It ought to be a ten times more than sufficient answer to every temptation for a man to be able to say, "I am a son of God; shall such a man as I yield to sin?" I have been astonished, in looking through old Roman history, at the wonderful prodigies of integrity and valour which were produced by patriotism or love of fame. And it is a shameful thing that ever idolatry should be able to breed better men than some who profess Christianity. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Varieties of Christian character:* —This witness of the Spirit varies—I. IN THE SAME INDIVIDUAL. 1. "There have been moments," says some weary soul, "when I have had that witness—in some time of great spiritual struggle, when through my very weakness there came a strength which made me conquer even myself, and also in moments of great spiritual exaltation; but there has come a reaction after the victory, a depression after the joy, and the evidence which seemed so strong has worn gradually away. If that had been the witness of God's strong unchanging Spirit, surely it could not have been so?" 2. Yes, it could be, and is so; for God's Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit. It is just as, in natural things, the sun in heaven bears witness with our human sight to the existence of physical objects; and its shining is constant and unchanging, but the evidence of it varies with the conditions of our vision. It cannot but be so when there is so intimate a connection between our body and spirit, and the one acts on, and is reacted on, by the other. We know how a depressed or nervous physical condition will tinge our feelings, will make us take a widely different view of things from that which we had taken before. Who is there who has not experienced the difference of a bright spring morning and a dull November day? Our spiritual nature has its noontide, when we work in the light and rejoice in the brightness of God's love; and it will have its night, when we can only see the light,

as it were, coming from some passionless moon, or from the cold steel stars in some far-off heaven. 3. Those moments of dulness and of coldness in our religious life are times of peril. There is a danger of despair, and the remedy is a more perfect trust in God. There is danger of turning to spiritual stimulants. Never try by physical means, or so-called religious exercises, to galvanise yourself into feeling what you know you do not feel. The true remedy is to strengthen and improve generally your spiritual nature, instead of nervously looking for artificial tests of its vitality. More earnest communing with God; more thoughts of Him and His great love, and less of ourselves and of our feelings; more study of the deep meaning of His Word; more seeking to do His will; more use of the means of grace will be helps to us in such moments. The keen appetite and the clear vision will return with the increasing health of the spiritual man in us, and again and again those glad moments will be ours, when we feel the Spirit bearing "witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God." II. IN DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS. 1. The witness of the Spirit must vary, as do our individual natures. The boat in the harbour is none less safe because it has not come across the storm-swept sea, but only down some inland river with no grand convulsions, but still with strange, commonplace, yet fascinating dangers of its own. It is a perilous and a very wrong thing to set up some one, sole, exclusive, monotonous standard of spiritual evidence and of spiritual life. There is no rigid rule of uniformity in God's treatment of souls. 2. The risen Lord came under great variety of circumstances, and with every differing kind of evidence of His presence, to each and all of His disciples. First, He came to the loving hearts of women, whose words seemed only "idle tales" to the apostles themselves; and then with logical demonstration to the cold reasoning intellect of St. Thomas; now to individual disciples walking on the common highway, and who only saw Him when He broke and blessed the bread, and it revealed to them why their hearts had so burned within them on the way; and then to the assembled Church with words of benediction and of peace. And thus still He and His Holy Spirit's witness come—now to some tender soul who cannot reason, but can only love, with simply an angel's message, which not only the world, but the Church, may for a moment think but an "idle tale"; and again to some consummate, lordly intellect, which is at last convinced by touching the nail-print and the riven side. Now He comes to solitary individuals on the dusty highway of life, who know not whence sprang every earnest pulsation of their burning hearts, till some day, perhaps in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, they see at last that it must have been He that was with them; and, again, He is present to the assembled Church when in some hour of danger it has shut the door, and then found that He is with them in the midst. 3. Do not think that you are not near to Christ, that He does not love you, because you have not had some one else's experience, because you are not like some saint whose biography you admire. There has been a terrible tendency to magnify, in every age, some one sole idea of Christian usefulness and beauty. At one time it has been solely the ascetic, and again solely the active life. At one time it has been the purely contemplative, and again the exclusively intellectual. This has done much to rob many a sweet life of its hopefulness; to create in others an almost unconscious hypocrisy. Surely the Master's life is a protest against it: "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"—all utterly different and unlike natures. We are too ready to unduly exalt Mary at the expense of her sister and her brother. Many a Lazarus and many a Martha are full of sorrow and even despair because they are not like Mary. (*T. T. Shore, M.A.*) *Christian assurance* is—I. THE BASIS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Inasmuch as—1. By it we have the first testimony of our filial relation to God. 2. It notifies to us all the benefits of the New Testament. 3. By it all that is involved in Christianity is made living and real to us. II. THE SUSTAINING POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. As the inward spiritual testimony is our encouragement against defection. 2. As it is an effective solace in the hour of trial. 3. As it is the communion of that Spirit who is the strength of righteousness. 4. As it renders us non-susceptible in the hour of temptation. III. THE PLEDGE OF THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. The fact of such a relation subsisting between God and the soul gives the highest warrant of eternal life. "If children, then heirs," &c. 2. The character of this assurance as the work of the Divine Spirit is a testimony to its possible perpetuity. 3. In this assurance is involved the idea of a pledge—"the earnest of the Spirit" (ver. 11). Learn: 1. To cherish this assurance, especially by cultivating an obedient sensibility to the Holy Spirit's suggestions. 2. To guard against anything that would grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. (*Homiletic Quarterly.*)

Ver 17. **And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.**—*Sonship: certainty and uncertainty about:*—It is not easy to imagine a more cautious, lawyer-like record than that of Lord Eldon's, "I was born, I believe, on the 4th of June, 1751." We may suppose that this hesitating statement refers to the date, and not to the fact of his birth. Many, however, are just as uncertain about their spiritual birth. It is a grand thing to be able to say, "We have passed from death unto life," even though we may not be able to post a date to it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sons and heirs:*—God Himself is His greatest gift. The loftiest blessing which we can receive is that we should be heirs, possessors of God. The text tells us—I. No INHERITANCE WITHOUT SONSHIP. 1. The lower creatures are shut out from the gifts which belong to the higher forms of life, because these cannot find entrance into their nature. Man has higher gifts because he has higher capacities. In man there are more windows and doors knocked out. He can think, and feel, and desire, and will, and resolve; and so he stands on a higher level. 2. And so Spiritual blessings require a spiritual capacity for the reception of them; you cannot have the inheritance unless you are sons. Salvation is not chiefly a deliverance from outward consequences, but a renewal of the nature that makes these consequences certain. 3. But the inheritance is also future, and the same principle applies there. There is no heaven without sonship; because all its blessings are spiritual. It is not the golden harps, &c. that makes the heaven of heaven; but the possession of God. To dwell in His love, and to be filled with His light, and to walk for ever in the glory of His sunlit face, to do His will, and to bear His character stamped upon our foreheads—that is the glory and the perfectness to which we are aspiring. Do not then rest in the symbols that show us, darkly and far-off, what that future glory is. 4. Well then, if all that be true, what a flood of light does it cast upon the text! For who can possess God but they who love Him? who can love but they who know His love? How can there be fellowship betwixt Him and any one except the man who is a son because he hath received of the Divine nature, and in whom that Divine nature is growing up into a Divine likeness? II. No SONSHIP WITHOUT A SPIRITUAL BIRTH. 1. The Apostle John, in that most wonderful preface to his Gospel, teaches that sonship is not a relation into which we are born by natural birth, that we become sons after we are men, and that we become sons by a Divine act, the communication of a spiritual life, whereby we are born of God. The same apostle, in his Epistles, contrasts the sons of God who are known for such because they do righteousness, and the world which knew not Christ, and says, "In this the children of God are manifested and the children of the devil"—echoing thus Christ's words, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me: ye are of your father, the devil." 2. Nothing in all this contradicts the belief that all men are the children of God inasmuch as they are shaped by His Divine hand, and He has breathed into their nostrils the breath of life. But, notwithstanding, it still remains true that there are men created by God, loved and cared for by Him, for whom Christ died, who might be, but are not, sons of God. 3. Fatherhood! what does that word itself teach us? It involves that the Father and the child shall have kindred life, and that between the Father's heart and the child's heart there shall pass answering love, flashing backwards and forwards, like the lightning that touches the earth and rises from it again. A simple appeal to your own consciousness will decide if that be the condition of all men. No sonship except by spiritual birth; and if not such sonship, then the spirit of bondage. You are sons because born again, or slaves and "enemies by wicked works." III. No SPIRITUAL BIRTH WITHOUT CHRIST. If for sonship there must be a birth, the very symbol shows that such a process does not lie within our own power. The centre point of the gospel is this regeneration. If we understand that the gospel simply comes to make men live better, to work out a moral reformation—why, there is no need for a gospel at all. If the change were a simple change of habit and action on the part of men, we could do without a Christ. But if redemption be the giving of life from God, and the change of position in reference to God's love and God's law, neither of these two changes can a man effect for himself. No new birth without Christ; no escape from the old standing-place, "enemies to God by wicked works," by anything that we can do. But Christ has effected an actual change in the aspect of the Divine government to us; and He has carried in the golden urn of His humanity a new spirit and a new life which He has set down in the midst of the race; and the urn was broken on the Cross of Calvary, and the water flowed out, and whithersoever that water comes there is life, and whithersoever it comes not there is death! IV. No

CHRIST WITHOUT FAITH. Unless we are wedded to Jesus Christ by the simple act of trust in His mercy and His power, Christ is nothing to us. We may talk about Christ for ever. He may be to us much that is very precious; but the question of questions, on which everything else depends, is, Am I trusting to Him as my Divine Redeemer? am I resting in Him as the Son of God? Ceremonies, notions, beliefs, formal participation in worship is nothing. Christ is everything to him that trusts Him. Christ is nothing but a judge and a condemnation to him that trusts Him not. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Heirs of God*:—We begin in order with the privilege itself, which belongs to God's children by virtue of their adoption: "And if children, then heirs." That all God's children are heirs. Whosoever do partake of the relation, they do partake of the inheritance. This is suitable and agreeable to some other places of Scripture (Gal. iii. 28, 29, iv. 7; Tit. iii. 7). Now there is a various account which may be given hereof unto us, which we may take in these following particulars. First, their Father's affection and special love which He bears unto them. Affection has a very great influence oftentimes upon an inheritance. There is affection and there is the constancy and immutability of it. Secondly, as there is their Father's affection, so there is likewise their Father's promise; as we know how Bathsheba urged it to David in the case of Solomon, against Adonijah (1 Kings i. 17). Thirdly, their very relation and condition wherein they are it gives them right and title hereto. Fourthly, the largeness and vastness of the estate, that is another advancement hereunto. All God's children are heirs, because there is means enough for them all. But here it may be seasonably demanded, What is it that God's children do inherit, and are heirs unto? First, for the things of this life. They are heirs of them, and have a special right and title to them. "All things are yours," says the apostle, and amongst the rest he reckons the world (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22). It is true that these things are not their portion. But yet they are oftentimes their possession. God's children they have an interest and a propriety even in temporal blessings; and such as none other else have besides themselves, for they have a sanctified right in them. No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly. Secondly, they are heirs more especially of the things of a better; and they are reducible to two heads, as the Scripture itself reduces them. Grace and glory (Psa. lxxxiv. 11)—the one considered as the means, and the other considered as the end. God's children they are heirs of them both. First, for grace and holiness. This is not a small kind of portion which God's children have an interest in. "Heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pet. iii. 7). All the graces of the Spirit, they belong to the children of God, and they are heirs, as it were, of them. Secondly, which is here principally to be understood: they are heirs of glory, and so frequently denominated. "Heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14); "heirs of the kingdom" (James ii. 5); "heirs of eternal life" (Tit. iii. 7; Col. i. 12). This we have assured unto us by the firstfruits of the Spirit within us. We may see what we are likely to have hereafter by what already we partake of here, in the beginnings of heaven to us. In what proportion this inheritance of the saints is dispensed and distributed unto them. Because it is said here that they all have a share in this business. That though all God's children are heirs of eternal happiness and glory, yet they are not all of them in the same degree partakers of it. As a father may give portions to all his children, but one may have a greater portion than the rest. It is said of Elkanah, in his carriage to Hannah, that he gave her a worthy portion, or, as some read it, a double portion. And Benjamin's lot from Joseph it was five times as much as of the rest of his brethren. Thus is it likewise in God's dispensations. He gives a portion to all His children, but He gives not the same portion to them all. Though the same for kind and specification, yet not the same for degrees and intention. All the saints shall come to heaven, but some may go further in than the rest. Therefore this should stir us all up to an endeavour after the greatest measure that may be. And now for the life and application of the whole doctrine itself to our selves. We may draw it forth in a threefold improvement especially. First: Here is that which may satisfy God's children which are in a mean and low condition here in the world, as it is possible for them to be, and as sometimes they are. Though they may be destitute of many things here, yet they are heirs of heaven. Secondly, it further teaches God's children to live answerably to this noble condition, and the inheritance which they are appointed unto. First, in a holy magnanimity and nobleness of spirit. Secondly, in making good their titles, and clearing their evidences for heaven. Those who are great heirs they are careful to make good their inheritances, and to prove their right and interest in them. Thirdly, in more

cheerful service and obedience to God's commands. We should henceforth serve Him not as base hirelings, but as those who are sons and heirs. Fourthly, take heed of losing it and parting with it upon any terms whatsoever. Take heed of Esau, that parted with his birthright. Lastly, seeing God's children are heirs, and are heirs of glory, we see then from hence the vanity of those persons who would make salvation to be a matter of merit. The second is the explication or amplification of this privilege to them, and that consists of two branches. The first is taken from the person that they are heirs of: "heirs of God." And the second is taken from the person that they are heirs with: "joint heirs with Christ." We begin with the first of these branches, viz., the person that they are: "Heirs of God." This is added here by the Apostle Paul both by way of explication and of enlargement. When we hear that God's children are heirs we might be ready, it may be, presently to dream of some earthly inheritance. They are heirs of God, as the giver of the inheritance; and they are heirs of God, as the inheritance itself which is given unto them. First, they are so relative. Heirs of God, as related to Him for such a purpose as this is. It is He that does entitle them to all the things. They are heirs of God, they have a worthy and an honourable inheritance. There is some credit in being heir unto Him. Secondly, in point of profit, heirs of God. Heirs of God; therefore not only honourable, but rich. They must needs be great heirs, because He is great Himself and has great revenues (1 Cor. x. 26). Thirdly, in point of conveniency and accommodation. There is a great matter in point of inheritance. The manner of ordering and disposing of it to the best advantage of him that shall heir it, and as to the circumstances wherewith he does enjoy it. Secondly, heirs of God. They are such as do inherit God Himself. He that is their Father is also their portion. And He which gives them the inheritance is the inheritance itself which He gives them. Sometimes the Lord is pleased to account His people to be His inheritance. "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 9). And sometimes again He is pleased to declare Himself to be theirs (Psa. lxxiii. 25, 26; Lam. iii. 24; Psa. xvi. 5; Gen. xvi.; xvii. 1). Now for the opening of this point unto us, that we may know what this business is of inheriting God Himself. The meaning of it is this—to have full interest in all His attributes. His wisdom is theirs, to direct them. His power is theirs, to preserve them. His goodness is theirs, to relieve them. His justice is theirs, to avenge them. His faithfulness is theirs, to support them. Every good is so much the more excellent, and the rather to be prized by us, as it is anything more large and comprehensive, and is containing of other things in it. Why thus it is now to be an heir of God. We have in Him everything else. All the beams of comfort in the creature they are derived from this Sun. And so again, in the want of other things, he may very much comfort himself in this. Alas, what are the stars to the sun? And what are the streams to the fountain? The second is taken from the person whom they are heirs with—"Joint heirs with Christ." Believers, they do partake of the same inheritance with the Son of God Himself. First, here is this implied, that Christ Himself is an heir, and an heir of God. Thus Heb. i. 2 He is called "the heir of all things." Again, besides, as He is an heir by nature, so He is also an heir by donation. Therefore He is said in the place before alleged to be appointed heir. The Father hath given all things to Christ (Matt. xi. 27). Thus is Christ an heir by gift. Therefore we see what great cause we have to please Him, and to endeavour to be in favour with Him. We see how it is amongst men. How careful they are to give contentment to an heir if it be but of some ordinary inheritance. The second is that which is expressed, that as Christ Himself is an heir, so God's children are heirs also with Him (Gal. iv. 7; Matt. xix. 28). This must needs be so. First, in regard of that union which is knit betwixt Christ and His Church. God's children, they are members of Christ, therefore they must be heirs with Him (1 Cor. 3, 22). Secondly, this is grounded in His promise which He hath made to us. Thirdly, His prayer for us (John xvii. 20–24). Fourthly, His office towards us as He is the Mediator of the Church. Therefore all things which come to us they must come to us through His hands. Now the life of all to ourselves comes to this. First, we see here how nearly it concerns us to find ourselves to be ingrafted into Christ and to become members of Him. Secondly, we may from hence see the certainty and infallibility of a Christian's salvation. We are joint-heirs with Christ. Therefore He being glorified, we shall be glorified also. Thirdly, we should hence learn to love Christ, and to give Him the glory of all. Considering that all we have it is from

Him, and by Him. If we are elected, we are elected in Christ. If we are justified, we are justified for Christ. If we are sanctified we are sanctified through Christ. If we are glorified we are glorified with Christ. Christ is all in all unto us. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Heirs of God*:—I. THE PRIVILEGES OF GOD'S CHILDREN. 1. Heirs of God. 2. Joint heirs with Christ. 3. Glorified together. II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PRIVILEGE AND THE RELATION. 1. None but children. 2. All children participate. III. THE CONDITION OF FINAL GLORY. 1. If so be we suffer. 2. With Christ. 3. For Him. 4. Like Him. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Heirs of God*:—I. THE GROUND OF HEIRSHIP. 1. It does not follow from ordinary creation. It is not "if creatures, then heirs." 2. Neither is it found in natural descent. It is not "if children of Abraham then heirs" (chap. ix. 7–13). 3. Nor can it come by meritorious service. It is not "if servants, then heirs" (Gal. iv. 30). 4. Nor by ceremonial observances. It is not "if circumcised or baptized, then heirs" (chap. iv. 9–12). 5. Our being born again of God by His Spirit is the one ground of heirship. Let us inquire—(1) Have we been born again (John iii. 3)? (2) Have we the spirit of adoption (Gal. iv. 6)? (3) Are we fashioned in the likeness of God (Col. iii. 10)? (4) Have we believed on Jesus (John i. 12)? II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE HEIRSHIP. "Children, then heirs." 1. The principle of priority as to time cannot enter into this question. The elder and the younger in the Divine family are equally heirs. 2. The love of God is the same to them all. 3. They are all blessed under the same promise (Heb. vi. 17). 4. They are all equally related to that great First-born Son through whom their heirship comes to them. He is the first-born among many brethren. 5. The inheritance is large enough for them all. They are not all prophets, preachers, apostles, or even well-instructed and eminent saints; they are not all rich and influential; they are not all strong and useful; but they are all heirs. Let us, then, all live as such, and rejoice in our portion. III. THE INHERITANCE WHICH IS THE SUBJECT OF HEIRSHIP. "Heirs of God." 1. Our inheritance is Divinely great. We are—Heirs of—(1) All things (Rev. xxi. 7; 2 Cor. iii. 21). (2) Salvation (Heb. i. 14). (3) Eternal life (Tit. iii. 7). (4) Promise (Heb. vi. 17). (5) The grace of life (1 Pet. iii. 7). (6) Righteousness (Heb. xi. 7). (7) The kingdom (James ii. 5). 2. Whereas we are said to be "heirs of God," it must mean that we are heirs of—(1) All that God possesses. (2) All that God is. Of His love; for God is love. Hence heirs of all possible good; for God is good. (3) God Himself. What an infinite portion! (4) All that Jesus has and is, as God and man. IV. THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE CLAIMANTS TO HEIRSHIP. "And joint heirs with Christ." 1. This is the test of our heirship. We are not heirs except with Christ, through Christ, and in Christ. 2. This sweetens it all. Fellowship with Jesus is our best portion. 3. This shows the greatness of the inheritance. Worthy of Jesus. Such an inheritance as the Father gives to the well-beloved. 4. This ensures it to us; for Jesus will not lose it, and His title-deed and ours are one and indivisible. 5. This reveals and endears His love. That He should become a partner with us in all things is love unbounded. (1) His taking us into union with Himself secures our inheritance. (2) His prayer for us attains it. (3) His going into heaven before us prepares it. (4) His coming again will bring us the full enjoyment of it. 6. This joint heirship binds us faster to Jesus, since we are nothing, and have nothing apart from Him. Conclusion—1. Let us joyfully accept the present suffering with Christ, for it is part of the heritage. 2. Let us believe in the ultimate glorification and anticipate it with joy. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Heirs of God*:—I. THEN THE CHRISTIAN IS GOING TO A RICH HOME AND A GLORIOUS FUTURE. Therefore, he ought not to be too much elated or depressed by the pleasures or privations of the journey. An eye to the rest and glory at the end should keep him from getting weary of the way. II. THEN THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD NOT DEBASE HIMSELF BY AN UNDUE ATTACHMENT TO THE THINGS OF TIME. How unreasonable to see an "heir of God" so swallowed up in the world that he has neither taste nor time to pray, or make suitable efforts to get ready for His Heavenly inheritance. III. THEN NO MAN SHOULD SPEAK OF HAVING MADE SACRIFICES IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN. IV. THEN AN HEIR OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE "MEET FOR HIS INHERITANCE." Without a meetness for it, the inheritance would be a burden rather than a blessing. V. THEN, IN SECURING THIS MEETNESS, THE CHRISTIAN MAY CONFIDENTLY EXPECT DIVINE AID. (*T. Kelly*). *Heirs of God*:—I. THE PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S CHILDREN. 1. As the law of nature and the institutions of society authorise children to expect the possession of property which once belonged to their parents, so God has pledged Himself that He will act the part of a Father. 2. Looked at with the eye of sense, the inheritance of God's children on

this world is not much to be envied; but, in reality, whatever be their outward lot, they are all the while richer than the richest, and greater than the greatest. 3. They may be said to be heirs of God even at present, inasmuch as they are entitled, by virtue of His covenant, to as much of what God is, and has, as shall be requisite for their welfare. 4. Of the future inheritance we have various accounts. It is—(1) "An inheritance among them that are sanctified." Heaven will confer on those who are admitted into it, a much higher degree of holiness than they before attained. (2) "An inheritance of the saints in light." In heaven we shall receive a great addition to our knowledge. (3) "An inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." The circumstances of earthly parents may be suddenly reversed, and their children therefore deprived of the inheritance. But the children of God have nothing to apprehend from reverses. All those ideas are epitomised in the text. God shall be, in heaven, fully and perfectly His people's portion. More than this God cannot promise or give. 5. Further particulars are included in the phrase, "joint-heirs with Christ," and "glorified together," viz:—(1) That we are altogether indebted to God's mercy in Christ, for our title to the inheritance. Heaven is a purchased possession; not by penitence or faith, holiness or usefulness, suffering or dying, but by the precious blood of Christ. (2) That the title of true believers is in the highest degree valid and satisfactory. Christ's title is unquestionable; what He hath amply merited He hath a right to bestow; and He wills to bestow it upon all believers. There are, indeed, differences between Christ's title and ours. His is original, earned by Himself; ours is borrowed. His is one actually recognised. He is in possession of the inheritance; whereas we are but on our way to it. But He has gone as our forerunner to take possession for us. (3) That there shall be a blessed similarity in point of nature—though, of course, not in degree—between the enjoyment of Christ in heaven and the enjoyment of His glorified people there. "The glory which Thou givest Me I have given them." II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS PRIVILEGE AND OUR RELATION TO GOD AS HIS CHILDREN. "If children, then heirs." This, of course, implies—1. That none but children will be recognised as heirs, or be allowed to inherit. 2. That all children are heirs. In the arrangements of human society, and it often happens that the estates descend exclusively to the male children, or to the eldest. But this is not the rule which God will adopt. "If children"—it matters not whether sons or daughters—"then heirs." Nor will this inheritance lose any value from being distributed among so many. Every man in heaven will feel himself much the happier, because he will know there are so many millions of ransomed spirits who share the same bliss. III. THE WAY IN WHICH WE ARE TO WALK SO AS TO SECURE THE ACTUAL BESTOWMENT OF THIS PRIVILEGE. First of all, to become children, we must apply to God in the way of penitence and faith that our sentence of alienation may be reversed. But if children, we are not to conclude that there is no further need of watchfulness or prayer. We are to remember the other clause:—"If so be," &c. Not that the sufferings of the saints are—like those of Christ—meritorious. Yet they may be fitly termed "suffering with Christ"—1. Because a large portion of the suffering of good people comes upon them in consequence of their devotedness to the truth, and cause, and service of Christ. If we would forsake Christ we should then escape much of—(1) The world's reproach. (2) Temptation from Satan. (3) Self-denial. (4) Providential sufferings. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." 2. If it be endured in the temper and spirit of Christ, who said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." The servant is not above his lord. Ought the private soldier to complain of privations or perils to which his general submits? It is not hard or unreasonable that we suffer with Christ before we are glorified, because the subsequent glory will far more than compensate the previous suffering (ver. 18). Conclusion: We learn from this subject the extreme desirableness and importance of being found among the regenerated people of God. Many of you have realised these privileges. Then—1. Be thankful. 2. Be submissive to your worldly lot. 3. Be consistent, be heavenly minded. 4. Remember what God requires of you in order to your being glorified—that you should suffer with Him. (*J. Bunting, D.D.*) *The heirs of God*:—I. THE SUPPOSITION. "If children, then heirs." 1. Unquestionably, in a general sense, God is the Father of all mankind. But the New Testament continually speaks of a higher form of paternity and childhood. This men may or may not sustain. If all men, without exception, were the children of God there would be no "if" about it, just as any hypothetical expression is unknown in heaven; or if all men were so placed

that it was impossible for them ever to sustain any relation to God, but the general one of creatures, then, also, there would be no room for question, just as there is none in respect to the brutes that perish, or to the devils and the damned in hell. The possibility of using conditional language, in relation to men, involves the idea that while they may be, in the language of Scripture, "children of the wicked one," they may also be sons of God in the highest and most emphatic acceptation. In relation to this subject, we may employ the language, "Howbeit, that is not first that is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." In neither case, however, does it necessarily follow that the spiritual must succeed the natural. Men may live and never be changed in the spirit of their minds; and they may die, and not rise after the likeness of the Lord's glorious body. But if any man is a child of God, then the Scripture teaches that this is his second state, not his first; that he has undergone, or been the subject of, a process by which he has passed from the one to the other. 2. This process is described as being "born of the Spirit," "created anew," "quickened," "raised from the dead," &c., and we cannot suppose that this is accomplished by the mechanical agency of any outward rite. It is represented as connected with repentance and faith in Christ. 3. In addition to an actual spiritual birth, we have the frequent use of the word "adoption," to illustrate the process by which man passes from his first to his second condition. This word is used in allusion to the reception into a family of a slave or a stranger. In like manner men, who, contemplated as sinners, are strangers, foreigners, and in bondage to the devil, are taken out of this state of distance and degradation, and, by an act of God's grace adopted into His family and constituted His sons. 4. And however humbling it may be to think of the necessity in which we stand of adoption and renewal, yet that nature is not to be disparaged, respecting which such things are possible. A brute animal could not be adopted and made a child by man; nor if it were could it be made the subject of human sympathies and affections. And so, unless man, in spite of all his corruption, had within him a nature distinguished by moral and religious capacity, it would be impossible for him to be either adopted by or born of God; and that nature of which this can be said, however ruined now, must have been originally great and God-like. II. THE DISTINGUISHED PRIVILEGE. 1. An heir is one who, by legal or natural right, possesses a title to an inheritance. A stranger may be constituted such, in virtue of the will and deed of another; a child may be such from natural relationship. Both these ideas are employed in Scripture to illustrate the subject. Men, considered as guilty, need pardon or justification, which is a legal as well as merciful act on the part of God, by which the relation of men to law is altered. It is in connection with this act that adoption is more especially to be regarded, and the heirship of the adopted as flowing from that act. Thus Paul speaks in the Epistle to Titus—"being justified, we are made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life." As possessing a corrupt nature men need to be regenerated, in virtue of which they become God's children, not merely by a legal or declaratory act, but by the positive sanctification of their nature, and then heirship results by way of natural consequence. "Thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir." 2. "Heirs of God." It would seem to be impossible to have too high ideas of what may be anticipated by those who are the children and heirs of a Divine Parent; of Him who created and who possesses all things; whose paternal affection is measureless, and who even speaks of Himself as the portion of His people. 3. "Joint heirs with Christ." There is something in this expression more than the idea of filial relationship to God. That to which the Christian is heir is not merely the inheritance of a son, but of such a son as Christ is represented to be: "the only begotten and well-beloved of the Father, in whom He is ever well pleased." The Church is His body, and whatever glory invests the head, the members participate. Conclusion: From all this we learn—1. The love and power of God. 2. The ultimate security of the Church. 3. Obligations and motives to obedience. 4. Encouragement to all anxious and earnest men, who are seriously inquiring for and seeking after God. (*T. Binney*). *The believer's heirship*:—This little word "if" intimates to us that all men are not children of God. No doubt there is a sense in which His intelligent creatures generally may be regarded as His offspring. But the title "sons of God" is confined exclusively to those who have been re-created in His image. I. How, then, MAY WE KNOW WHETHER WE BE THE CHILDREN OF GOD OR NOT? 1. By the consciousness we have that we have complied with those conditions of repentance and faith, on the fulfilment of which the privilege is suspended. 2. By believing the

testimony of the Word, which declares that all those who thus repent and believe are acknowledged to be the children of God. 3. By considering the fruits of grace in our lives, and then comparing these with the characteristics of sonship which are delineated in the Word of God. 4. By the fact that we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 5. By the direct witnessing of the Spirit itself, with and to our spirits, that we are the children of God. II. "IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS." The children of the wealthy and noble are the heirs of nobility and wealth. Now, it is not strange that God's children should also be heirs: for who is so rich and noble as their Heavenly Father? 1. They come into possession of their inheritance, not on the death of their Father (for He can never die), but when they reach their majority. This occurs at different periods of spiritual life, and under varying circumstances of purification and trial; for some are no sooner born of God than they are ready for translation, while others have, like the Captain of their salvation, to "be made perfect through suffering." 2. That inheritance is—(1) A reality. It may not, indeed, consist of tangible tenements, land, silver and gold; but it does consist of all that can gratify the cravings of an immortal spirit. Whether you call heaven a place or a state, it is a possession and an enjoyment—(2) Vast and grand, surpassing all that earthly potentates have ever coveted or earthly conquerors won. (3) Pure and undefiled, neither acquired by injustice nor retained by wrong. (4) Ensured. Every child of the new birth is born to it; nor is there any man who can rob him of it. (4) Enduring. It fadeth not away. (5) There is this difference, that whereas on earth the portion of each diminishes as the number of heirs is increased, in heaven it is quite the reverse. Have we not, then, a direct interest in seeking to take others with us to glory? III. "JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST." 1. Our heavenly happiness is to be of the same nature as His. If His consists of transcendent holiness, and dignity, authority, and power, then ours will comprehend the same elements of felicity. 2. Our happiness will be realised in the same state, or place, or sphere as His. Where He is, we shall be also. 3. Our inheritance has been purchased, or procured by the same means as His. By His sufferings, for after these came the glory; and all those sufferings were endured for us. Jesus has conquered for us our inheritance by the conquest of His own. In conclusion: 1. Be humble. The heirs of earthly kingdoms are apt to be elated with pride in proportion to the magnitude of their prospective possessions. But with the sons of God, the clearer their views of future glory, the more astounded are they with the greatness of the gift of God; and this proportionally makes them feel their own unworthiness. 2. Be hearty. How much owest thou to thy Lord? How, then, shouldst thou love, praise, own, obey, and serve Him! 3. Be holy. Thou art an heir of glory. How, then, shouldest thou prepare for it? (*T. G. Horton.*) *The Christian's heirship*:—I was in a provincial town some time ago, when I was told of a nobleman who for many years worked as a porter in the railway station, because he did not know his true position in the world, till one day a gentleman entered the station, and after saluting him said, "Sir, may I ask your name?" "John ——," was the answer. "I have come to tell you that you are the Earl of ——, and entitled to a large estate," replied the visitor. Do you think that man stood about the station touching his cap for tips any longer? Not he. He took possession of his inheritance at once. That is just what we Christians should do. *The joint heirs and their Divine portion*:—Let us—I. CONSIDER THE TERMS OF THE WILL. 1. Our right to the Divine heritage stands or falls with Christ's right to the same. (1) If He be not truly an heir, neither are we. (*a*) If there be any flaw in the will, then it is no more valid for Christ than it is for us. (*b*) Perhaps there may be a suit in law made against the will. But then it is Christ's interest that is at stake as well as mine. If Satan bring an accusation against us, that accusation is made against Christ, for we are one with Him. You must enter your suit against the Head if you would attack the members. (*c*) Yet suppose, after the will has been proved, it shall be found that nothing is left to distribute, or a debt against the estate? Why, if we get nothing, Christ gets nothing; if there should be no heaven for us, there is no heaven for Christ. (*d*) And then suppose that, though there be something left, yet it be a mere trifle; that heaven should be but inferior joy, such as might be found even in this world. Then saints with little glory means Christ with little. (2) I have been dwelling upon the black side in order to bring the bright one out by contrast. Let us revel in that contrast. (*a*) There is no flaw in God's will with regard to Christ, and He has said, "I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." (*b*) No suit in law can stand against Christ. He has satisfied God's law.

Who shall accuse the Redeemer? Nor can any creature accuse His saints, nor infringe upon our title so long as His title stands. (c) And there is no fear that the Son of God, the infinitely rich, will have a trifling portion. And "all things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 2. If we are joint heirs with Christ, we legally have no inheritance apart from Him. The signature of the one will not avail to alienate the estate, nor can he sell it by his own right, nor have it all at his own separate disposal. You have no right to heaven in yourself; your right lieth in Christ. The promises are yea and amen, but only in Christ Jesus, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance. 3. Christ, as co-heir, has so identified Himself with us, that His rights are not to be viewed apart from ours. Before we leave this point, note what an honour is conferred upon us. To have anything to do with a great man is thought to be a distinguished privilege; but what honour is conferred on the believer to be joint heir with the King of kings! Lift up thine head; think no man's princeship worth thy coveting; thou art greater than the greatest, for thou art joint heir with Christ. II. VIEW THE ESTATES. 1. The inheritance of suffering. (1) Just on the edge of your Father's great inheritance lies the swamp of affliction. Now this is yours. If this be not yours, neither are the rest, for they are bequeathed to you in the same will. The same legacy that left peace also left tribulation. No cross, no crown. But, remember, Christ is co-heir with you in this. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." (2) You must also be the heir of persecution. Christ had to be persecuted, and so must you. (3) Another black portion is temptation. In this, too, Christ is your co-heir. "He was tempted in all points like as we are." 2. Now let us march joyfully to the other part of the inheritance. As in matters of wills everything should be proven and sworn to, let us have the evidence of God, that cannot lie. (1) As co-heirs with Christ, we are heirs of God (Psa. xvi. 5; lxiii. 26). (2) In Rom. iv. 13 the promise made to the Seed was that He should be heir of the world. "Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," &c. "The world is ours," because it is Christ's by right of inheritance. There is nothing here below which does not belong to a believer. If he hath wealth, let him use it in his Master's service, for it is his. If he hath poverty, poverty is his to help him to be sanctified, and to long for heaven. Whatever happens to him—sickness or health—everything is his here below. "The meek shall inherit the earth." (3) In Heb. i. 2, we are told that God has appointed Christ heir of all things. Then we are heirs of all things conceivable and inconceivable, finite and infinite, human and Divine. Christ's property extends to all, and we are co-heirs. (4) Then in James ii. 5, we are spoken of as being heirs of the kingdom. Doth Christ call Himself a King? He hath made us kings. Does He sit upon a throne? We shall overcome and sit down with Him upon His throne. Will He judge the nations? The saints shall judge the world. Will He be received with triumph by His Father? So shall we when His Father shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Hath He joy? We shall have His joy. Is He everlasting? So shall we be, for because He lives, we shall live also. III. ADMINISTER THE EFFECTS. 1. There is one part of the property which we may enjoy at once. Take your cross up and bear it with joy. Resignation takes the weight out of the cross, but a proud spirit that will not bow to God's will changes a wooden cross into an iron one. Say, "I count it to be my joy to be permitted to be a partaker of the sufferings of Christ." All the sheep of the Great Shepherd are marked with the cross, and this not only in the fleece, but in the flesh. "If ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." 2. Why cannot we administer also to the blessed part of the testament? (1) If you have faith enough, you may this morning be raised up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. (2) God has given Christ the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for His possession, and we are co-heirs with Him. Let us advance to take the property. Some of you can do so by preaching in the streets. Others, by teaching your children in the class. You can say, "God has given these souls to Christ; I am going to take them in Christ's name." Others, who can do little themselves, can assist by sending forth men to preach the gospel. All that the Church wants to-day is courage and devotion. Let her, then, as Christ's queen, claim the earth as hers, and send her heralds forth from sea to sea to bid all men bow before Him, and confess Him to be their King. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The glory of the good*:—They are in a distinguishing sense—I. THE CHILDREN OF GOD. They have—1. A special resemblance to Him. 2. A special affection for Him. 3. A special attention from Him. II. THE INHERITORS OF ALL GOOD. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) If so

be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.—*Suffering with Christ*:—Believers suffer with Christ—I. IN THE SAME CAUSE—that of truth and righteousness. II. FOR THE SAME END—the glory of God and the good of His Church. III. FROM THE SAME HAND—Satan, their common enemy, and the world. IV. IN THE SAME MANNER, and with the same spirit of patience and resignation. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Suffering with Christ, a condition of glory with Christ*:—I. SONSHIP WITH CHRIST NECESSARILY INVOLVES SUFFERING WITH HIM. 1. We misapprehend the force of this passage if we suppose it to refer merely to outward calamities, and see in it only that the sorrows of daily life may have in them a sign of our being children of God, and some power to prepare us for the glory that is to come. The text does not merely contain a law for a certain part of life, but for the whole of life. The foundation of it is not that Christ shares in our sufferings; but that we, as Christians, participate in Christ's. 2. Do not suppose that I am forgetting the awful sense in which Christ's suffering stands as a thing by itself, incapable of, and needing no, repetition. But do not let us forget that the very writers that emphasise this, say to us, "'Be planted together in the likeness of His death': you are 'crucified to the world' by the Cross of Christ; you are to 'fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ.'" He Himself speaks of our drinking of the cup that He drank of, &c. The fact is, that the life of Christ remains to be lived by every Christian, who in like manner has to fight with the world, to stand, by God's help, pure in the midst of a world that is full of evil. (1) The sufferings of the Lord were not only those that were wrought upon Calvary. Conceive of that perfect life in the midst of a system full of sin, and ask yourselves whether part of His sufferings did not spring from the contact with it. "Oh that I had wings like a dove," &c., must often be the language of those who are like Him in spirit and in consequent sufferings. (2) Another branch of the "sufferings of Christ" is to be found in that deep and mysterious fact that Christ wrought out His perfect obedience as a man, through temptation and by suffering. There was no sin within Him. "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." But yet, when that dark Power stood by His side, and said, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down," it was a real temptation, and not a sham one. And though the doing of His Father's will was His delight; yet obedience, sustained in the face of temptation and the "contradiction of sinners," may well be called suffering. (3) But not only is the life of Christ as a life of suffering a model for us, but His death, besides being an atonement, is a type of the Christian's life, which is to be one long and daily dying to sin, to self, to the world. There is the "old man," "the flesh," "the old Adam," your own godless, independent, selfish, proud being. And crucifying, plucking out the right eye, maiming self of the right hand, mortifying the deeds of the body, teach us that there is no growth without sore sorrow. And not until you can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," have you accomplished that to which you are consecrated and vowed by your sonship—"being conformed unto the likeness of His death," and "knowing the fellowship of His sufferings." On this high level, and not upon the lower one—viz., that Christ will help us to bear afflictions—do we find the true meaning of all that Scripture teaching; which says to us, If you want the power for holy living, have fellowship in that atoning death; and if you want the pattern of holy living, look at that Cross and feel, "I am crucified to the world by it, and the life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." 3. Such considerations, however, do not necessarily exclude the comforting thought, "In all our affliction He is afflicted." In some trackless lands, when one friend passes through the pathless forests, he breaks a twig ever and anon as he goes, that those who come after may see the traces of his having been there, and know that they are not out of the road. So when we are journeying through the murky night, and the dark woods of affliction, it is something to find here and there a spray broken, or a leafy stem bent down with the tread of His foot and the brush of His hand as He passed; and to remember that the path He trod He has hallowed, and thus to find lingering fragrances and hidden strengths in the remembrance of Him as "in all points tempted like as we are," bearing grief for us, with us, like us. 4. Do not keep these sacred thoughts of Christ's companionship in sorrow for the larger trials of life. If the mote in the eye be large enough to annoy you, it is large enough to bring out His sympathy; and if the grief be too small for Him to compassionate and share, it is too small for you to be troubled by it. If you are ashamed to apply that Divine thought, "Christ bears this grief with me," to those petty molehills that you magnify into mountains sometimes, think it a shame to stumble over

them. But never fear to be too familiar in the thought that Christ is willing to bear, and help me to bear, the most insignificant of daily annoyances. Whether it be a poison from one serpent sting, or from a million of tiny mosquitoes, if there be a smart, go to Him, and He will bear it with you; for if so be that we suffer with Him, He suffers with us. II. THIS COMMUNITY OF SUFFERING IS A NECESSARY PREPARATION FOR THE COMMUNITY OF GLORY. 1. I name this principally for the sake of putting in a caution. The apostle does not mean that if a son of God have no occasion, by brevity of life or other causes, for passing through the discipline of sorrow, his inheritance would be forfeited. We must always take such passages as this in conjunction with the truth which completes them, that when a man has the love of God in His heart, there and then he is fit for the inheritance. Christian people make vast mistakes sometimes in talking about "being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," about being "ripe for glory," and the like. It is not the discipline that fits, it only develops the fitness. "God hath made us meet." That is a past act. The preparedness for heaven comes at the moment—if it be a momentary act—when a man turns to Christ. The one may be dispensed with, the other cannot. A Christian at any period of his Christian experience, if it please God to take him, is fit for the kingdom; yet in His mercy He is leaving you here, training you, disciplining you; and that all the glowing furnaces of fiery trial, and all the cold waters of affliction, are but the preparation through which the rough iron is to be passed before it becomes tempered steel, a shaft in the Master's hand. And so learn to look upon all trial as being at once the seal of your sonship, and the means by which God puts it within your power to win a loftier throne, a nobler crown, a closer fellowship with Him "who hath suffered, being tempted," and who will receive into His own blessedness and rest them that are tempted. III. THAT INHERITANCE IS THE NECESSARY RESULT OF THE SUFFERING THAT HAS GONE BEFORE. The ground of mere compensation is a low one on which to rest the certainty of future bliss. But the inheritance is sure, because the one cause—union with the Lord—produces both the present result of fellowship in His sorrows, and the future result of joy in His joy, of possession in His possessions. The inheritance is sure, because earth's sorrows not merely require to be repaid by its peace, but because they fit us for it, and it would be destructive to all faith in God's wisdom not to believe that what He has wrought for us will be given to us. Trials have no meaning, unless they are means to an end. The end is the inheritance; and sorrows here, as well as the Spirit's work here, are the earnest of the inheritance. Measure the greatness of the glory by what has preceded it. If a fair measure of the greatness of any result be the length of time taken for getting it ready, we can dimly conceive what that joy must be for which seventy years of strife and sorrow are but a momentary preparation; and what must be the weight of that glory which is the counterpoise and consequence to the afflictions of this lower world. The further the pendulum swings on the one side, the further it goes up on the other. The deeper God plunges the comet into the darkness, the closer does it come to the sun at its nearest distance, and the longer does it stand glowing in the full blaze of the glory from the central orb. So in our revolution, the measure of the distance from the farthest point of our darkest earthly sorrow to the throne may help us to the measure of the closeness of the glory above when we are on the throne: for if so be that we are sons, we must suffer with Him; if so be that we suffer, we must be glorified together! (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Sharing with Christ*:—I. WHAT BECOMES OF GOOD MEN IN THE FUTURE? They are "glorified with Christ." We have here—1. A positive conception of the blessedness of heaven. Elsewhere we are told what heaven is not, rather than what it is. We seem more frequently to have promised to us relief from sufferings—no more sickness, night, curse, nor death—all of which we shrink from as if their absence was enough to make our bliss. But here heaven is presented as "glorification with Christ." 2. A striking contrast to those carnal views which unspiritual men hold upon this subject. 3. A heaven already realised—in the person of our Lord. He is already glorified. In the glorifying of Christ, our glorifying is involved. 4. A most consolatory and satisfactory prospect therefore. It is the fellowship, not the place, that makes up our happiness. With Christ fully revealed to us we could be happy anywhere. II. WHAT PRECEDES THIS BLESSEDNESS? "Suffering with Him." "To suffer with" is to sympathise (1 Cor. xii.). 1. Christ's sufferings were—(1) Voluntary. (2) Caused by sin. (3) The result of the contrariety of His pure nature to the depravity of men amongst whom He came to live. 2. We partake of them—(1) Beneficially. There is a sense in which this is the only way whereby we can be partakers of His

suffering—in which, therefore, He is alone in suffering (Isa. lxiii. 3). (2) In consequence of our contact with the world. "As He was, so are we in this world." They who are like Christ must expect to have His sorrows and His treatment repeated. (3) Non-meritorious. Suffering for Christ as martyrs do is really suffering with Him, and finds its joy in the suffering itself. Only such minds could suffer with Him, and the having such a mind is itself the blessed thing. (*P. Strutt.*) *Suffering in relation to sonship*:—The apostle does not affirm the absolute necessity of much suffering in order to our reaching heaven; for there are souls whose course on earth is short and happy; still less that there is any merit in our suffering; for nothing is plainer than that such a doctrine would be flatly opposed to the whole argument of this Epistle. I. SUFFERING IS A COMMON CONDITION OF SONSHIP. Christ never promised His followers in this world anything else but tribulation, save only that in the midst of it all they should enjoy His peace and His Father's protection; and all the apostles speak of suffering as the common lot of the saints (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13, 16; 1 Thess. i. 6, ii. 14, iii. 4; Heb. xii.). In all these passages the same principle is involved which is contained in the text. The cause of our sufferings as Christians is found in the simple fact that we are Christians. II. THIS AFFORDS A TEST OF OUR SONSHIP—1. In the way of its infliction. If the world persecute us for Christ's sake, if it deem us worthy of such distinction, it must be because it is convinced that we are Christians, and therefore we may be comforted by the very malice of our enemies. "The villain's censure is the good man's praise." 2. In the manner in which we endure it. It is only the true saint who can bear reproach with meekness, take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, refuse to avenge himself, love his enemies, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. III. THE NATURE OF THE BELIEVER'S SUFFERINGS. 1. There are many which are not associated with Christ, and which do not result from sympathy with Him. The ungodly are not without their sufferings—the results of sinful folly and excess, or visitations of Divine indignation, and issue in the aggravated impiety of those who endure them. Beside which, how many of our trials and annoyances do we bring on ourselves by our pride and self-will, or by our compliance with evil temptation! 2. Sufferings with Christ are divisible into those which come from men and those which come from God. The former are persecutions; the latter, salutary chastisements. (1) Christ was persecuted, even unto death, and He has warned His disciples to expect the same treatment (Matt. v. 12). We in happy England are exempt from the fiery trial. But let us suppose the case to be otherwise. Could we, if called to it, bear imprisonment and torture, and final execution, for the Lord's sake? If so, how is it that we are so soon offended when the least troubles arise in connection with our Christian profession? And yet there are some who are not persecuted for Christ's sake. There are tradesmen who lose custom because they will be faithful to conscience. There are artisans who are injured and insulted unceasingly by their fellow-workmen for the same reason. There are wives whose piety brings on them rudest treatment from brutal husbands. But, after all, how light and little does this kind of trial appear in comparison with what our predecessors in the faith have endured. But, such as it is, it is a suffering with Christ, and should be met with calmness and borne with patience, fortitude, and hope. (2) The other class are those which resemble the pangs of Jesus, when it pleased the Father to put Him to grief. "It became Him," &c. But there are important points of difference. Both have relation to sin; but while ours are connected with our own sins, His were endured for the sins of others. His sufferings only exert an expiating efficacy. Yet Christ also learned obedience by the things which He suffered. In this respect our sufferings may resemble His. God may try us, as He tried Him, for the simple purpose of teaching us to renounce our own wish and will, and to say, with Christ, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." IV. IF WE SUFFER WITH CHRIST, WE SHALL ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER. Our afflictions are not for naught. They are like the early processes of the garden, when the soil is broken up and weeded, in order that fair flowers may at length adorn it. They are the quarrying and the chiselling of the marble before the living statue can stand out in symmetrical proportions. They are the tuning of the instruments, without which no harmony can be secured in the ultimate concert. They are the medicine of our convalescence, the drudgery of our education, the spring-pruning of our vine trees, without which we can never be healthy or happy, fit for heaven, or qualified to bring forth fruit whereby our Father may be glorified. Wherefore murmur not and faint not. Thou canst tread no path of hardship which Jesus hath not hallowed by His footsteps. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Suffering attends God's children*:—In the text itself there are

two general parts considerable—the supposition and the inference. The supposition that is in these words, "If so be we suffer with Christ." First, here is the condition of God's children considered absolutely. And that is, that it is a state of suffering, "If so be that we suffer." Many are the troubles of the righteous. Not to stand upon the proof of that by testimony, which experience does so frequently evidence, we may take some account of it in these particulars. First, there is somewhat for it in their nature, which they have in common with other men (Job v. 7). But, secondly, not only so, but more particularly which is founded in grace, and that holy profession which they bear upon them. First, I say, the malice and hatred of the world. Those whom men hate, they will afflict and disturb, if it lies in their power. Secondly, there is also the goodness of God, and His wise providence towards His servants, which has an influence hereupon likewise. God will have His people here in this world to suffer for divers reasons. As, first, for the trial and exercise of their graces. Secondly, God orders afflictions to His children, thereby to wear off that rust which is in them, and to take away their defilements from them, as it is in Isa. xxvii. 9. Thirdly, to wean them from the world and an inordinate love of these things here below, and to make them more willing to be gone when He calls for them. Lastly, in Fatherly discipline, to keep His children regular and in good order, and to prevent them from worse things to come (1 Cor. xi. 32). The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us. First, as it serves to teach us patience under those trials which God at any time in His providence exercises us withal. Secondly, we learn hence also to expect it and to prepare for it. Thirdly, we learn from hence also to take heed of passing rash censure either upon ourselves or other men, occasionally from these conditions. Now the second is, as it is considerable relatively; and that is, that it is a suffering with Christ. "If we suffer with Him." This they are called, first, from that mystical union which is betwixt Him and us. As by virtue of this union, that which is His, is ours; so, by virtue of the same union, that which is ours is also His. Secondly, by way of sympathy and compassion, we suffer with Him, and He suffers with us, in a suitableness and correspondency of affection. Thirdly, the sufferings of God's children are called the sufferings of Christ, forasmuch as it is He that strengthens them and enables them for to suffer them, and as we suffer by Him. With Him; that is, with His assistance and through His enablement, and by power communicated from Him. The godly have a supply from Christ for the enduring of that which they endure. And their sufferings are in that respect His. Fourthly and lastly, and principally, they are the sufferings of Christ, forasmuch as they are in Christ's cause, and for the particular things which He suffered; that is, indeed, for righteousness sake, and the doing of that which is good (thus Psa. xxxviii. 20; 1 Pet. iii. 17, 18; Matt. v. 11, 12). This teaches also Christians not to rest themselves contented in this, that they suffer, but to observe both how and what they suffer for. What they suffer for as to the cause of their suffering; and how they suffer, as to the manner and carriage of their suffering—each of which have a necessary influence upon this business of suffering with Christ, and are most requisite ingredients to the making and constituting of it. The second is the inference in these words, "That we may be also glorified together." First, to look upon this passage according to the exclusive emphasis; and so I say there is this in it: that there is no coming to glory but by suffering. Suffering it is the beaten path to glory, and that common road which all take that come to that end. Now there is a various account which may be given hereof unto us. First, that herein we may be conformable to Christ our Head. Secondly, suffering goes before glory, thereby to set a greater price upon glory itself, and to make it so much the more glorious. Thirdly, that so by this means He may in some manner fit us for glory, and prepare us and dispose us thereunto (Col. i. 12). But against this may be haply objected that there are divers of the children of God, and such as we have cause to hope well of, who yet have a very quiet and comfortable life, wherein they meet with little sorrow or trouble at all. And how, then, is this so generally true whereof we now speak? To this I answer, that the providence of God is very mysterious in this particular in His different carriage to different of His servants here in this life. And that with some it fareth better than others in this respect. But yet there are none but in some kind or other, at some time or other, in some sense or other, have the experiment of this truth upon them. Sometimes the servants of God are more troubled with inward conflicts than with outward afflictions. Sometimes, again, God afflicts them in others, though not immediately in their own persons, which yet, notwith-

standing, according as they improve it, proves an affliction unto them. As Esther mourning for her people and kindred while she was herself in great prosperity; and Nehemiah, for his brethren's captivity, when himself was in great favour. But then, further, this is that which all God's children do in a manner prepare for, and so dispose themselves as to make account of it. And it is their wisdom so to do. As a man that takes a journey by sea, he may chance to sail, it may be, without storms, in regard of the event; but yet he expects them, and makes account of them, as incident unto him. And so must Christians in this sea of the world. Now the second is that emphasis which is inclusive. "If we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together"; that is, the one it shall certainly follow upon the other. Wherein, again, there are two things further considerable. The one is the conjunction of conditions, and the other is the conjunction of persons, in reference to those conditions. First, here is the conjunction of conditions: glory joined with suffering. Christians that suffer in this life, they shall be glorified in the life to come. So after that He hath called them to suffering, He does at last bring them to glory. This He does in His infinite wisdom and goodness, and as carrying a special comeliness and congruity with it (as 2 Thess. i. 6–8). As there is a beauty in all the works and ways of God besides, so amongst the rest also in this. Look at those who have had the greatest pleasure and delight in sin, they shall hereafter have the greatest punishment and vexation. There are three considerations especially which are matters of great supportment and satisfaction to God's children in suffering. First, the comfort which they have in it. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. God's children have never more embracings and cherishings from Him than at such time as they are under greatest afflictions. As the mother tends the sick child especially, and is most fond of that. Secondly, the benefit which they have by it or from it; that is another thing here considerable. Thirdly, another encouragement is the glory which comes after it (Matt. xix. 28; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. i. 7). Where still we must observe and remember this: that it is said, "If we suffer with Him." It is not suffering considered indefinitely that does entitle to glory. First, not mere suffering in a way of common providence, which even a natural man may do. Secondly, not suffering in a way of public justice, which an evil man may do. Thirdly, not suffering neither with murmuring and repining. There may want glory as to either of these things. The second is the conjunction of the persons in reference to these conditions. Believers are joined with Christ, and in particular joined with Him in glory. This phrase of "together with Him" does imply divers things in it. First, conformity. "We shall be glorified with Him"; that is, we shall be like to Him in glory (thus John xvii. 22). Secondly, concomitancy. "We shall be glorified with Him"; that is, we shall be joined to Him and present with Him in glory (John xvii. 24; 1 Thess. iv. 17). A concomitancy both of fate and of time, there and then. Thirdly, conveyance or derivation. "We shall be glorified with Him"; that is, we shall be glorified from Him. His glory shall reflect upon us and be transmitted to us. We shall shine in His beams. Affliction, it is such a condition as is irksome to flesh and blood, and we all by nature are ready to shrink at it and at the thoughts of it; but grace is much satisfied about it. God will at last make all His children amends for any troubles which here He lays upon them. Heaven, it will swallow up all. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The reward of glory*:—Samuel Rutherford used to say, "I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what the Lord is preparing for him." "When we shall come home, and enter into the possession of our Brother's fair kingdom, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and suffering, then shall we see life and sorrow to be less than one step or stride from a prison to glory, and that our little inch of time-suffering is not worthy of our first night's welcome home to heaven."

Ver. 18. **For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory.**—*A sublime comparison*:—Men exaggerate the importance of what is close at hand, and diminish the value of what lies in the far future. Prudence teaches men to free themselves from this tendency. And religion summons men to take into their calculation the distant but not uncertain prospect. I. THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PRESENT MAY BE SEVERE. Every human being has many pains, troubles, anxieties, to bear. And every Christian has his own especial sufferings. Nothing is gained by concealing these facts. Let every reasonable

being "count the cost" of following Christ. II. THE GLORY OF THE FUTURE IS REVEALED. We need no revelation to make us sensible of the pressure of present pains. But experience and reason fail to make us know the glory which is to be. This is declared to us by inspiration, viz., that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. That glory consists in the knowledge, favour, and fellowship of the Redeemer. III. THE ESTIMATE AND CALCULATION IS THAT THE GLORY OF THE FUTURE OUTWEIGHS THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PRESENT. 1. This was the personal conviction of the apostle himself. He was a reasonable man, and he reckoned, &c. He acted upon his persuasion, and throughout his life accepted hardships, braved dangers, endured persecution, animated by the blessed hope of victory and of glory. 2. This has been the principle which has underlain the endurances which have always characterised the Christian life. Who would willingly endure the self-denial and the oppression, the insult, the privation and the martyrdom, except for the sake of the approval of the Divine Master, whose victory and whose throne it is promised that all His faithful followers shall share? (*Clerical World.*) *The present and the future*:—I. THE APOSTLE'S ESTIMATE. 1. Of this world. A scene of—(1) Vanity. (2) Bondage. (3) Suffering. 2. Of the world to come. (1) Glory. (2) Liberty. (3) Happiness. II. THE EFFECTS OF THIS ESTIMATE. 1. Hope. 2. Patience. 3. Earnest desire. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Present suffering and future glory*:—I. GOD'S SUFFERING SONS. Sonship does not exempt from sufferings—sometimes it even causes them—as when we are called to suffer on account of religion, especially in times of persecution. But we need not look for "some great thing" to bring the text into conformity with daily experience. No sufferings are small that have power to affect the mind. The strife of tongues, the petty persecutions of home, the long continuance of some chronic disease, the anxiety connected with our occupation, may be doing for us what greater trials did for the martyrs. We may be sufferers in the intensity of emotion, even when the instruments of suffering may not be the prison and the stake. The gospel, then, does not imply immunity from suffering. And this fact teaches that suffering to the believer is—1. Good and not evil—like medicine, which may be nauseous to the taste but healing in its effects. 2. Best when least deserved. "I could have borne it had I merited it," is the world's word. God's Word says, "If the will of God be so, it is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." To do wrong is a greater evil than to suffer wrong. 3. Confined to "this present time." II. THE COMPARISON WITH FUTURE GLORY. "I reckon"—as if it were a calm and deliberate mental process. If we allow our feelings to predominate we shall allow our experience of pain to prevail over the revelations of faith. The glory is yet future—it is not yet felt—whilst the suffering is felt. We need to bring into the comparison, in order to feel alleviation, those vast objects in the presence of which all temporal sorrow dwindles. We might compare, *e.g.*, our own sufferings—1. With the far severer sufferings of many of our fellow-Christians who are as dear to God as we are. 2. With our deserts and our deep sense of the evil of sin. 3. With our mercies and alleviations, and be ashamed to think of our ingratitude in permitting one sorrow to blind us to a thousand joys. 4. With the bitter sufferings which our Lord endured, and think of the double honour which is given us on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but to suffer for His sake. 5. But the apostle brings before us the glory that shall be revealed in us, as if he would compare the poor accommodation of the roadside inn where the traveller passes the night, with the enduring blessedness of the home. One day in heaven will repay all the sufferings of earth. (*P. Strutt.*) *Present sufferings and future glory*:—I. COUNTERBALANCING TEMPORAL THINGS WITH ETERNAL, IS THE WAY TO CLEAR OUR MISTAKES, OR PREVENT THE DELUSIONS OF THE FLESH. The apostle observeth this method here and elsewhere (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18). This may be done in four ways. Comparing—1. Temporal good things with eternal good things, that we may draw off our hearts from the one to the other, and so check the delights of sense (Heb. x. 34; Psa. xvi. 11; John v. 44). 2. Temporal bad things with eternal bad things; so to defeat the terrors of sense. All the sufferings of the world are but the scratch of a pin to that tribulation that abideth for every soul that doth evil (Luke xii. 4, 5). 3. Temporal good for eternal evil (Heb. xi. 25). 4. Temporal bad things, with eternal good things (2 Cor. iv. 17). (1) Our sufferings come from men, but our glory from God; now as the agent is, so is the effect; man afflicts as a finite creature, but God rewards as an infinite being; man showeth himself in his wrath, and God in His love (Isa. li. 12). (2) Our sufferings are earthly, but our glory is heavenly. As the place is, so is the estate; here both the good and

evil is partial, but there both are complete. Here we have the earnest, there the whole bargain; here a taste, there a full feast. (3) Our sufferings are but short, but our glory eternal (1 Pet. i. 6, v. 10). (4) As they are short, so they are light (2 Cor. iv. 17). (5) The sufferings are in our mortal bodies, but the glory is both in soul and body. (6) Sufferings do mostly deprive us of those things which are without a man; but this is a glory which shall be revealed in us. (7) Our sufferings dishonour us in the sight of the world, but this glory maketh us amiable in the sight of God. (8) The order is to be considered. As to the wicked, God will turn their glory into shame; so as to the godly, He will turn their shame into glory (John xvi. 20). II. THE COMPARISON, THOUGH IT BE RIGHTLY WEIGHED, WILL HAVE NO EFFICACY UNLESS WE HAVE FAITH, or a deep sense of the world to come. It is easy to show how much eternal things exceed temporal; but this taketh no hold of the heart, till there be a firm belief of the glory reserved for God's people (Heb. xi. 1; 2 Pet. i. 9). III. THIS FAITH MUST BE OFTEN EXERCISED BY SERIOUS MEDITATIONS. For the greatest truths work not, if we do not think of them. Faith showeth us a truth, but consideration is the means to improve it (Luke xiv. 28-30). IV. There is, besides, NEED OF THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Sense is too strong for reason without faith; and faith cannot do its office without the Spirit. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Suffering and glory to be revealed in the good:*—First, of the subject or antecedent: "The sufferings of this present time." By sufferings here we are to understand the sufferings of the servants of God more especially. First, to look upon it in the first reference, of the time in order to suffering; and so, I say, there is this in it, that the present time it is a time of affliction. Where we must first of all explain what is here meant by this present time. First, the state of this world it is expressed by the time or season, ὁ χωρίς. And so, indeed, it is. It is a time of great opportunity, which God does afford unto us. Those that will be saved hereafter, they must be sanctified now. And therefore accordingly does it concern us to mind this time, and to be sure to be good husbands of it; not to strive or squander it away we care not how, but to have a special regard hereunto. That is the first term of emphasis, the time, or season. The second is, that it is called the present time, which is to be taken in an exclusive sense, as that which shall not be hereafter. It is present, and it is present but for a while. It has a disparagement of transitoriness upon it. The second is of suffering in order to the time. And so there is this in it, that affliction it is only for a season. The suffering of this present time, that is, as much as this moment any suffering; this suffering, which is but of short continuance. Thus we shall find the Scripture to express it (2 Cor. iv. 17; Heb. x. 37; 1 Pet. i. 6, v. 10). These and the like are the expressions whereby the shortness of affliction is set forth unto us. This it serves, first, to put a difference betwixt the children of God and other men. As for wicked and ungodly persons, their sufferings are not only for time present, but as well for time to come, and for that especially. Therefore, secondly, it should keep up their hearts from fainting and sinking under them. The second is the predicate, or consequent, in these words, "Are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Wherein we have the state of God's people in the world to come set forth under a threefold notion or description. First, from the nature of it; and secondly, from the order of it; and thirdly, from the degree of it. First, here is a description of the future state of the children of God, from the nature of it; and that is of glory to be revealed in them. First, for the matter of it, it is glory. He does not only say it is rest, as He does in another place (2 Thess. i. 7). Heaven it does not only consist in the removal of former evils, but in the addition of further comforts. And mark here what this comfort is, for the condition and quality of it, while it is expressed by glory; wherein the Spirit of God seems to labour to satisfy us and to uphold us against the scorn and reproach of affliction. If here now it shall be further demanded what this glory we now speak of is, and wherein it consists. First, in the glorious qualifications which both soul and body together shall be endued withal. The body raised up to the excellencies and perfections of a spirit—a spiritual body—and the soul endued with a great measure of knowledge in all particulars. Secondly, in the glorious company and society which we shall there partake of. Thirdly, in the glorious actions and performances which we shall then be employed in: in sitting upon thrones, judging the world, even angels themselves. And finally, in an universal freedom from whatsoever might cause any annoyance. Secondly, we may here take notice of the dispensation, as it is said to be such as shall be revealed in us. While it is said that it shall be revealed,

there are two things implied in this expression. First, its present secrecy. It shall be revealed; therefore as yet it is hid, and so it is. That glory which a Christian shall one day partake of in heaven it is for the present concealed (1 John iii. 2). The second is the future discovery, or manifestation, which is here expressed. It is the discovery of it only which is future and has yet to come. It is already in being, so far forth as it is prepared for us, as the Scripture assures us. This glory, which for the present is hid, it shall hereafter be revealed both to the children of God and other men. First, it shall be revealed to God's children for their comfort and greater reward. God will now at last make them amends for all their long expectations and dependencies upon Him. Secondly, to wicked men it shall be revealed also for their shame and confusion. There is one word more which is here considerable of us, and that is the subject of this glory—ourselves. It is not only to us, but in us. Glory may be revealed to a man, which himself has no interest in. But the glory of heaven it is such as shall be revealed in us, that is, we shall partake of this glory. This it holds a proportion to our capacity and reception of grace. Look as the children of God. The second is taken from the order of it, or method in which it is dispensed, and that is, in succession to affliction. God's children, in regard of that state which happens unto them, have their best still at last. And this it goes before that. Look as it was with Christ Himself, even so it is also with the members of Christ. For Christ Himself—we know how it was with Him—He suffered before He reigned. The harvest is after the seed-time. This is matter of great encouragement and consolation to all true believers in the saddest condition that befalls them. It may be that for the present they may lie under very grievous afflictions. Well, but here is that which may satisfy them: that there is the greater comfort behind, that waits upon them. The third is the measure or degree of it; and that is, glory transcendent to affliction. Present suffering is incomparable to future happiness. First, to show you that it is so. There must needs be an infinite excellency and transcendency of glory above suffering upon this account. First, the reason and argument which God uses and takes from glory to persuade His children to suffering. That can by no means be an argument which is not itself a truth; at least such an argument as the God of truth shall vouchsafe to use. Indeed Satan he many times offers those things for encouragements which have no substance or reality in them. But the Lord He does not do so. He will make good every argument which He presses for the doing of any duty. Secondly, as this may be cleared from God's own arguments and reasonings, so also from the saints' apprehensions and improvements of those arguments. Thirdly, this may be also evinced unto us, even from the principles of superstition itself. We may see what future glory is, in regard of present sufferings, from the voluntary sufferings which many people lay upon themselves. Fourthly, the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the beginnings of glory here in this present life, these are an evidence hereof unto us. Now, further, secondly, we are to consider wherein this disparity and eminency and transcendency does mainly consist, which we may take notice of according to these following explications of it. First, in weight; secondly, in number; and thirdly, in duration. Now the second is the apostle's judgment, or determination about it, in this word, I reckon, or make account. The word in the Greek signifies properly to reason, or cast up accounts. And so it is a metaphor either taken from logic or from arithmetic. If we take it from logic, so it is a drawing of the conclusion from the premises; if we take it from arithmetic, so it is by casting up the account to find out the true total sum. First, take it from logic; I reckon, that is, I conclude; so we find the word used in other places, as in Rom. iii. 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith," &c. It is the same word which is here in the text. And so there is this in it, that a good Christian has the best and perfectest reason. And therefore let all proud wits stoop and veil to this. But, secondly, it may be a metaphor taken from arithmetic; I reckon, that is, I make account. That the receipts do exceed the expenses; the present suffering it comes short of the future glory by infinite degrees. That a Christian is the best accountant. Especially he is so in this point of religion, as to the preferring of glory to suffering. St. Paul had a very great advantage of many others in this particular. First, he had skill; he had a wit and understanding for this purpose. Every one has not the art of arithmetic, especially of this spiritual arithmetic. Secondly, he had experience. He had the trial of both estates, and so was best able to judge of both (2 Cor. xi. 23, xii. 4). Thirdly, he had the advantage also of practice. The expedite casting up of accounts it is a matter of use, and the facility is

contracted by custom. Now St. Paul he had this also, he was used hereunto, and he had done it often again and again. As a man that will be sure of an account, he goes over it the second time, and the third, and if it still proves the same, then he determines it and sets it down for certain. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Present sufferings and future glory* :—In Heb. xi. 25, 26, there is a similar course of reasoning. See how he loads the scales. On the world's side, "pleasures" and "treasures"; on Christ's side, "reproaches" and "afflictions." But with the former he throws in "for a season"; with the latter he casts in "with the people of God"; and in a moment the world kicks the beam. I. THE PRINCIPLE WHICH GUIDED THE APOSTLE TO HIS CONCLUSION IS TO BRING ETERNITY INTO EVERY CALCULATION, and to judge of everything as it affects our eternity. Everything has in it an eternity of consequence. There is not a pain, nor a pleasure, a word, nor a thought, which, either directly or indirectly, does not reach out for ever and ever. Now, to an immortal being, the rule and standard of measurement must be eternity. Ask the man on the eve to "depart, and be with Christ," what he thinks of the affairs of this present life? and he will answer in the spirit of my text. II. THE EXACT POINT OF THE COMPARISON AS IT STOOD IN THE APOSTLE'S MIND. It would have been quite natural to have spoken of "the glory that should be shown *to* us," as of the object which we are all reaching to in heaven; but it was a far higher range of thought when it dwelt on "the glory that should be shown in heaven *in* us." For what is that "glory" which is to make heaven? Unquestionably the same to which David looked (Psa. xvii. 15). Perfect reflection of the brightness of God in our person—of the judgment of God in our intellect—of the love of God in our affections—of the will of God in our motives—of the unity of God in the harmony of our whole being. Everything is "glorious" as it respects or admits Deity. Now every "suffering" here, of body or of mind, has reference to, and affects that reflection of "glory." We Christians are passing through the processes which are essential to our final condition; the school-time, which is preparatory to maturity, or, the furnace, melting the material, making it capable of receiving the impression of its influence. And, if we once admit that, then we hold a chain of reasoning which justifies, nay, reproves, nay, rejoices in every sorrow; and establishes a proportion between the degree of "the sufferings," and the degree of "the glory." The height of the glory depends upon the attainment of the grace; and the attainment of the grace is according to the elevation of the faith; and the degree of the faith is in proportion to its exercise; and the exercise lays among afflictions. And surely the thought of consummation ought to be sufficient to swallow up all the pain of this present world. What, if the body "groans, being burdened," when it is all "but for a moment," and eternity will be spent in rapturous ministrations. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The important calculation* :—I. There can be no comparison between the sufferings of the present time, and the consummated glory of the heavenly world, IN RESPECT OF NATURE. Without some resemblance of nature, comparison cannot be instituted at all. We may compare the sun with the moon, or with a star, or even with the flame of a candle; because, however much smaller, these are all luminous objects. But we cannot very well compare the sun to a tree or to a reptile, because of the dissimilarity of nature. So, also, we may institute a comparison, however remote, between the ocean and a lake, or river, or fountain, because water is essential in all; but there cannot well be a comparison between the ocean and a quadruped or a flower. So, as there is no sameness of nature in sufferings and glory, they cannot be compared, unless to point out their dissimilarity be comparison. II. There can be no comparison between present sufferings and future glory, IN RESPECT OF ATTENDANT CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. One of the circumstances frequently attendant on the sufferings of this life is solitude. 2. It is another circumstance attendant on suffering, that we cannot always see the good which is designed. 3. It may be mentioned as a further circumstance attendant on suffering, that the causes of grief are seldom single. It has grown into a proverb—Misfortunes come in troops! 4. Let us now reflect, that in the time of that "glory which shall be revealed in us," this array of sorrow will be for ever passed away! Instead of neglect and solitude, will be the banquet with "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven"; "the innumerable company of angels—the general assembly and church of the first-born—the spirits of just men made perfect"; and more than all, the beatific vision of the immortal God! Instead of the doubt and obscurity of this mortal state, will be the bright result of things; the visible demonstration how these light and momentary afflictions work out "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Instead of the thousand forms of human woe which crowd the span of life with diversified

sorrow, there will be consummated happiness; every form of pleasure which holy and exalted souls can take in. III. It is an unworthy comparison between the sufferings of the present life and the glory of the life to come, IN REFERENCE TO DEGREE. It is a fact in the constitution of man's present being, that he cannot endure suffering of any kind beyond a given limit. If pushed beyond that limit, suffering relieves itself. Swooning, and even death itself comes in, to the relief of those whose burden of woe is too great to be borne! Nor should it be forgotten, that in our present being we can no more bear the excess of joy than that of grief. But in the glory which shall be revealed in us, the powers of man shall be, beyond all our present conception, exalted and enlarged. IV. There can be no comparison between the sufferings of the present life and the consummated glory of the heavenly world, IN RESPECT OF DURATION. Time may be compared with time, and one finite thing with another thing which is finite; but time cannot be compared with eternity, a thing which is finite with one that is infinite. The sufferings of this present time will have an end. Were every hour of every day crowded with agony, we know the last hour will soon arrive, and the sorrows of earth be no more! But the glory to be revealed in us has no end! The crown of life never fades: the fountains of pure delight never cease to flow. After this illustration of the apostle's doctrine, we are justified in using it to the following purposes—1. As a most urgent reason, why we should take care that in all our sorrows we suffer as Christians. 2. The apostle's doctrine is certainly a lesson of patience and submission, under those afflictions it may please Almighty God to permit to come upon us. 3. It will not be possible to give full credit to the apostle's doctrine, and to lay it seriously to heart, without feeling it a call to live in a constant reference to other and brighter worlds. (*J. Bromley.*) *Present sufferings contrasted with future glory*:—1. It is a saying as ancient as the oldest book in the Bible that "man is born to trouble." And Christians, while they are exposed to various afflictions "common to man," have trials, often pungent and severe, peculiar to themselves. But Christians have, also, consolations peculiar to themselves, and proportioned to their sorrows. 2. In the text the apostle represents himself as having instituted a comparison between "the sufferings of this present time," and "the glory that shall be revealed," with his eye on their respective magnitudes; with the result that "the sufferings are not worthy to be regarded, in comparison with the glory." 3. There are two circumstances which confirm and commend the apostle's authority on this subject—(1) The large experience he had received of present afflictions (2 Cor. xi.). We are accustomed to attach weight to the opinions of those who have had much experience in the things of which they speak. Yet, with his enlarged experience, Paul declares that the present sufferings of Christians are "not worthy to be compared with" their future glory. What are our sufferings in comparison with his? If, then, those greater afflictions, much more our smaller trials, vanish in such a contrast. (2) The apostle has been distinguished, perhaps above all other men, by an anticipated experience of the glory of the future state (2 Cor. xii. 1–4). And, looking at both worlds with this connected and enlarged experience, he pronounces the judgment stated in the text. 4. Observe, also, the force of "the glory that shall be revealed." The same emphatic expression is used by Peter, in apparent allusion to the words before us (1 Pet. iv. 1). A small and dim reflection of that glory is all that is at present conveyed by Divine revelation; like the glimmering of those distant suns that irradiate infinite space; an infantine perception proportioned to our infantine faculties. It is a glory that must be revealed; that can be discerned only by its own splendour. In looking at the comparison, therefore, we must take into consideration the disadvantages arising from the one side being matter of experience and clearly discernible, while the other side is matter of faith, and placed beyond the power of human conception. The things that are temporal are seen; the sufferings are present: but the things that are eternal are not seen; the glory is to be revealed. 5. There are, however, certain alleviating circumstances connected with our present sufferings, which render them unworthy to sustain a comparison with that contrasted glory which is free from all deductions. I. THEY SELDOM PROCEED FROM THE HIGHEST SOURCE OF SUFFERING, and hence they are never sufferings of the severest nature. The sufferings of a good man cannot arise from the horrors of a guilty conscience that sees nothing in futurity but an angry God and eternal woe! We can measure our strength in the contemplation of temporal calamities, but not in the prospect of eternal ruin. The Christian, whatever his sufferings, may have peace in his conscience, and their edge is effectually taken off in his experience. They are thus rendered very imperfect. But the future glory is of a nature to fill the soul, to satisfy its highest conceptions, its largest

capacities of good. II. THEY ARE SUBJECT TO INTERRUPTIONS AND INTERVALS OF REPOSE. The storms of adversity do not prevail through the whole period of the most afflicted life; they are relieved by intervals of calm and sunshine (Psalm cxxv.). It is because our sufferings are thus interrupted that they become the more conspicuous. Health, for example, is the ordinary state of our being; sickness is an interruption of that state; hence we dwell on a few days or even hours of pain, while we let years of ease and vigour pass unnoticed. But in the heavenly world there is no suspension of good, no intrusion of distress. There will prevail an unbroken continuity of bliss. Who, then, would compare the occasional sufferings of this present time with the enjoyment of undisturbed felicity? III. THEY ARE ATTENDED BY MANY ALLEVIATING CIRCUMSTANCES. None touch us at once in all points and put an end to every enjoyment. God attempers His chastisements to our weakness; and, in general, so mingles goodness with severity, as even, amidst our sorrows, to call forth our thanksgivings. If our health and ease is impaired we are often attended by kind friends, and we have all the assistance which the physician's art can afford, and, for the support of our hearts, the rich promises of Scripture, and the influences of the Divine Comforter. But in the future state of glory there is no admixture of suffering; it is a state of pure fruition; a scene of unimpaired beatitude. With the perfect nature of that glory, the very imperfect nature of our present sufferings, as modified by many alleviating circumstances, renders them not worthy to be compared. IV. EVEN WHEN WE MAY BE REDUCED TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DISTRESS, STILL WE RETAIN HOPE, which operates with a resisting force against the assaults of adversity. And what a source of joy does this principle open to the Christian! (ver. 24; Heb. xi. 1). But in the happiness of heaven there exists no disturbing fear to correspond with the hope that allays the sufferings of time. Once admitted to that bright world, we shall look back on "the sufferings of this present time," as on the faint recollection of a vision of the night: they will only serve to enhance our beatitude, to swell our song of praise! V. Present sufferings ARE PROPORTIONED TO OUR PRESENT POWERS OF ENDURING; but the glories of the future world, to another state of faculties, a very different order of capacities. At the resurrection there will take place a great, an inconceivable enlargement of our energies in mind and body, our capacities of action and enjoyment (1 Cor. xv.). The body will be "raised in power," like that of angels who "excel in strength." The eye will be strengthened to behold those beams of Divine effulgence which, were they to be manifested to us now, would blind us with their blaze. The ear will be fitted to receive, the voice to respond, those eternal hallelujahs! Every cloud will be dispelled from the mind, every imperfection of its powers removed. What are our limited sufferings, proportioned as they are to our present limited powers, placed in comparison with that ineffable glory, to which powers of a different order are adapted? VI. And note THE IMMEASURABLE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE DURATION OF TEMPORAL AFFLICTIONS AND THE DURATION OF CELESTIAL GLORY. If they extended through the whole period of life, and that period were protracted to antediluvian longevity, still they would be lost in less than a moment, in comparison with eternal glories: weighed against that "exceeding weight," these light afflictions would appear as the almost invisible motes of the sunbeam. Conclusion: 1. Let Christians derive support and encouragement under their various afflictions. When we are ready to be cast down by some pressing burden, let us balance it against an "eternal weight of glory." 2. Let others, who may not as yet have turned their attention to eternal realities, be prevailed upon no longer to neglect the great salvation. Who would hesitate between a few years of doubtful enjoyment, invaded by sufferings "common to man," and inconceivable happiness prolonged and progressive through infinite duration? (*Robert Hall, M.A.*) *Present suffering and future glory in contrast*:—1. "Present time" may mean the sufferings of any one at any time, or of any one during his whole life, or of all persons during their life; or, still again, of all persons consolidated in their experience of one person. 2. "Glory" is splendour, magnificence. Then, as according to the text, suffering is not to be compared with the glory. They must be placed in contrast, as to their—I. ORIGIN—the one from sin, the other from God. II. NATURE. All suffering is mixed; glory is unmixed. III. REALISATION. Suffering comprehensible; glory incomprehensible. IV. DURATION. Suffering ends; glory never—it is everlasting. To be like Christ; to be with Christ; to be equal heirs with Christ—this is glory. And yet we cannot travel to the end of such infinite glory. Is there not enough in this view of our text to inspire the Christian with zeal and devotion, and to send the sinner weeping to the Cross? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Present sufferings not to be*

compared with future glory:—I. WHAT ARE THE SUFFERINGS HERE INTENDED. 1. Those of "this present time" in the present disordered and fallen state of things. While man was a stranger to sin, he was also a stranger to suffering. But when sin found an entrance it made an opening for suffering. How various are the kinds and degrees of suffering, and how many are the quarters from whence it arises! What faculty of mind, what sense or member of body, what possession, connection, or enjoyment in life, may not become a source of sorrow? We may suffer through fires, inundations, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, inclement seasons. And what is more dreadful than any of them, we may see fields of battle covered with the dead, and resounding with the groans of the dying. Behold the widow, orphan, prisoner, slave. We may "return and consider all the oppressions done under the sun" (Eccles. iv. 1, 2), all introduced by sin, that pregnant womb. 2. Now, even in these general sufferings the people of God have more or less their share. But, besides these, they have sufferings peculiar to themselves. They mourn in Zion, sorrow for sins, their own or those of others: they "deny themselves," and "take up their cross," "crucify the flesh," are "reproached for the name of Christ," and, in various ways, are made partakers of Christ's sufferings. 3. But the apostle spoke more particularly of the Church in that age, when the sufferings of its members were peculiarly aggravated (2 Cor. iv. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 9–13; 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5; Rom. viii. 35; Heb. x. 32–34, xi. 36–38). II. WHAT IS THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED. This cannot be at present fully comprehended (1 John iii. 2). It implies, however—1. A perfect state of soul, gloriously enlightened (1 Cor. xiii. 12), glorious in holiness (1 John iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 4), in happiness (Rev. xxi. 3–6; xxii. 1–5), in authority, power, and dominion (Luke xxii. 28–30; James i. 12; Rev. i. 6, iii. 21). 2. A perfect and glorious state of body (Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 20, 43, 49, 51; Eph. i. 19, 20; Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2). This is justly termed "the manifestation of the sons of God" (ver. 19), and "the adoption" (vers. 23, 29). 3. The being placed in a world of glory, which will far exceed this world. 4. The being admitted into glorious society, even that of patriarchs and prophets, evangelists and apostles, saints and angels. 5. The having free, constant, uninterrupted communion with the Father of glory through the Lord of glory, and by the glorious Spirit. III. How IT APPEARS THAT THE SUFFERINGS ARE NOT TO BE COMPARED TO THE GLORY. Compare —1. The subjects of the suffering and of the glory. Our powers of body and mind are limited. Any great weight of affliction soon crushes the frail body, and causes it to seek repose in death. The narrow capacity of the mind, likewise, cannot admit at once a very large measure of trouble of any kind; one sorrow is wont to displace another. 2. But the glory to be revealed in us will be the glory of an angel. Our vessels will then be wonderfully enlarged, and rendered capable of containing a large measure of felicity and glory. 3. Their nature and design. (1) The sufferings are not designed to be a proper punishment of sin. God only corrects that He may reform and amend. (2) The glory, however, will be a reward proper for an infinite Being to bestow on those whom He acknowledges to be His children (chap. ix. 23; Heb. xi. 16). 4. The degree of the one and the other. The sufferings of the present time, however great, are not without any mixture of consolation. But the glory to be revealed will be pure glory and felicity, unmixed with the least alloy of sorrow. 5. The constancy of the one and the other. The sufferings of the present life are seldom, if ever, incessant, but the glory will be incessant, without change, unless for the better. 6. Their duration. The sufferings of the present time are the sufferings of a creature of a day (1 Cor. vii. 29–31). But the glory is that of an immortal being; a being that can die no more either in soul or body. IV. IN WHOM THIS GLORY WILL BE REVEALED; OR WHO HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT IT? 1. Not in mankind in general, though all be redeemed with the blood of Christ. For a man may "frustrate the grace of God" (Gal. ii. 21). 2. Not in all that profess Christianity. For a man may "profess to know God, and by works deny Him." 3. Not in all that are outwardly unblameable. For a man may "have a name to live and be dead." 4. But in all that so believe the gospel as to find it "the power of God unto salvation." (*J. Benson.*)

The higher heroism—suffering and glory:—There was an ancient sect who held that the highest virtue was to triumph over pain. The Stoics aimed high; but the road they took was paved with crushed desires, with petrified affections, and strewn with the ashes of distinguished loves. But Christianity does not save us by rendering us incapable of sorrow, but through sorrow, it leads us into the joy of God. Note—I. THE RECKONING. 1. It is a reckoning, not a full realisation. The apostle does not say, "I know," for he had not drained the cup of earthly sorrow, and had but tasted the cup of heavenly joy. But neither does he say, "I think or conjecture," for

although he knew not the whole, he knew a good deal of both. What he does say lies between the two. "I reckon" is the language of faith, which accepts its present as the sure ground of a larger experience. 2. It is a reckoning about "present" suffering. It was then a time of persecution; but the truth of our text is not to be confined to such a time. Are we not apt to exaggerate the sufferings of a time of open persecution, as compared with calmer times? Do we not pass people every day who are suffering more for the sake of principle than ever martyr did? Their death is no less a martyrdom because it is a slow death. The Christian suffers both as a man and a Christian. He does not escape through faith the common lot. And besides, the spiritual nature has sufferings peculiar to itself. It begins in suffering. We have to pass Sinai, and see the terrors of the Lord. There is the struggle of conscience, with sin and unbelief, and the pangs of the new birth. Sanctification is but the deepening and broadening of our conversion, and it is carried on through suffering. The higher a nature rises, it increases in tenderness and sympathy, and while it has to maintain a conflict with evil, the heart must be the home of many great griefs. 3. It is a reckoning about present suffering in connection with future glory. The mere mention of the two cannot but suggest that the former is unworthy of comparison with the latter. The magnanimity of Paul prevents him from dragging his afflictions into comparison with the glory of God. The memory of past hardships is all but swallowed up in the enthusiasm of hope; and in this he follows his Master, "who, for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame." II. THE GROUND OF THE RECKONING. 1. The grace of God in the heart, since it so reveals God to the soul, so brings down heaven to earth, that the possessor of it can say that his sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in him. 2. This grace is the root both of the sufferings and the glory. If the two things were really opposed, then some comparison might be made; but this is not the case. Suffering is the first-fruit of grace, glory the last. The one is the fruit of grace in time, the other its fruit in eternity. To have the grace of God in the heart is to have a principle of life there that must come into bitterest conflict with evil. Jesus Christ must needs suffer to enter into His glory. As He was, so are we in this world. We have to "fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." Dwelling in the believer Christ has still to meet the temptations of the devil and the contradictions of sinners. 3. The suffering leads to the glory. Suffering is in no sense the purchase of the glory. The sufferings of Christ have both paid the penalty of all sin, and purchased all blessing; and it would not accord with justice that we should have to pay the same penalty over again in our suffering. Certainly, if present suffering could purchase future glory, it would be a great bargain. Willingly might we undertake a pilgrimage to any shrine—gladly might we give our bosom to the knife, if the gates of Paradise would thereby open to us. But, although our suffering is in no sense the foundation or price of the glory, the one, nevertheless, leads to the other—is a condition of, or contribution to the other, as is stated in the preceding verse. The suffering, then, is not to be compared with the glory, as if the one were a deduction from the other; for the one enhances the other. As the light of the precious stone is brought out by cutting; as the veins of the marble are revealed by polishing; as the storms that fight with the young tree rock it into sturdier strength; so the Christian life is strengthened and beautified by suffering. Conclusion: Should any one standing on the threshold of the Christian life hesitate in view of its sufferings; or having put his hand to the plough, be disposed to look back; let him know that he is not fit for the kingdom of heaven. Those difficulties before which he pauses as great obstacles to his setting out on the way to glory are the very way itself. Who can show us a way to glory of any kind that is not paved with suffering? Is the glory the soldier seeks to be had with ease? Is the prize of fortune the merchant seeks to be had with folded arms? Are the ends on which the student is bent achieved by laying his head on a soft pillow and dreaming of them? One is apt to say there is no royal road to the glory of God; but that would be a great mistake. Suffering is the royal road, for by it the King passed into His glory. (*F. Ferguson.*) *Future glory an encouragement under present sufferings*:—When the sailor encounters heavy weather, one thought cheers him—the ship may roll and pitch in the angry sea, the cold spray may drench him, his work may be hard and perilous, but he can look towards the shore; far away over the vessel's bow, far away across the tumbling waves is the shore, the haven where he would be, and for the sake of this, by remembering this, he can bear his present troubles, though the waves of the sea rage horribly. It was this feeling of hope which carried the great heroes and discoverers of old through all their trials.

When Columbus set forth to discover the new world he could bear the hardships and dangers in his way because he looked towards the shore; and at last, when he beheld the broken sea-weed floating past his ship, and the birds wheeling round him, he knew that his purpose was gained, and that the land which he sought to win lay before him. So I bid you to do; when the waves of affliction swell and roll towards you, when strong under-currents of temptation catch you and sweep you along, when you are weary and faint with buffeting the tide of sin, and sorrow, and frailty, look to the shore, look past the sins and the sorrow, past the noise of the whirlpool of life, past the high tide of accumulated trial, and the low water-mark of despondency and despair—look to the shore, there is peace there, there are flowers there, there is rest there remaining for the people of God. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *How the apostle lifts himself above the sufferings of time*:—1. Little souls, superficial minds, reckon it as wisdom to argue away the mass of sufferings, or at least to belittle them, to conceal the dark shadows with rosy veils, and to place opposite a longer account of pleasures. But the truth is found in the plaints which are known by all, and which Job expressed (Job vii. 1-3). Our apostle likewise gives full expression to the truth. In the phrases, "earnest expectation" (ver. 19), and "from the bondage of corruption" (ver. 21), he expresses the magnitude of the afflictions, and in the oft-repeated "creature," "whole creation" (ver. 22), is expressed its extent, its generality, which knows of no exception. 2. Neither does he treat the origin superficially. It was not so from the beginning, neither was there necessity that it should be so, "not willingly" (ver. 20). The creature was made subject to vanity. It is not a blind, puzzling game of chance concerning which it would be best not to investigate; but the apostle knows and speaks boldly that this woe has a reasonable, just, and Divine cause, "by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope," *i.e.*, on account of human sin, because the holy God desired to mark sin with the unmistakable mark of misery and enmity to God. 3. But the apostle likewise knows that from the beginning—*i.e.*, in the will of God—this is no unchangeable and eternal relation or condition ("in hope," ver. 20). Glory, which excludes every woe, is the certain destiny of the Christian, so that the sorrowful condition of the present world appears to him as a prophecy of this destiny. (Compare the "for" in ver. 19). Adoption (ver. 23), has undoubtedly and completely taken place (ver. 19, "manifestation of the sons of God"). Enjoyment of that which is promised in the testament, afterward the revealed and distributed inheritance (ver. 17). Separation from every temporal fetter, also of the mortal body; hence glorious freedom (ver. 21, and "redemption of the body," ver. 23), is the destiny of those who belong to Christ ("in us," ver. 18, is explained by ver. 14); in which destiny all creation shall share (ver. 22). This clear aim in view, guaranteed by the "possession of the first fruits of the Spirit" (ver. 23), causes the present sufferings to be only of momentary consequence (ver. 18); the Christian longs for heaven (ver. 23), and this homesickness is termed the blessedness of hope (ver. 24). (*Prof. Cosack.*) *The prospect of future glory*:—1. This was the reckoning of one who could not mistake—for the text is not merely the opinion of the apostle, but as the declaration of God Himself, for the eternal comfort of His Church. 2. And this leads us to remember how very little is said in Scripture of the glories of the world to come. It seems solemnly determined by our Master that His Church shall walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. xii. 4). Those who die come not back again. Doubtless they sometimes wish it (Luke xvi. 27-30), but it is a vain wish. He tells us, instead, much about the sufferings and trials which await us in this life. There is a great deal said about a cross: much tribulation, the need of purity of heart, and self-denial. These are not the things by which the world induces us to love and serve it. The world keeps pain in the background, and talks of pleasure. Christ keeps pleasure in the background, and talks of pain. And it is not hard to guess why. It is because the world has so little pleasure to offer as a bribe, that it had need to talk much about it; whereas the Lord of glory has so huge an amount of blessedness in store for those who love Him that if He were to reveal the greatness thereof faith would be swallowed up in present certainty and hope in present enjoyment. 3. And yet the solemn silence of Scripture concerning heaven is now and then all but broken. The lips are sometimes opened, as it were, to speak; and, though closed again immediately, enough has escaped to fill the soul with wonder and to make the spirit attentive. The apostle in the text does not describe heaven; but he tells us that something wonderful might be told. Something of the same kind is found in 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, and 1 Cor. ii. 9. We may think as we will, and what we will; and we shall still be far, far behind! To see patriarchs, prophets, apostles, the early

Churches, will be much, to be sure; yet will it be as nothing compared to what shall be! So again (and oh, the unspeakably higher privilege!)—so again, the beholding of the face of the Son of Man. Or again, to be shown the providences which watched over our lives; to recognise the hand of Love in every blow which overtook us, every disappointment which afflicted us; yea, to be restored, and that eternally, to everything we had ever loved and lost—these things and more, told over ten thousand times, convey but a feeble picture, a faint image of the blessedness of Heaven! To conclude. The use of these declarations is clearly this—to reconcile good men to present sorrow. There is a bright prospect beyond. (*Dean Burgon.*) *Confident expectation of a perfect kingdom of God:*—I know the obstacles, but I know as well the power behind! I do not see success as yet, but I know that it is coming. So I do not see the cathedral as yet, when I go into the confused quarry-yard and see there the half-wrought stones, the clumsy blocks that are by and by to be decorated capitals. But when at last they are finished in form and brought together, the mighty building rises in the air, an ever-during psalm in rock. I do not see the picture yet, when I look upon the palette with its blotches and stains and lumps of colour. By and by, when the skilful brush of the painter has distributed those colours, I see the radiant beauty of the Madonna, the pathos of the Magdalene; I see the beauty of the landscape spread out upon the canvas, with meadow and hill and winding stream, and the splendours of the sunset crowning the whole. I do not see yet the perfect kingdom of God upon earth, but I see the colours which are to blend in it. I see the already half-chiselled rock out of which it shall be wrought; and I am not going to despond now, when so much already has been accomplished. (*R. S. Storrs.*)

Vers. 19-23. **For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.**—*The expectation of the creature:*—The Greek for "expectation" is one of those admirable words which that language easily forms. It is composed of three elements: *κάρα*, the head; *δοκέω, δοκάω, δοκέω*, to wait for, espy; and *ἀπό*, from, from afar; so "to wait with the head raised and the eye fixed on that point of the horizon from which the expected object is to come." What a plastic representation! An artist might make a statue of hope out of this term. The verb "longeth for" is not less remarkable; it is composed of the simple verb *δέχομαι*, to receive, and *ἐκ*, out of the hands of, *απο*, from, from afar; so "to receive something from the hands of One who extends it to you from afar." The substantive and the verb together vividly describe the attitude of the suffering creation, which in its entirety turns, as it were, an impatient look to the expected future. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The expectation of the creature:*—There is a sort of vague, undefinable impression, we think, upon all spirits, of some great evolution of the present system under which we live—some looking towards, as well as longing after immortality—some mysterious but yet powerful sense within every heart of the present as a state of confinement and thraldom; and that yet a day of light and largeness and liberty is coming. We cannot imagine of unbelievers that they have any very precise or perhaps confident anticipation on the subject any more than the world at large had of the advent of our Messiah—though a very general expectation was abroad of the approaching arrival of some great personage upon earth. And, in like manner, there is abroad even now the dim and the distant vision of another advent, of a brighter period that is now obscurely seen or guessed at through the gloom by which humanity is encompassed—a kind of floating anticipation, suggested perhaps by the experimental feeling that there is now the straitness of an oppressed and limited condition; and that we are still among the toils, and the difficulties, and the struggles of an embryo state of existence. It is altogether worthy of remark, and illustrative of our text, that, in like manner as through the various countries of the world, there is a very wide impression of a primeval condition of virtue and blessedness from which we have fallen, so there seems a very wide expectation of the species being at length restored to the same health and harmony and loveliness as before. The vision of a golden age at some remote period of antiquity is not unaccompanied with the vision of a yet splendid and general revival of all things. Even apart from revelation, there floats before the world's eye the brilliant perspective of this earth being at length covered with a righteous and regenerated family. This is a topic on which even philosophy has its fascinating dreams; and there are philanthropists in our day who disown Christianity, yet are urged forward to enterprise by the power and the pleasure of an anticipation so beautiful. They do not think of death.

They only think of the moral and political glories of a renovated world, and of these glories as unfading. It is an immortality after all that they are picturing. While they look on that gospel which brought life and immortality to light as a fable, still they find that the whole capacity of their spirits is not filled unless they can regale them with the prospect of an immortality of their own. Nothing short of this will satisfy them; and whether you look to those who speculate on the perfectibility of mankind, or those who think in economic theories that they are laying the basis on which might be reared the permanent happiness of nations—you see but the creature spurning at the narrowness of its present condition, and waiting in earnest expectancy for the manifestation of the sons of God. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

The longing of the creature for perfection:—First, the creature. This is to be taken not in a limited sense, as sometimes it is taken in other places, for the human reasonable creature—that is, for mankind (Mark xvi. 16)—but in an extended sense. For all these outward and visible things which are in the world besides ourselves—the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them. The whole frame and body of the creation, as the original word carries it here in the text, the creation itself. And so the Syriac and Arabic interpreters translate it "every creature," or the "whole creation." The second thing is, the earnest expectation of the creature waiting. The word which is here translated "earnest expectation," is in the Greek very emphatic, and signifies properly the stretching or putting out of the head with vehement intention, as one that looks out for some special friend, whom he expects and desires should come unto him. According to that which is expressed of the mother of Sisera, waiting for the return of her son (Judg. v. 28): she looked out at the window for him, and cried through the lattice. Now in the third place, by the manifestation of the sons of God, we are to understand the day of Christ's second coming as the proper time and season wherein the sons of God shall be made manifest. We begin. The party expecting: the creature. It is usual with the Spirit of God in Scripture to fasten upon the unreasonable creatures those expressions which do properly belong to reasonable men. As for example Psa. xcvi. 11, xcviii. 7, 8; Hab. ii. 11; Gen. iv. 10; James v. 4. And so here now the creature is to expect and to wait earnestly. That the whole course and frame of the creation is so ordered and disposed of by God, as that it carries in it a vehement desire and longing for the future estate of God's children. There are three things in this passage which are ascribed to the creature, which are accordingly observable of us. There is expectation, desire, and patience. First, I say, it expects or looks for it. This is spoken metaphorically. First, it is in a state of defectiveness, and so looks to be supplied. The creature hath lost very much of that beauty and vigour and strength which it had in its first beginning, and which God at first did bestow upon it. The present imperfection of the creature shows that it waits for such a time as this is, because every defect calls for some kind of supply and making of it up. Secondly, it is in a state of motion, and so looks to be fixed. When we see a man going up and down, and running from one place to another, now in this corner and then in that, and afterwards again in another, and never at rest, we conclude that certainly there is somewhat which he looks after that he has not yet obtained. Even so is it also here with the creatures. Thus we see how the creature is expressed under a great deal of inconstancy; which shows that it hath not yet attained to its consistent condition which it expects to come unto. As the needle in the mariner's compass, which is touched with the loadstone, it is never quiet, but hovers up and down till it be fastened upon the north, which is the place of its proper rest. The second is the creature's longing for the time of this manifestation also, as that which it desires may be. This is also signified in the text, in this earnest expectation, which does not only denote a mere wishing, but an express desire and vehement seeking. When we see the earth sometimes to be dried, we say it thirsts and longs for rain; not that it hath such desires in it, which we ourselves are capable of, but because it is in such a condition as does occasion such desires in us. It earnestly longs for the manifestation of the sons of God in another world. But why or whence does it come to do so? What has the creature to do with that? The dumb and unreasonable creature, with the glorious perfection of the saints? Yes, it is very much concerned in it; and that upon a threefold account. First, by way of sympathy and suitableness of affection to us, as in some sort delighting and rejoicing in the good of God's people; for as the creatures were made for us, so they do in some manner take part with us, and have impressions upon themselves answerable to those things which happen unto us. That the creature hath some sympathy with us in such things as befall us. And amongst

the rest, especially in this—for the perfection and consummation of our happiness. Secondly, and further. Out of respect to itself, for its own consummation likewise. For God in His wisdom and Providence hath so ordered things that the good of His own children shall be the good of everything else. Thirdly, out of respect to the honour and glory of God Himself, which is concerned in it. The third is the creature's tarrying or staying; as that which it is content with till it be. The creature, although for the present under manifold evils, yet notwithstanding is patient under this condition. Though it groans, yet it does not complain; but keeps within its own bounds and limits for all that. All the creatures, they still keep their course; they are not sullen, but do that work which is proper to them. And thus have we seen this passage made good in this particular—in looking, in longing, in staying. Now the use of all to ourselves comes to this: First, as a shame and reproach to all carnal and worldly persons. We see here how far they are inferior and below the very creatures themselves. Those which are below them in regard of creation, yet they are above them in regard of affection. These look and long for the second coming and appearance of Christ, which the others do not. Secondly, this serves to strengthen and confirm the faith of Christians themselves. If the creature doth thus wait for the time of the second coming of Christ, why then certainly such a thing as this there is to be expected and looked for by us, forasmuch as this is put into them by God Himself. And the earth is not only to feed us, but also to teach us; and a gracious and spiritual heart will be careful accordingly to improve it. Thirdly, here is an argument also for patience under present sufferings, in hope of future deliverance. While the creatures are patient in their condition, as making account to be one day freed from it, how much more should we be so in ours, and do that from the principles of piety, which they do only from the instincts of nature? The sum of all comes to this: All the creatures wait for their perfection; and why should not we? No creature does as yet attain its end; why should we seek for happiness here below? The second is the thing expected in these. The manifestation of the sons of God, that is, by taking it passively; the time when as the sons of God shall be manifested. For the better opening of this present point, we must know that the manifestation of God's children is considerable in a threefold distribution. First, as to their persons. They shall be revealed and manifested here; who are so, and who are not. Here in this present world there is a mixture of one with another; of tares and wheat together; but then there shall be a plain separation and distinction of either. God will put a difference betwixt His jewels and other stones. There is a threefold manifestation of God's children again in reference to their persons. First, a manifestation of them to themselves. Secondly, a manifestation of them to one another. Thirdly, to wicked men. Thus shall there be a manifestation of the children of God in their persons, which is the first explication. Secondly, in their actions. They shall be manifested in these likewise. "Every man's work shall be made manifest" (1 Cor. iii. 13). As the Lord knows their works Himself, so He will cause others to know them also. And secondly, it is also an encouragement to us in secret goodness and the present concealment of worth, or questioning of it. And so as for the actions which men do, so also the cause and interest which they own; they shall be manifested here also. There is a double party and side in the world—God's and Satan's. Now it shall one day be manifested who has taken the better part, and owned the juster cause, and been on the strongest side, as Christ will then be sure to manifest and discover all his enemies, and those that would not that He should reign over them. Thirdly and lastly, in their condition. They shall be manifested so also. And that especially as a condition of glory. The consideration of all these things laid together—that there is such a time to come wherein the children of God shall be made manifest, and withal that the creature itself does earnestly hope and wait for this time, when it shall be so indeed; it should have this practical influence upon us, even to raise our hearts and affections to it. It was the commendation given to old Simeon, that he waited for the consolation of Israel. And to Joseph of Arimathea, that he waited for the kingdom of God. Let us take in these directions with us. First, be well settled in our judgments, that there is such a state indeed as this is. For that which we do not believe we cannot desire. Secondly, let us be much in the thoughts and meditations of it. Contemplation, it raises affection. We see how it does so in other things, and how much more then in this? Thirdly, let us get our hearts weaned and taken off from the world and the things of it; so long as we do anything more than ordinary admire earth, we cannot very much desire heaven. The worse in

such a case as this will make us to neglect the better. Fourthly, let us labour to be purged and freed from sin, both as to the guilt of it and also to the power of it. And, lastly, to all the rest and fruitfulness and activity in goodness. Those who are much in arrear, they do not care to come to an account. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The expectancy of creation*:—As we read these words there rises before us a vast, majestic vision, the imagery of a whole universe—fields, trees, rivers, clouds and stars, endless crowds of immortal beings, numberless hosts of creatures without souls—all standing with the head thrust forward, and silently, eagerly, gazing far away for something hoped and longed for, something that is slow, indeed, in coming, but that is sure to come at last. The teaching of the entire passage is—I. THAT ALL CREATION IS IN SOME SENSE FALLEN. 1. Of course only intelligent and responsible man is capable of falling in the sense which involves guilt; and whatever other creatures may suffer, cannot be regarded as the punishment of their sin. But who does not know what suffering man's sin, cruelty, and thoughtlessness, inflict day by day upon dumb animals? And even that conduct which we call *vice* is always the result of some wrong conduct upon man's part. There would be no such thing as a vicious horse if there had not previously been a cruel or injudicious man. 2. But to go into the general question—(1) Think what millions of innocent lives were cut short by the waters of the Deluge, and what hosts of guiltless creatures have yielded up their lives as sacrifices of sin! Now, we know God cares for oxen. Rely upon it, it was a thought to God when almost all the brute creation perished at the Flood. Rely upon it, He did not overlook the suffering of the beasts with whose blood under the law "almost all things were purged." (2) As for the inanimate creation, of course, it cannot suffer consciously. Man can both sin and suffer. The inferior animals can suffer but not sin. And as for the inanimate universe, it can neither sin nor suffer. But it is a mistake to fancy that a thing is perverted from the end contemplated by the Creator only when it knows the fact and suffers from it. The inanimate creation is involved in man's fall, according to its nature. You would almost think that Nature is obliged, by man's sin, unwillingly to do many things which she would not do if she could help it. The atmosphere is constrained to carry words which are false, impure, profane. Surely that beautiful liquid ether was never made for that! Food is constrained to strengthen for sinful deeds. Is it not hard, so to speak, upon the innocent grain, upon the generous grape, that they should be compelled to yield their energy to the arm of the murderer as readily as to the hand that does the deed of mercy? And since the days of the friar, who stumbled upon that combination of materials, separately innocuous, which hides the battlefield with its sulphureous clouds; think how great a share of human ingenuity has been directly given to wresting from Nature that which shall quench or torture human life. Look at a ship of war! What a grand and imposing spectacle it is! But is it not one great proof that man is fallen? Think of the costly material, skill and industry, that have gone to make that—a grand weapon of destruction: and say if the consequences of man's fall do not reach to the oak in the forest, the iron in the mine, the flax in the field, the very air and water! And, not lingering on instances of noble material agencies perverted to evil by man—such, for instance, as the printing-press; think how the whole landscape is often darkened by the brooding cloud of sin. II. NATURE IS WAITING FOR BETTER DAYS. All things are unconsciously looking forward. There is a vague, dumb sense, that surely better things are coming. All conscious things live in an undefined hope. And wherefore? Simply from some vague, general belief that surely evil will one day die, and the reign of good begin! Why does the man who has got more money than he can ever spend, and no one to leave it to, still save as before: why, but from some shadowy looking-forward, which he does not care to define. Why do most men, when they begin any task, feel eager to get through with it, but for that onward bent that is in all "the creature"? And we can discern traces of the same feeling in inferior natures. Why does the poor hack lean to his collar so eagerly, and toil up the steep street overburdened, but from some vague, dull, confused hope that surely all this will end. Goethe has recorded that he could never look on a beautiful summer landscape without feeling as if it were waiting for something, asking for something, which was not there. III. WHAT IS THE END FOR WHICH ALL CREATION IS SO EARNESTLY WAITING? You who feel a constant craving, believe it, it is no earthly end that will satisfy the longing of your nature! Whenever you have attained one end you see another, and cannot be content till you have reached that: and, that reached, you will see before you another still. The poor man

wishes to be rich; the rich man longs for a recognised position in society; the man who has got that thinks how pleased he would be could he obtain a title, fame, nobility. Ah, there is no end of it! Yes, there is more in this than the mere morbid feeling of restless discontent: it is "the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!" That is the only end in the universe that shall absolutely satisfy the great craving which is in the centre of man's nature—that is the only summit on reaching which you will see no farther summit stretching away beyond. What a blessing it is to be told what it is we really need! But the Christian only knows what shall fully satisfy that longing; we know that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever." "Thou madest us for Thyself," said Augustine, "and our souls are restless till they find rest in Thee!" (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *The hopes and aspirations of the new creature*:—I. THE OBJECT OF THE CREATURE'S EARNEST EXPECTATION. 1. Its own "manifestation" in its true character. It is now "the creature" subject to vanity, laden with sorrow and corruption. This creature is to be developed. It does not now appear what it is in reality. Some marks of his destination are upon the Christian: he enjoys some foretastes of his inheritance, but nothing in comparison with the glory that shall be revealed in us. 2. A glorious liberty—in opposition to vanity, corruption, and affliction. 3. Bodily resurrection. II. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CREATURE. 1. It is subject to vanity. "When a thing neither fills that which contains it, nor supports that which leans upon it, nor yields fruit to him that labours in it, it is a vanity." 2. In the bondage of corruption. The phrase chiefly refers to the corruption which must actually take possession of the body in the grave; but it may not inaptly describe the state of Christians themselves in the present world. Though the commanding power of sin is destroyed in conversion, yet its relics exist, and impede the child of God, so that he cannot do the things that he would. 3. This is an unwilling subjection. The desires, affections, and purposes of the renewed nature, all rebel against the yoke of sin, and contend for their perfect freedom. III. THE TEMPER OF MIND WHICH THE CREATURE EXHIBITS IN THE MEANTIME. 1. Earnest expectation. Let the ungodly tremble at the thought of Christ's approach; but to the saints it will be a day of glory, as well as to their Master: to them the consummation of their brightest hopes, to Him the public display of His victories. The proper state of mind, therefore, in which it should be contemplated is that of expectation and desire. We ought so to live that when we shall be summoned to meet Him we may be able to lift up our heads and say, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" 2. This earnest expectation is associated with patient waiting for the event; the principal ground of which is that God Himself has subjected us to the same in hope. A willing acquiescence in His wise arrangements is one of the best proofs of our filial spirit. No doubt it would be far better to wear the crown than to carry the cross; but so long as there is a work for us to perform on earth, and scope is given to glorify God by resignation under toil and suffering, we must be satisfied to endure temptation; knowing that patient continuance in well-doing leads to glory, honour, and immortality. 3. It is impossible that these strong affections of the new creature should be unproductive of practical results. Do you hope to be acknowledged as sons of God *then?* Show us the evidences of your adoption *now*. What traces of your heavenly birth and destination should be visible in your dispositions and lives! Christian patience is not a sluggish grace. It has a work to do, a stewardship to occupy, while it is waiting for the Master's coming. (*D. Katterns.*) *Creation's waiting*:—St. Paul is primarily thinking only of the little Church at Rome, and giving them rules for their duty. And yet, with the mind of a great philosopher—or, rather, with the vision of a great prophet—he is swept beyond the special case before him into the general principle which it involves, and in giving rules to Rome he is led to survey the method of the universe. I. THE APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE. 1. This whole creation is not a dead, but a living thing. Its movement is not the movement of machinery, but of life. Instead of a blind, mechanical process, this man sees a universe with a desire of its own, bringing forth at last, through the pains which we now call the struggle for existence, the state of things we see. Instead of a world-factory grinding out with indifference its tides and storms, its plants and animals, and the emotions and ideals of men, he sees a universe working out with expectancy a divinely appointed end. Thus he simply anticipates the philosophers and poets who have seen in Nature a living and purposeful process, manifesting at each step the presence of one comprehensive will. 2. Having reached its present point, for what does creation now wait? The "revealing of

the sons of God." Without them the universal evolution pauses. The movement of the universe goes its way from the beginning to a certain point under mechanical laws, fit for material things. But at a certain point the elements of evolution become changed. The problem of the universe is no longer to mould and harden a world—it is to unfold and quicken the higher faculties of man; and for this new work of God a new necessity appears—the help of man. God's ends are reached, not by such laws as could create or maintain the world, but through His sons. Up to a certain point, things go toward making man what he is; but at that point man takes these things which have moulded him and shapes them to their higher uses. For this reaction of character on circumstance the whole creation waits. Until this occurs, the process that God would fulfil toward the world is retarded. Here is a vessel eager to reach her port, and God's winds invite her to move on. But not the fairest wind can bring her on her way unless man does his part. The earnest expectation of the vessel waits until the captain spreads her sails; and then, man working with God, the creation which lay dead and lonely on the sea becomes a thing of life and motion. So it is with all the higher movements of God's creation. God may create the best of circumstances, but the whole creation simply groans and labours, like a vessel labouring in a sea, until man spreads her sails to catch God's favouring breeze. The patient expectation of the vessel waits for the manifestation of the captain's will. II. LET US TAKE THIS PRINCIPLE, AND SET IT BY THE SIDE OF SOME OF THE PROBLEMS AND MOVEMENTS OF THE MODERN WORLD. 1. Take the forces of Nature. Here, *e.g.*, is electricity. It is a creation of God. The force was always there, eager to serve the wants of man; but God's purposes through it could only be worked out by the sons of God. Finally, after ages of a patient creation, the inventor thinks God's thoughts after Him, the sons of God are revealed in their relation to Nature, and then the creation moves on into its higher uses, and lights, moves, warms us. And it is awful to consider how many other powers we dwell among without any discernment of their significance and end, while the creation waits for the revealing in its midst of the sons of God. 2. Now turn to the nearer creations—the institutions and affairs of men. Look, *e.g.*, at—(1) The simplest form of human institutions—the life of the family and the home. Here, in this smallest group of human beings, has been the beginning of all social evolution. In the family, civilisation begins. And its beginnings were natural, inevitable, mechanical. The family group became permanent because it was the group fittest to survive. But is this the end of the evolution of the home? No! A new possibility opens before this primitive institution. It becomes the best symbol of the relation of God to us, and of ourselves to Him. Now, what brings the home into these higher stages of its evolution? Nothing but the revealing in it of the sons of God. Walk along any street to-day, with its row of houses. How far has the evolution of each home proceeded? Within one door the sons of God have revealed themselves, and domestic life is moving straight on to be the complete image of the heavenly world. Here, at the very next door, the evolution has been arrested, and the whole creation groans and travails with the pains of a disordered home. The two houses are alike in outward form, but the one is a home and the other a shelter; the one is a school for immortal souls and the other a pen for domestic animals. Turn to your own home with this thought of its higher intention, and you see with a new clearness your place in it, and its place in the world. You have not been thrown into this place by accident. You are the heir through it of the whole history of man. And now the question lies before you whether that history shall proceed or wait. (2) The larger world of human society. There never was a time when so many minds were so busy with thoughts of a healthier and happier social state. Dreamers and agitators, working men and scholars, poor women and prosperous women—all are looking for some golden age, when there shall be a more even distribution of the good things of life. But suppose the fortunes of the rich laid low, and the poverty of the poor turned to a competency; suppose all the mechanical difficulties of such a revolution overcome. Would the evolution of society be complete? Would its new relations work without friction or check? No! We should be at precisely the point where this whole industrial creation would show itself a waiting creation for the revealing of the sons of God. We should be like people who had created the most delicate of engines, and then had only unskilled mechanics to set it at work. People seem to think that if they can only reconstruct the machinery of society, it will run itself. They see that in the lower stages of social evolution machinery does a great deal. They see the State preserving itself by legislation; they see some evils checked and some

gain made by law. But the fact is, that at a certain point the movement of society becomes not mechanical, but moral. It is not a question of controlling men, but of calling forth the best in men; and at that point the movement waits, not for new economic laws or social schemes, but for better souls, for higher impulses, for the revealing of the sons of God. You devise the most ingenious system for making all work for the good of all, but you can perpetuate such a system only by making men love one another. Given a competing race of men, and no device of legislation can abolish competition. Given a regenerated race of men, and a new social state of common life and ownership might be maintained; but one must also say, given a regenerated race and a new social state would seem to be superfluous. III. ITS PERSONAL LESSON AND LAW. Why should any one of us try so hard to make the most of himself? Why not abandon himself to passion or indolence? 1. There are various answers to this question. (1) "Because the higher path is the path of happiness." True. But with the happiness come the conflict and pain; with the new ideals the disappointments; and always there is the pull of animal pleasures dragging one down to other ways of happiness. The search for happiness will not reveal the sons of God. (2) "Because you are here to save your soul." True again. For what is a saved soul? It is a healthy, a developed soul—a soul grown up into the stature of Christ, revealed to itself as a son of God. But, after all, this, as a supreme motive of life, is mere self-interest, mere self-culture. 2. Contrast these personal considerations with the reason which St. Paul lays down, and see the tremendous chasm which lies between it and the desire for happiness, or even for salvation itself. What the apostle says is, "Here is God working out through the long ages His purpose toward the world. He comes to a certain point, and there, by the very necessity of things, His work passes out of the region of natural law and self-acting methods, and has to be done through human beings. Now, suppose any soul fails of its higher capacities and remains stunted and unrevealed: is that merely a personal loss of happiness or of salvation? On the contrary, it is a loss so vast as to make every personal motive shrink into insignificance. It is simply so far the retarding of the perfect and universal work of God." To be sinning, not against one's self, but against the universe; to be a hinderer of God's great ends in the world—that is what gives awfulness to every thought of sin. It is, again, some great factory where the looms go weaving with their leaping shuttles the millions of yards of cloth, and then of a sudden one thread breaks, and the loom stops short in its progress, lest the whole intricate work be marred. And then to turn the matter round, think how this thought affects every desire for good. A man looks at his life, and it is a poor, feeble, insignificant thing. He says to himself, "Of what earthly importance is it that I should struggle thus against the stream of my tendency and taste?" That is the unconscious defence of many a ruined life. For one man who errs by thinking too much of himself, ten fail by not thinking enough of themselves. But now comes the apostle into the midst of this spurious modesty, and says, "Yes, taken by itself your life is certainly a very insignificant affair; but placed in the universe which God has made, your life becomes of infinite importance. For God has chosen to work out His designs, not in spite of you, but through you; and where you fail, He halts. God needs you." It is as though you were a lighthouse-keeper. Can any life be more unpraised or insignificant? Why sit through weary nights to keep your flame alive? Because it is not your light—that is the point. You are not its owner; you are its keeper. The great design of the Power you serve takes you thus out of your insignificance, and while you sit there in the shadow of your lonely tower, ship after ship is looking to you across the sea, and many a man thanks God that, while lights which burn for themselves go out, your light will be surely burning. The earnest expectation of many a storm-tossed sailor waits for the revealing of your friendly gleam. The safety of many a life that passes by you in the dark is trusted from night to night to you. (*Prof. F. G. Peabody.*) *The manifestation of true men the supreme want of the world:*—I. TRUE MEN ARE THE "SONS OF GOD." What constitutes men such? 1. Negatively. (1) Not that they are mere productions of God. All creatures are His productions. (2) Not that they resemble the Divine nature. Man is spiritual, reflective, free, but so are devils. 2. Positively. (1) Moral resemblance; similarity of governing disposition. Love is the ruling element in God. All thus ruled resemble Him, whether men or archangels. (2) Filial devotion. A man may have six male offspring, and not one true son. The grand purpose of the gospel is to give men the disposition of true children. II. These sons of God ARE TO HAVE A GLORIOUS MANIFESTATION ON THIS EARTH. "Waiting for the manifesta-

tion." Glorious—1. In the perfection of their character. The best of God's "sons" on the earth to-day are not perfect. 2. In the vastness of their numbers. These imperfect "sons of God" are comparatively few. But the manifestation will be one of countless multitudes, each perfect. They are the coming men. III. This glorious "manifestation of the sons of God" IS THE SUPREME WANT OF A SUFFERING WORLD. They are the objects of the "earnest expectation" of suffering humanity. What is the great want of the teeming millions to-day? 1. More churches? Some think so, and ecclesiastical edifices are being multiplied. But the people do not want them, and they are half empty almost everywhere. 2. More converts to conventional Christianity? This does not make true men, but formalists and hypocrites. 3. More official preachers? Preaching there should be, but it should be the preaching of the living man, not of the professional pulpiteer. 4. More religious organisations? No; they with their committees and vested interests are drag-chains on the wheels of spiritual independency and true progress. 5. More Bibles? No, there are millions lying unread and uncared for. What the suffering world profoundly longs for is the advent of true men, "sons of God." Such men will be living Bibles, editions of Him who went about doing good. (*David Thomas, D.D.*) *The manifestation of the sons of God*:—I. THE SONS OF GOD ARE NOW HIDDEN. 1. How? (1) As to their persons (1 John iii. 1). It is not exactly known in the winter, when the roots lie in the earth, what will appear in the spring. (2) As to their life (Col. iii. 3). They are hidden not only in point of security, as maintained by an invisible power; but in point of obscurity. Because the spiritual life is hidden under—(*a*) The veil of the natural life; it is a life within a life (Gal. ii. 20). (*b*) The veil of afflictions, outward meanness, and abasement (Heb. xi. 37, 38). (*c*) The veil of reproaches and calumnies (1 Pet. iv. 6). They are presented in the world as a company of hypocrites (2 Cor. vi. 8). (*d*) The veil of infirmities, by which they often obscure the glory of that life which they have. (3) As to their privileges, and the glory of their estate. There must be a distinction between earth and heaven. For the present, our glory is—(*a*) Spiritual, and maketh no fair show in the flesh, as the image of God is an internal thing (Psa. xlv. 13). (*b*) Future. The time of our perfection and blessedness is not yet come, and we cannot for the present judge of it, nor the world imagine what it shall be. 2. From whom? Not from God (2 Tim. ii. 19); not from Christ (John x. 14); not from angels (Heb. i. 14); but—(1) From the world, as colours from a blind man (1 Cor. ii. 14). (2) In a great measure from ourselves. What with corruptions within, and temptations without, we have much ado to be persuaded that God is our Father, and we His children; our condition being so unsuitable, and our conversations so much beneath our rights and privileges; so that it needeth to be cleared by the Spirit of adoption (ver. 16). When that is done, yet the glory intended to be revealed in us is not sufficiently known (1 Cor. ii. 9). 3. Why? (1) Because now is the time of trial, hereafter of recompense. Therefore now is the hiding-time; hereafter is the day of manifestation. If the glory were too sensible, there were no trial, neither of the world, nor of the people of God. (2) God hath chosen this way to advance His glory, that He may perfect His power in our weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9). (3) To wean us from things present to things to come (2 Cor. iv. 18). II. THEY SHALL BE MANIFESTED. 1. Their persons shall be known and owned (Rev. iii. 5). No more doubt when owned, not by character, but by name. 2. They shall be manifested to themselves, and their glory also revealed to the world by the visible marks of favour Christ will put upon them, when others are rejected (Isa. lxvi. 5; 2 Thess. i. 10). III. THIS MANIFESTATION OUGHT EARNESTLY TO BE DESIRED AND EXPECTED BY US. 1. To this end the apostle mentions the earnest expectation of the creature, and the day principally concerns us (Cant. viii. 14; Rev. xxii. 20). The saints look for Christ's coming (Titus ii. 13) by faith and hope; and long for His coming (2 Tim. iv. 8) in a way of love. 2. Now His coming must be desired by us with—(1) Earnestness (2 Cor. v. 2). (2) Constancy. (3) Patience (1 Thess. i. 10). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The hope of a fallen world*:—We are told that in those countries where the night lasts for many months the inhabitants, when they conclude that the dayspring is at hand, climb the loftiest mountains, and there wait and watch the first streak of returning day. That streak is the signal for gladness and melody. Such was the attitude of those who "waited for the consolation of Israel" before the Son of God came, and such ought to be our attitude who look for Christ's second coming. Note—I. THE MOURNFUL CONDITION OF CREATION SINCE THE FALL. 1. It is in the "bondage of corruption" through the iniquity of its inhabitant man. The mansion

has been spotted and stained by the leprosy of him that dwells in it. Before man fell the whole creation, as it came from God, was "very good"; but when man became corrupt and turned the good creatures of God into occasions of sin and idolatry, the whole creation, in a sense, became partaker of the defilement of its rational inhabitants. Drunkenness and debauchery have been made to find their fuel and their food in the good things that God had made for man's good and for His own glory. 2. And, being thus enthralled by corruption, it is made "subject to vanity." It is a peculiarity in the Divine government that things should partake in each other's weal or woe. "A fruitful land maketh He barren, because of the wickedness of them that dwell therein." Think of Sodom and Palestine. And what God has thus, in a smaller measure, done in individual instances, He has, in the grand scale, in creation. God brought vanity on His beautiful works, and marred, though He did not wholly deface, the lovely structure He had built and furnished. 3. To complete the dark picture, "the whole creation travaileth and groaneth in pain together until now." What a grandeur there is in this personification of the whole visible universe! The Psalmist thus made all nature, animate and vocal, to praise her Creator, and await her Deliverer's coming, and it is by a similar bold flight of imagination that the apostle personifies all creation as wearied with the bondage of corruption, mourning through the continual vanity, waiting for the wondrous transformation that is in store for her, and striving after it as a woman drawing near to her delivery longeth for the hour when it shall be said, "a man is born into the world." And it is not mere fancy that we may seem at times to hear, in the moaning of the tempest, the roar of the storm, the dashing of the billows, the sounds and the sighings that we may often hearken to from troubled, tempest-tossed nature, to construe these into the "groaning and travailing of creation," after that great redemption and deliverance that the Redeemer hath in store for her. 4. Must we not be arrested with the lesson thus taught us? What a fearful thing is sin, that it casts its dark shadow over the whole universe of God! When we make light of sin, let us look around us, as well as look within us, that we may be humbled, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" II. THE HOPE THAT ANIMATES CREATION in her mournful and fallen state (ver. 19). 1. That is the great epoch to which creation turns her anxious eye, anticipating her glorious deliverance. For we are hid; "our life is now hid with Christ in God." The world knoweth us not, and we sometimes know not one another. But a day of manifestation cometh—a day of public adoption in the presence of the whole intelligent universe, a day of adoption in the day of "the redemption of the body," when, invested with the similitude of their glorious Head, they shall stand forth, confessed of all to be the sons of God. Then creation shall find her glorious deliverance. This is that bright epoch foretold by the prophets, the time of the restitution of all things, when the Creator shall say, "Behold, I make all things new." 2. Behold the hope of the creature. It shall be "delivered out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!" This cannot be annihilation. Would it be deliverance to creation, any compensation for its involuntary suffering, to be blotted out? The very fact that creation has suffered with man is in itself strong presumption that it shall triumph and be exalted with man. And so we look for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The whole visible creation is anticipating this blessed hope, when, with in its renewed inhabitants, it shall undergo renovation, and shall receive perfection. Conclusion: 1. The subject is fitted to alarm every one who is making earth his portion. They that corrupt the creature and defile themselves therewith shall never know the creature's promised bliss. 2. For those that profess to be waiting for Christ's coming, this contemplation is fitted to impart exalted hope. "Eye hath not seen," &c. (*Canon Stowell.*) *The final deliverance of believers*:—I. THE PERIOD WHEN THIS STATE OF DEGRADATION AND SUFFERING SHALL GIVE PLACE TO THE FULL HOPE WHICH THE GOSPEL NOW SETS BEFORE THEM. The day of the second advent of Christ. This, indeed, will be, in some most important respects, a day of "manifestation"—the manifestation of Him whom the heavens have received, of judgment, of the long-delayed punishment of sinners. But it shall be also the day of "the manifestation of the sons of God." 1. Of their number, which now we possess no mean of calculating. 2. Of persons whom, perhaps, we never anticipated—for many that are last shall be first, and the first last. 3. Of their virtues, which the world slandered. 4. Of that glory with which they shall be eternally invested. II. THE CHARACTERS UNDER WHICH THIS HOPE IS PRESENTED. 1. "Deliverance from the bondage of corruption." See this bondage—(1) In the weakness of the body. It has lost its

strength and perfection. (2) In the diseases of the body. (3) In that moral corruption to which the natural corruption ministers. (4) In the manner in which this law sports with every feeling, care, interest. 2. The contrast to this is "the glorious liberty of the children of God"—(1) From the bondage itself, as resulting from the lapse of Adam. (2) From the grave, for Christ opens, and no man shuts. (3) From the grossness of the body, for that which is sown a natural is raised a spiritual body. (4) From irregular appetites, implying perfect liberty from sin. (5) From affliction and suffering, for there shall be no more pain, no more chastening. (6) From death. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE WHOLE SUBJECT IS HEIGHTENED. The apostle refers—1. To the groans and expectations of the creature, *i.e.*, the whole race of fallen and unrecovered men. The apostle sees before him the multitudes of mankind. He marks their miseries, groans, struggles against their lot, their aspirations after a something unattained. As a powerful intellect at its first dawn aspires after a knowledge of which as yet it has no conception; as an ambitious spirit tends upwards to a height beyond its gaze; as a heathen in his ignorance feels after a God unknown—so will the soul of fallen man wrestle with its bondage and strive for deliverance. It is a mighty power, though bound, and it sighs, and heaves, and tends, though blindly, to the good which it has forfeited. How elevated, then, the Christian's hope! It is the hope of mankind. But let us attend to some instances by which this truth may be illustrated. (1) Man feels his miseries more sensibly than any other creature—not only because he reflects, which is itself a heightening of his distress, but because he has a consciousness that he possesses a capacity of perfect bliss. The very poignancy of his misery is in proof of his aspirations after unmingled felicity. (2) Man carries his desires beyond the limits of any present enjoyment. Winged with desire, he hastens to an object; he obtains it; he stops; he finds it not sufficient, and hastens on to another. Onward, and onward still, beyond all that earth can supply. What, then, is the true philosophy of this? A distant, though unapprehended, good attracts us. (3) Man is displacent at the very vices which he indulges. And how are we to account for this? Why, but because the soul aspires for liberty from its moral corruption. (4) Man struggles against disease and death. Life is the object of most passionate desire, and death of equally strong aversion. What is this but a tendency to a state like that which shall be enjoyed at "the manifestation of the sons of God." 2. To the revealed hope of the believer, to which all his longings are directed (ver. 23). "They have the first-fruits of the Spirit." Even this exempts not from the miseries of life, nor is there in them, however glorious they are, anything which can satisfy the vast desire of glory. (1) True, the soul is reconciled to God, but the bondage of corruption still places them in circumstances of temptation. They may sin against God, and they long for the deliverance which shall make sin no longer possible. (2) True, the manifested presence of God is the delight of the soul; but even this, in its full extent, is veiled and hidden. (3) True, there is the glorious attainment of a regenerate nature, but how many imperfections yet remain! (4) True, there is the presence of heavenly graces, but these are like exotic plants, and an unfit soil prevents their full expansion, their fragrancy, and fruitfulness. (5) True, there is heavenly knowledge and sacred converse with God, but the wants of the body demand supply, and hence numberless cares and anxieties. (6) True, there is the communion of saints, but to what interruptions is not this exposed by human mortality! (7) True, religion strengthens your social affections and heightens domestic enjoyment, but from those whom you love you have been, or you must be, severed. (8) True, you are saved from the fear of death, but still there is death, the last enemy, and the struggle with him. Thus do we "groan within ourselves," even though we have the hope which alone prevents our sinking in despair. But, while groaning under the pressure of life's burdens, we are "waiting for the adoption," the glorification of the body, and its establishment in the perfect and everlasting joys of heaven. (*R. Watson.*) **For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.**—*The vanity of the present state consistent with God's perfections:*—I. THE GOSPEL GIVES US ASSURANCE OF A MOST EXCELLENT AND HAPPY STATE RESERVED FOR GOOD MEN IN ANOTHER LIFE, described in the text by these two characters; of its being the manifestation of the sons of God, and a state of the most glorious liberty. 1. Let us consider this future happy state which the gospel describes as the manifestation of the sons of God. Good men are the sons of God upon a double account, viz., of their nature, and of their state; each of which is becoming that high title of the children of God. In respect of that new nature of which they are partakers, they

are justly styled the children of God; He being both the Author and the Pattern of it. Are they regenerate or born again? it is of God (1 John v. 1; 1 Pet. i. 23; John iii. 5). 2. It is farther represented as a state of glorious liberty. This most desirable freedom is indeed begun in the present life; for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: but then, as long as men continue in this world it is only begun. (1) Since the future state of good men will be so glorious, what reason have they to bear all the sufferings of the present time with a contented mind. (2) Since such is the glory of that future state, in which there shall be a manifestation of the sons of God, it should be a powerful motive with them to hasten more towards it in their desires and preparations. (3) Since such is the honour and privilege of all good men who are now the sons of God, and since such will be their happiness when the time is come for their fuller manifestation, would not one think that all should be desirous of this character, and resolve to do everything which may entitle them to it? Would not one think that the kingdom of heaven should suffer violence, and that all who hear of such a state should be hastening into it in crowds? II. THE PRESENT STATE OF MANKIND IS A STATE OF VANITY, AND BONDAGE TO CORRUPTION. 1. In the present life, mankind are subject to many fruitless desires and expectations. 2. The present is a state of suffering. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards." Who can pretend to reckon up the several sorts of pains and diseases to which the body of man is liable? or the many disagreeable accidents and mournful events to which we are continually exposed, and which so often befall us in the course of life? 3. The present is a state of great moral weakness and disorder. The fall has introduced a sort of anarchy into the human frame: the passions are broke loose, and the mind has not that command over the appetites and inclinations of the animal part which it were to be wished, and which we believe the mind enjoyed in the state of innocence. 4. This is a state which quickly passes away, or, which is the same, out of which we quickly pass by death into another, in every respect almost exceedingly different from the present. III. TO THIS VAIN AND CORRUPTIBLE STATE, MANKIND WERE ORIGINALLY BROUGHT INTO SUBJECTION, NOT BY THEMSELVES, BUT BY ANOTHER. By him who subjected the creature to vanity, may be meant either the first man by his transgression, or God for the sin of man; I rather incline to the latter, though the difference is not very material. Such honour had man in his creation, that God subjected to him, or put under his feet, all other things. Such was the unhappy consequence of man's offending God, that from henceforth man himself becomes subject to vanity. But how shall we vindicate this dispensation of Divine providence? 1. As to the justice of God, the case to any one who rightly considers it is attended with no difficulty at all. This dominion of God, or right to take away what He has given, or to withhold from some of His creatures what He gives to others, is as unquestionable as in the exercise it is uncontrollable. And as the dominion of God or His right to put mankind into what state or circumstances He pleases is indisputable, so He never exercises this supreme dominion of His without good reason. 2. To vindicate the wisdom and goodness of God in this dispensation. (1) In respect of the chief consequences of the fall, God does little more than leave things to produce their natural effects. (2) Supposing God had interposed in a supernatural way, directing and overruling the course of things, so that the posterity of Adam should suffer no inconvenience by his fall; yet in that case it cannot be imagined their condition would have been fixed without their having first gone through a state of probation, which must have been suited to the nature and advantages they would then have enjoyed. There might have been no room for repentance after they had sinned, and the reward of their obedience, if they had persevered to the end, might not have been so great, as the reward of the virtuous now will be. Which being considered, it may be justly questioned whether, on this supposition, the circumstances of mankind upon the whole would have very much exceeded those in which they now are, if at all. (3) If it has pleased God to subject the race of mankind to a state of vanity and corruption, it does, in many respects, better answer the ends of a state of trial. Every virtue, both active and passive, such as self-denial, fortitude, benevolence, charity, compassion, and the like, have now room for exercise, which they would not in a state of perfect ease and tranquillity. (4) God suits His government of man and dealings with him to the state he is now in. If he has given less to the posterity of fallen man than he did to their first parents, He requires less of them. Are we weak? He knows it, and expects no more from us than He hath given us, or, upon our humble application to Him, will give us strength to perform. (5) There is this advantage in the present state as a state of vanity and corruption,

that it carries in it a continual admonition to turn our thoughts and affections towards a better state, and to be more diligent in our preparations for it. (6) We may reasonably conceive God has tho rather chosen the present scheme of things, because hereby He has an opportunity of dispensing His justice and bounty in two most remarkable acts of providence which occur in His dealings with mankind: His justice in punishing the sin of the first Adam and all his descendants; His bounty in rewarding the obedience unto death of the second Adam. IV. IN THIS STATE OF VANITY, UNDER WHICH THE WHOLE MORAL CREATION OR WORLD OF MANKIND GROANETH AND TRAVAILETH IN PAIN TOGETHER, THE HUMAN RACE HAS AN EARNEST EXPECTATION OR DESIRE OF A CONDITION MORE PERFECT AND HAPPY. 1. All creatures naturally tend to their perfection, so does the race of mankind in particular; and the future state of the saints in the text, styled the "manifestation of the sons of God," importing the highest perfection to which the nature of man can be advanced; with the greatest propriety, men who are reasonable creatures and breathe after immortality may be said to wait for such a state, though they are far from having a distinct idea of it. 2. In proportion as any of the sons of men have improved their rational faculties, and lived up to the light they have enjoyed, this desire of perfection and happiness has been more ardent and more explicit. V. MEN HAVE NOT BEEN WITHOUT THE HOPE OF SUCH A HAPPY ALTERATION IN THEIR STATE, WHICH IN THE TEXT IS EXPRESSLY ASSERTED AND PROMISED. 1. Mankind have always been possessed with the hope of a better state of things than the present. They have not only desired it, but hoped for it. Now hope implies some degree of belief that the thing desired will come to pass. And such a belief has obtained in all ages. 2. God has given men some ground for this hope, though He was pleased to permit sin, suffering, imperfection. To this effect was the very first promise after the fall. But besides this first promise, God, as the God of nature, the Author of reason, and the Governor of the world by His universal providence, has encouraged men to hope they shall, some time or other, be freed from that vanity and corruption to which, in this mortal state, they are subjected. By the large capacities and faculties of the human soul, to which the things of this world bear no manner of proportion, and which, in our present circumstance, have not an opportunity to unfold and show themselves, God plainly points us to another life, where all who behave well in the state of trial shall attain to much higher degrees of perfection and happiness. 3. This hope is raised into assurance by the Christian revelation. APPLICATION: 1. Let this lead us into proper reflections on the nature of man, and of his present condition, and excite in us affections and purposes suitable to such reflections. 2. Let what we have heard raise our value for the gospel of Christ. We are to be thankful for our natural hopes, but especially for those which we derive from the gospel revelation, which are at once the strongest, the most extensive, and the most satisfying. (*H. Grove, M.A.*) *Subjected—in hope*:—See how all things testify to the Christian's hope. I. See THE CREATION itself restless with an otherwise inexplicable longing. It is not often that we have indications in Paul's writings either of a painter's eye or a poet's fancy. We rather conceive of him as one to whom scenery and history, time and space were something less than indifferent. Here, however, we see that he has observed nature—yes, as only poets read her. Paul has seen nature's imploring look, and heard her complaining voice, and felt her yearning thought, and sympathised with her confession —of waste, as she brings one seed and one blossom to perfection out of ten thousand —of discord, as she is made to launch her thunderbolts, and to lift her waves, and to let loose her hurricanes—of cruelty, in her ruthless laws of consequence, and which take no account of innocence or penitence. St. Paul is not satisfied with lovely landscapes. He is no tourist of pleasure or fancy. He looks within and beneath, and feels that beauty might be more beautiful, and life more vital, and strength yet more robust, and that in all actual being there is a possible being more satisfactory; so that he must write nature an expectant, not an inheritor—he must claim her testimony as on the side of that gospel which makes hope, not contentment, the attribute of God's creature. 1. See the very face of nature scarred with tokens of conflict. How unmelodious and often barbarous are the agencies of nature as she heaves in elemental agonies. Is this quite the scene which God pronounced to be very good? Hear the cry of the brute world, itself the prey of man, and, in turn, its own tyrant and murderer. 2. Mark the unrest of a humanity which prides itself upon its position at the top of God's handiwork, as it pours the waters of an inexhaustible ambition into the sieve of a perpetual disappointment. Listen to that sigh of thankless satiety which echoes from the pampered child of

fashion to that other sigh from the heart of the sorrow-laden. See that fever-stricken village, that battlefield. Is not the creation making confession, in all these manifold utterances, of a condition neither original nor final? Is not the creation travailing as in birth-pangs with a mysterious and compensating future? Can it be that God, the good and the great One, can suffer these blots and stains upon His own work to continue thus for ever? If God be, and be God, every symptom of ruin is a prophecy of reconstruction. Very mysterious, this subjection of the creature to vanity, to the dominion of disappointment, of dissolution, of decay! The word and the thought fills one book of the Old Testament, as it is here summarised in one chapter of the New. And you will see, if you study that Book of Ecclesiastes, how comprehensive is the word here before us. It is the perpetual filling of that which is never full, the ceaseless round of a monotony which has no harmony and no melody. St. Paul instructs us how to deduce a positive from all these negatives. He claims this vanity as an evidence for hope—as a witness to the necessity of the reconstruction which Christ promises to us in His gospel. II. He who thus read "vanity" as the legend of nature; he who saw even here the record of a fall mysteriously interwoven with the condition of a creation incapable of sinning, now calls as his involuntary witness to the Christian expectation THE LIFE OF MAN AS LIVED OUTSIDE CHRISTIANITY. 1. It was with a pitying and compassionate eye that St. Paul looked upon humanity. Could he gaze unmoved upon this great, swarming population "looking for so much, bringing in so little," earning its wages only "to put them into a bag with holes"? St. Paul saw this great busy earth subjected to vanity by reason of sin; he saw how each generation, each life, sets out, as though it were the only one, full of confidence, full of conceit, on its little race of ambition, passion, interest, only to say at evening, "Vanity of vanities." "Not willingly," he says. It would not have it so. Not of its free will does it find every effort defeated, or the successful effort turned into bitterness. 2. St. Paul calls this vanity as a witness to the hope. He says, Could these things be if there were no hereafter? Is not this nothingness, this bondage of corruption, proof enough of the true character of this present as a mere birth-pang of the true, the satisfying, the everlasting? Is there not, indeed, in all men, an inward witness to this hope? Who does not wish to leave something, some one behind him? Who has not some vision of a perfection, if not for himself, then for the race? Who that is engaged in business, or philanthropy, who that has framed for himself any idea of a religion, of a God, has not done so in an expectation? These experiences of vanity are the birth-pangs of glory. God has written vanity upon the present that every eye may be directed towards a dawn, of which the only visible streak is the instinct of the longing. Cherish that longing, for it is your hope. Base and dastardly is that contentment which would call darkness light and shadow substance. This is the great lie, against which God in nature, in providence, in conscience is waging perpetual warfare. Say to yourself till you feel it, "I am here, subject to vanity; if I pitch my tent here, if I choose the thing that is seen, then I am a part of the vanity." Let me be true at all risks—true to the inward voice which says, "Be thou a stranger and a sojourner here, and then thou hast a home, and a city, and an immortality beyond." How magnificent the thought—"The creature itself also shall be emancipated." "I saw new heavens and a new earth." "Times of refreshing shall come." The Spirit of God shall move again upon the face of a second chaos, and shape a new universe out of the confusion of this subjugation. Let us not refuse a hope for which every voice within, around, and above us cries aloud. III. There is A PART, EVEN OF THE CHRISTIAN, which St. Paul places side by side with nature and humanity as a witness. "We groan within ourselves, waiting." There is a redeemed part within us, and there is an unredeemed. "The Spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death." But what then? That very emancipation makes the remaining fetter gall and fret and wound more than before. The body, which is the outlet and the inlet of all temptation, is still unrenewed, over-ruled, consecrated, but not yet transformed. Therefore I, as a Christian man, am a witness to the great hope. I could not live thus for ever. I could not go to heaven thus. Nay, the more I know of the spiritual life, and the more sensitive I become to the thing which God hates, and the more I acquire the mastery over sin and corruption, so much the more do I become aware of the burden which I carry everywhere in this body. So much the more am I a witness to the necessity of a death and a resurrection. So much the more do I, in this body, groan being burdened, having a desire for the heaven of God's saints. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

The vanity of the creature :—I. ITS EVIDENCES. Creation.—1. Has lost its original charm, beauty, durability, harmony, perfection. 2. Is corrupted by much that is pernicious or useless. 3. Has been subjected to abuse. II. ITS CAUSES. 1. Man's sin. 2. God's purpose. 3. The hope of restoration and development. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Man made subject to vanity* :—I. MAN IS MADE SUBJECT TO VANITY. 1. In the frailty of his body and its subjection to death, and in the precariousness of his life (Gen. ii. 17). 2. In the unsatisfactoriness and uncertainty of his pursuits. II. MAN UNDERGOES THIS SUBJECTION UNWILLINGLY. It was not a pleasant change from a body preserved in independent vigour and immortality by the efficacy of the Tree of Life to a mortal body; from gardening in Paradise to ploughing a stubborn and comparatively barren soil. So reluctant was Adam to the change that compulsion was necessary—"So He drove out the man." III. THIS SUBJECTION WAS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DIVINE PERFECTION. It was rendered necessary by Divine justice and wisdom, and executed by Divine power. IV. THIS SUBJECTION IS ALLEVIATED BY HOPE. Redemption by Christ was the hope of the fathers, founded on God's promise—"The seed of the woman," &c. It is our hope now. 1. It is a hope of deliverance from vanity to a state answerable to the rank of "the sons of God." This deliverance is "the redemption of the body" and "the manifestation of the sons of God." 2. It is strengthened by the spiritual renovation which is the pledge of its fulfilment. Learn—1. The folly and wickedness of a worldly mind. 2. The reasonableness of patience. 3. The duty of yielding to that Spirit who is working out our deliverance. (*C. Wills, M.A.*) *The creature subjected to and delivered from vanity* :—Two wrong ways of regarding the visible creation around us—1. Making an idol of it. 2. Professing to despise it. Scripture teaches that nature is not our master, but our fellow-servant. The passage before us teaches its connection with us, past and present, its actual condition, and its future destiny. I. NATURE IS IN SYMPATHY WITH FALLEN MAN.—"Whole creation groaneth," &c. 1. Subjected by, and for, some one: "By reason of Him." Whom? God, not Adam, as some think. (1) He subjected it. (2) And "in hope." (3) See Gen. iii. 17. 2. As to the manner of subjection, two views—(1) A part reserved, Paradise; and the outside world then what it is now. (2) A mighty shock passed upon the world, previously paradisaical. Either admissible. Perhaps, in a measure, both. 3. As to the nature of the subjection. (1) To vanity (see Eph. iv. 17; 1 Pet. i. 18; Eccles. i. 2, 14; Psa. lxii. 9, xxxix. 5). Expressive of inefficacy, aimlessness. (2) To bondage of corruption. Deeper: outcome and result of vanity. Sickness, pain, death, restraint, bondage. II. THE SUBJECTION OF NATURE NOT HOPELESS. 1. Groaneth and travaileth—not willingly subjected. Evidences of this in nature. Decay, discord, pain. 2. This longing verified by Scripture. Subjected in hope. "Earnest expectation" in creature. 3. In sympathy with regenerate man: "We ourselves groan," &c. III. THIS HOPE WILL BE REALISED. "The creature also shall be delivered," &c. 1. General truth of this asserted in Scripture (Isa. xi. 6, lxv. 17; Acts iii. 21; 2 Pet. iii. 13, &c.). 2. More particularly in this passage. From bondage of corruption to liberty of glory. Just as Christ was raised to the glory of the Father, and the sons of God to the glory of Christ, so will be the redeemed creation to the glory of the sons of God. 3. At or after the second advent. "Behold, I make all things new." Different opinions as to time and manner. As regards the thing itself, a truth of revelation. A subject of deep interest to all Christians. (*Preb. Clark.*) *Life a prophecy* :—It seems to me that many reasons justify us in regarding our time upon this earth as a season full of prophesyings of better things to come. First: Our own being is prophetic. We are organised for something more and better than as yet appears. We are inspired with the thought of the unseen and eternal. Each man of us has a prophecy of future rewards and punishments written in his own conscience. And does not human love have always hidden it in heart a prophetic hope of the future and its completions? Listen to your own soul. Make silence within, and listen to your own better self. You are that prophet whom you seek. You are chosen from your birth and called of God to be a witness to the higher order of spirit, and to live as an heir of the kingdom of God. Secondly, our human relations are prophetic. Accept your family relations and your human friendships as gifts of God—nay, as revelations to you of what God in His Fatherhood, and the Son of God in His brotherhood is—and then all these human relations through which God Himself comes near to bless you, will grow doubly sacred to you. There is a presence of God also in them. They are of holy worth. Any sin against them, any violation of these sacred human relations, touches something Divine. Observe further in this connection how broken, partial,

and tragic, often, these human relations and friendships seem in this world to be. They all of them suggest something which should be complete, holy, perfect; and then they break off, and in the poor actuality of the present remain but suggestions of what should be. There is evidently eternal worth in such relations of life, but just as we begin to find it, we lose it. Those who made each other's lives so complete are no longer dwellers in the same world together. Love here has too often only the beginning of its good—the precious, yet too quickly broken fragment of its own blessing. Put then together in your thoughts these two facts—the self-evident worth of these human relations and friendships, and their present incompleteness—and do you not see how through their partial good the prophecy of the Lord of life begins to come into our lives? The earthly fragment which love has received was given as a promise of the Lord; it was never meant as a completed thing. The present, broken good is a Divine suggestion to us of the perfect life in which all that is now fragmentary shall be made complete. I have not yet in these statements led you to lay hold, as one may, of the strong principle of reason underlying this prophetic interpretation of our present human relations. These statements rest upon the prophetic principle which we find in nature pervading all growth, and pointing ever on from partial good, and lower types, towards the better things to come. The only difference is that when the geologist or the biologist reads the record of progress and ascent of life upon this earth, he can now read the Scripture of nature backwards, and having before him in man's present form and brain a fulfilled prophecy of nature, he can easily interpret, reading backwards, the lower prophetic forms and types. What from the beginning upwards was one constant prophecy of man's coming is now our history. But the Christian, when he now looks forward and thinks of the coming of the second man, even the Lord from heaven, has still to read the present prophetic signs and tendencies of things forwards by faith. Nevertheless, we proceed upon the same principle of reason whether we read the creation backward or forward; that which is good, but which is in part, is always a sign and herald of that which is perfect, which is to come. All partial good is prophetic. That is a first principle of nature. This is also a great principle of faith. It is a profound principle, reaching, I must believe, to the bottom of all natural evolution, and yet simple as the hope which will not die in the heart of human sorrow. It is a principle of life so true, and so strong to bear our faith, that you will allow me once more to endeavour to render this present deeply prophetic significance of human nature intelligible. There is a third prophetic element in this present life to which I should now allude. We have thus far considered the fact that man himself in his own being is essentially a prophet of the Lord upon this earth, and also the truth that our human relations in their eternal worth, but present incompleteness, all bear witness of something diviner to come in which they shall be made perfect. A further prophetic aspect of our life here we may find in the present relation of our spirits to outward things. Our present embodiment in nature is a good, but it is not a complete and permanent good. It is the best thing on this earth; there is nothing among all material things more wonderful than the brain of man. The stars in their courses, the infinite network of attractions which constitute the order of the heavens, excite our wonder and awe; but are they so marvellous manifestations of creative wisdom and power as the living centres and constellations of nerve-cells, and the balanced forces and ethereal fineness and complexity of the processes which the spirit that is in man finds given him in the organism and harmonies of his brain, for the purposes of recording and comparing his thoughts, and executing his free volitions? Man himself in his present embodiment is the consummation of nature, and the last wonder of the creation. But, nevertheless, this body is not enough for the spirit of man. Our present embodiment, in other words, is prophetic—wonderfully and profoundly prophetic of what shall be. Yes, in these bodies so wonderfully made, yet so incomplete, we have nature's prophecy of the resurrection, and the earthly preparation for the perfect, spiritual body which shall be. In these mortal bodies, in which we begin to live and to be formed for immortality, the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. I hold that the earnest expectation of the whole creation from the first organic cell up to the brain of man waits for the revealing of the sons of God; I would claim that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection and the consummation of nature, as laid down in St. Paul's chapter of inspired interpretation of God's thought, is in accordance with the present prophetic nature of things, and that we can and should believe in the Word of God, which confirms the whole up-look and on-look of the creation; and we may wait, therefore, in the

patience of hope for the glory which the heart of man indeed cannot conceive, but which shall be known in us who are risen in Christ, when that which is perfect shall come. (*N. Smyth, D.D.*) *St. Paul's account of the creation*:—I. St. Paul says that "THE CREATION IS SUBJECT TO VANITY," AND IS UNDER "THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION." He sees in the creation a good deal of effort that comes to nothing, a waste of power, general imperfection, universal decay. 1. The apostle's description is confirmed by facts. There is an ideal form of beauty for the leaf and blossom of every plant; but no leaf or blossom is quite true to its ideal. The human eye is a very wonderful organ; but it is said that there are most curious faults in it. Man is not the only creature whose growth is often stunted, powers repressed, and glory obscured. Birds and beasts die of famine and in cruel conflict with each other. They are sometimes blind, deaf and lame. Epidemics sweep them away. They are tormented by diseases precisely analogous to our own. Flowers, plants, and trees, spring up in soil which gives them no food, and they die of starvation. They perish from want of rain. They are burnt up by heat. Their fruit fails to ripen for want of sun. They, too, are liable to diseases, which are curiously similar to ours. What makes all these facts the more appalling is that this apparent waste and suffering have been going on for millions of years. St. Paul might have read one of Mr. Darwin's books, for this is what Mr. Darwin has made certain: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." 2. But is not the creation God's own workmanship? Do not the heavens declare His glory, and all His works praise Him? Did not St. Paul say that "the invisible things of God," &c.? Yes; and it may be true that there has been more of happiness than of pain. There is "vanity" and "the bondage of corruption" everywhere; and yet Nature is fairer than the poets have ever sung; there are intricacies of skill which transcend all that genius has ever yet discovered; and there is an infinite wealth of goodness, in the presence of which our most fervent gratitude is cold. 3. You have listened to the work of a great master when it has been imperfectly rendered. The chorus just missed a sudden leap of exulting triumph, or they did not sink to the soft hush of harmony, or their voices were too coarse, or the instruments were not quite in tune, or the band and the voices parted company. And yet the genius of the composer shone through it all. Sometimes, too, you have seen on the walls of a church the work of a great artist. The frescoes are falling away from the wall; the canvas is rotting. And yet there are lines and colours which reveal the skill of the immortal painter. These illustrations fail to touch the mystery of the imperfection and pain of the universe; and yet they may suggest the blended dissatisfaction and rapture with which St. Paul thought of the works of God. The things that God has made reveal His eternal power and Godhead; but the creation is subject to vanity by the will of the Creator, and the bondage of corruption is upon all things. II. BUT ST. PAUL DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE IMPERFECTION OF CREATION IS TO CONTINUE FOR EVER. IT WAS MADE SUBJECT "IN HOPE," AND IT WILL BE "DELIVERED," &c. 1. As those that are in Christ are to inherit eternal glory, so all created things are to pass into new and higher forms of existence. Speculation, indeed, on this subject has no materials to work upon. "We know not what we shall be"; still less do we know what the glorified creation will be. We may dream of sweeter music, fairer flowers, and nobler fruits, &c., in the new creation than in the old. But all these are dreams. All that we can say is, that we have not seen the last and consummate manifestations of the power and wisdom of the Creator. The great "hope" of the creation has yet to be fulfilled. "Now is the winter of its discontent"; its spring has not yet come; the splendour of its summer is still far off. 2. The birth-throes of which the apostle speaks are an effort of imagination which closely touches some of the theories which we are asked to receive on the authority of scientific proof. We are told that the fierce struggle for existence is the condition of the development of higher and yet higher forms of life. By a law which could not be resisted, the feebler and the less perfect forms of life have been crushed whenever they have come in collision with the nobler and the more vigorous. The birth-throes of nature have extended through all time, and they are not yet over. Through how many more ages the suffering will last, whether it will ever cease, are questions upon which there is no general consent of scientific opinion. (1) M. Renan dreams that through the operation of this law of development there will at last arise an intellectual aristocracy which will have absolute command of all the resources of the world; that in every country there may be a dozen or a score of men as superior in their intellectual force to the rest of the nation as men are now to brutes; and that, perhaps, eventually the

whole force of the world, all its knowledge, and therefore all its power, may even be concentrated in the hands of a solitary individual, who will have absolute control over the life and fortunes of the race—a god that the human race had developed for itself. (2) There are others who tell us that the great movement must be at last arrested. The play of the mighty forces which sustain it will cease. There will be equilibrium. The anguish will be over, and with the anguish life, in all its forms, will be no more. (3) Paul believed that the creation has a glorious future. Christ, "the brightness of the Father's glory," has become man, and has brought all the regenerate members of the race into immortal unity with Himself, so that His glory is certain to become theirs. Man, however, belongs to the visible creation. From the earth we sprang; and we are the children of the earth, though we have been made the children of God. As we are to share the glory of Christ because of our union with Him, the earth is to share our glory because of its union with us. 3. You see, therefore, at what points St. Paul is in agreement with the results of scientific observation, and where he is hostile to philosophical theories which have been hastily erected on a scientific basis. (1) If the man of science maintains that he discovers signs of imperfection in every living organisation; that the organs of sense are imperfect; that in the lower types of life there are the mere rudiments of limbs which are found in a useful and complete form only in the higher; that in the higher there are survivals of elementary forms of structure which were useful only in the lower; that there is a universal waste of life; that there is an appalling amount of suffering—St. Paul is ready to accept all these facts. The creation is subject to "vanity" and is under "the bondage of corruption." But if the man of science goes on to argue from the imperfections, and failures, and waste in creation, that the universe had no intelligent Creator, St. Paul vehemently persists that with all the imperfection, failure, and waste, there are transcendent manifestations of the Creator's "eternal power and Godhead." (2) If the man of science maintains that all created things have gradually been developed by conflict and pain from lower forms of life, and that the history of the development has been a history of protracted anguish, St. Paul will find in the facts which illustrate this doctrine the most startling confirmation of his own statement that "the creation groaneth and travaileth together till now." (3) If the man of science maintains that the physical nature of man is the result of the same development, so that man on the side of his inferior life belongs to the inferior universe, St. Paul will listen with an open mind, remembering that his own sacred books had taught him that the physical nature of man came from the dust, though nothing had been said of the gradations by which the dust ascended to the dignity and power of the human form. But if the man of science further maintains that the history of man's physical development is a complete account of human nature, St. Paul will again protest vehemently. He will affirm—and the consciousness of the human race supports him—that there is a mysterious power in man which cannot be explained by this process of development. The ascending movement of physical life—if science can establish the reality of the movement—was met by the descent of the power of God, and the living creatures whose organisation had become capable of receiving inspiration from God received it. (4) If, again, the man of science argues that the groaning and travailing of creation are to end in stagnation and despair, St. Paul protests again and exults in the certainty of the hope that the creation will be delivered at last from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (*R. W. Dale, D.D.*) *The groaning creation*:—1. The word translated "creation" has a variety of significations in the New Testament. It sometimes means the act of creation (chap. i. 20); sometimes finite existence generally (Matt. x. 6; 2 Pet. v. 4; Rom. i. 25, viii. 39); sometimes the human race exclusively (Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 23; 1 Pet. ii. 13); and sometimes the class of regenerated men (Col. i. 15; Rom. iii. 14; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. ii. 10). 2. That the meaning we attach to it here should agree with the scope of the context and the aim of the writer. The aim of the apostle is evidently to exhibit the sublime privileges of the Christian amidst all the trials of this life. 3. That whatever meaning we attach to the word, it should be the meaning that the word will carry through the whole passage. Attending to these three things we have been compelled to regard the word "creation" as intended to designate regenerated humanity. Substitute the word, regenerated humanity, for "creation" throughout the whole passage, and you will give it a consistency both with itself and the aim of the writer. Our subject is "The Groaning Creation; or, the Apostolic estimate of the life of Regenerated Men." This estimate—I. HAS RESPECT TO TWO WORLDS—the present and the future.

As the average conduct of a man should be taken into account in order to estimate his character, so the entire life of a man, future as well as past and present, must be taken into account in order to estimate the balance of his joys or sorrows as a whole. Let us look at Paul's view of—1. The present life of the good. He describes it—(1) As a scene of vanity. (2) As a scene of slavery. "Bondage of corruption." (3) As a scene of suffering. All good men from the beginning have been "groaning." It is our happiness, however, to know that all our sufferings are parturitional; they are all travailing together; they will give birth to a higher order of things that will be more than a compensation for the throes. 2. The future life of the good. (1) It is a scene of spiritual glory. "Glory that shall be revealed in us." The glory of wordly men is outside; the glory of the good is within. (2) It is a scene of triumphant freedom. "The glorious liberty of the children of God." (3) It is a scene devoutly anticipated. "They are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." "When He who is our life shall appear," &c. II. IS MOST SALUTARY IN ITS EFFECT. "We are saved by hope." Such a hope saves us—1. From scepticism. Did we not take into account the life of future blessedness that awaits us, our present trials and afflictions would shake our faith in the wisdom and love of God's government of the world. 2. From murmurings. Did we not keep the future blessedness in view, we should be likely to complain and repine under our present afflictions; but looking at the glorious things awaiting us, we say with Paul, "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," &c. 3. From indolence. How the blessed prospect stimulates to activity! How the racer kindles with fresh fire as he glances at the goal! (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The vanity of the creature:*—We begin with the creature's condition, in these words, "The creature was made subject to vanity." That all the creatures which are in the world, or ever have been since the fall of man, they are for the present in a vain condition: they are vain and subject to vanity. First, take it in its insufficiency, and consider it there. A thing is, then, said to be vain when it does not reach its proper end, nor does that for which it was intended. The creature, in its original ordination and the first appointment of it, was ordained for two ends. The one was the glory of God, and the other was the good of man. Now both of these ends does it in a sort very much come short of; yea, is opposite unto them. Secondly, the good of man. It also fails of this, and is perverted in this particular likewise; and that, again, in a double respect, whether temporal or spiritual. His temporal good, for the preservation of his body, and his spiritual good, for the edification of his soul. The creature has a vanity upon it, so far as it is opposite to either, in the improvement of it. The use which we may make of this observation to ourselves comes to this, namely, to teach us to labour to have the creature sanctified to us; and so in a sort reduced to that estate which at first it was set in. First, the creature is sanctified on God's part by His word; and there is a threefold word of His, which is considerable to this purpose. First, the word of donation. Secondly, the word of benediction. And thirdly, the word of promise. The word of donation, whereby He bestows the creature upon us; the word of benediction, whereby He blesses the creature to us; the word of promise, whereby He makes a tender of this blessing. But prayer helps us to use them conscionably, that those things which in themselves are lawful may not become through our improvement sinful. Secondly. To enjoy them comfortably; for without God's special favour and blessing, though we partake of the things themselves, yet we can relish no sweetness in them at all. Now prayer, it fetches this from Him. And so much may suffice to have spoken of the first piece of vanity of the creature, consisting in its insufficiency and failing of that first end whereunto it was ordained. The second is in regard of its uncertainty, its transitoriness and shortness of continuance. The creature is subject to vanity in this regard also. And so the Scripture does everywhere represent it to us. "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31; 1 John ii. 17). This is the nature of these worldly matters, but as a show and pageant, and there is an end. This it hath a twofold ground for it. First, the sin of man that hath deserved it The heavens and earth are harmless, yet, because they were made for man's sake, they bear the tokens of God's wrath against man for his sin (Isa. xxiv. 5). Secondly, God's counsel that hath so ordained it. God has cursed the earth for man's sake, and thereby brought destruction upon it. The consideration of this point is thus far useful to us. First, it teaches us from hence to put no stress or confidence in the creature. "When riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Psa. lxii. 10). Secondly, is the creature thus subject to vanity in regard to the transitoriness of it, then let us hold ourselves so much more to the Creator, in whom is no vanity, or

variableness, or shadow of turning. And so now I have done with the first general part of the text, which is the creature's condition in these words: "For the creature was made subject unto vanity." The second is the cause or occasion of this condition, which is laid down two manner of ways. First, negatively: "Not willingly." Secondly, affirmatively: "But by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." First, take it in the negative, "not willingly"—that is, not of its own proper instinct and inclination; for what the will is in things rational, that the inclination is in things natural, and the one is by a borrowed speech transferred to the other here in this place. The creature of its own accord is not subject to vanity, forasmuch as every thing naturally desires the preservation of itself. So that this is that which is here observable of us, that the vanity of the creature, it is accidental and preternatural to it; and therefore is afterwards in this chapter called "bondage," which is an unwilling subjection. First, in the failing of its first end, for which it was made. This is preternatural to it. The creature in its first institution was made in reference and subordination to man, and so naturally does delight to be useful and serviceable to him for his good, and especially, and above all things, for the good and welfare of his soul. But now for to be a slave to his lust and instrumental to his execution of wickedness, as sometimes it proves to be through man's corruption, this is a thing which is directly contrary to its nature and disposition. It is so likewise in regard of the uncertainty and transitoriness of it. It is subject to vanity thus, not willingly, or of its own accord neither. There was an enmity and kind of reluctancy in their entirest being, and by the law of their first creation they were subject to change and alteration, so that this transitoriness of them is thus far as it were natural to them; but in this sense it is said to be preternatural, so far forth as they do naturally desire the preservation of themselves. If the creature be not willingly subject to vanity in reference to naturals, what a shame is it for men and women to be so in reference to morals! Never were people more vain and willingly subject to vanity than now they are. Vanity in all kinds, and in all expressions of vanity—vanity in our speeches and discourse, vanity in our pastimes and recreations, vanity in our garments and attire, vanity in our houses, and especially vanity in our hearts; we cannot look aside but we behold vanity, and love to do so. The creatures groan under their vanity, but we laugh and sing under ours, which is the highest degree of madness and distemper that can possibly be thought of. And so much may be spoken of that particular: the account of this condition in the negative, "not willingly." The second is in the affirmative: "But by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope"—that is, by reason of God the Creator, who for the sin of man cursing the creature hath subjected it to vanity and to corruption. In hope, that is, not irrecoverably, but reserving to it a possibility of returning to its former estate. There are two particulars which are here observable of us. First, for the dispensation itself, that is, the subjecting of the creature to vanity, which is here intimated and implied to be done by God Himself. The creature, it is subjected to vanity for man's sin. And as this holds good in general, so to some persons more especially in particular who do more fully and directly partake of the vanity of the creature in this particular which God threatens to them for their sin. There's a curse which belongs to everything which they deal withal, or have interest in, a curse upon their estates. The ground of this dispensation does proceed from that near relation which is betwixt man and the creature. It may seem a very strange matter that the creature which has done no hurt at all should be thus punished for the sin of man. We know how it is sometimes in the affairs and businesses of men; that some kind of malefactors they are punished not only in their persons, but in their relations, to put the greater terror upon their miscarriages, and to make them more odious. The proper use and improvement of this point to be made by ourselves comes to this: First, to inform and convince us of the great misery which is in sin. Secondly, we see here whom to blame and to find fault withal in the miscarriages of the creatures, and in our own disappointments from them. When they do not prove so serviceable to us in some cases and at some times as we expect and desire they should. And that is even our own selves, who are indeed the proper causes of it. Thirdly, here's matter of just abasement and mourning and humiliation when we shall consider the great mischief which we contract by our sins, not only to ourselves, but to others. Fourthly, we should from hence take heed that we do not willingly wrong the poor creatures or do injury to them. Lastly, as the creatures serve men in their sins, contrary to their natural inclination, even so should men serve God in welldoing against the bent of their natural corruption. The second is the additional qualifica-

tion of this dispensation in these words, "in hope," where the apostle still speaks of the creature as of a rational person, as he did in the words before. When we speak of hope, it is considerable two manner of ways: either in the subject of it, or in the ground of it; either in the person, or in the condition. Then any are said to be in hope when they are in a hopeful way, or estate; or then any are said to be in hope when they do hopefully conceive of themselves in that estate. Now it is not so much the latter as the former which seems to be here intended. First, because this vanity, which is now upon it, is only accidental and occasional. It is not from any demerit in itself, but only from the sin of man, as we have formerly shown. Now that vanity, which was only accidental, is not likely to be perpetual. Secondly, the sins of men, for whose sake this vanity is inflicted, and from whom it is decreed, they shall some of them be delivered from that vanity which is upon them, therefore there is great cause to believe that the creatures shall also some of them partake of the like proportionable deliverance. And, therefore, thirdly, as another ground of it, we have the promise and Word of God Himself making for it. This may discover to us the different nature of that curse which is inflicted upon the creature, and that judgment which does belong to incorrigible and reprobate persons. We see here the different condition of fallen men and of fallen angels and devils. The one is a condition irrecoverable, while the other is a condition of hope. This should accordingly teach us to lay hold upon this hope which is set before us. Let us take heed of sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth. If any time we miscarry, let it be unawares, and against our minds. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*)

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—*The bondage of corruption*:—Nature is prevented from putting forth its powers, from manifesting its real grandeur, and from attaining its original destiny. It is therefore bound. And its bondage is caused by the necessary decay of its products. All that nature brings forth is doomed to die. And nature is compelled to slay its own offspring. The lightning flash destroys the stately oak. The winter's cold kills the songsters of the summer. Animals devour other animals to maintain life. And this universal destruction limits the achievements of nature. Instead of constant growth, nature's beauty and strength fade away. The powers of the material creation are bound by fetters of decay. (*Prof. Beet.*) *Glorious liberty*:—Nothing is more prized than liberty: indeed he deserves not the name of a man who can ever be reconciled to slavery. But while civil liberty is so desirable, the liberty in our text is of a still more important character. This liberty we may consider as gracious, and so enjoyed by believers even now; or as glorious, and so enjoyed in the life to come. It is of the latter the apostle speaks. Let us examine—I. THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS LIBERTY. You will not expect a full development of it. "Eye hath not seen," &c. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." The believer's experience is "a glory to be revealed." It may well be called glorious if we consider—1. Its price. Many things are estimated according to their price. The chief captain obtained his freedom with a great sum (Acts xxii. 28); but our freedom was obtained at a much greater cost (1 Pet. i. 18; Acts xx. 28). 2. Its immunities. Only think from what evils it will free us. (1) From the powers of darkness. (2) From a world lying in wickedness. (3) From indwelling sin. (4) From the blindness of our understanding; from perplexity, and doubt, and uncertainty. (5) From anxiety, trouble, and exhausting toil. (6) From the body of this death, this vile body, this prison. 3. Its accesses. (1) To what a place will it give us access!—the palace of the King of kings. (2) To what society!—our own beloved connections, patriarchs, apostles, just men made perfect, angels, and Jesus. (3) To what entertainment!—to rivers of delight; to the marriage supper of the Lamb; to fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. 4. Its anticipations. What God does for His people here is but little to what He designs to do. 5. Its duration. Immortality will extend to the body as well as the soul. II. WHO ARE THE HEIRS TO THIS LIBERTY? "The children of God." 1. By adoption, by which God admits us into His favour, and we are made the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. 2. By regeneration; for every Christian is a new creature, not only as to his state, but as to his nature. A new condition requires new and suitable qualities. So God makes us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." 3. By imitation. Christians are obedient children, not fashioning themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance, but as He who has called them is holy, so are they holy. III. HOW THIS GLORIOUS LIBERTY BELONGS TO

THESE CHILDREN. It belongs to them—1. Only: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 2. Universally. It belongs to all of them without exception. There is no difference here with regard to condition or circumstances. 3. Assuredly—as sure as the promise of God; the purchase of the Redeemer; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can make it. 4. Freely and without desert. Conclusion: 1. Let us adore and praise the goodness of God in remembering us in our low estate, and in providing for us such a glorious liberty. 2. Seek after and ascertain your title to this glorious liberty. 3. Rejoice in the hope of this glorious liberty. 4. Walk worthy of vocation. 5. Be concerned for those who are strangers to all this. (*W. Jay.*) *The coming deliverance of the creature:*—We begin with the future estate and condition of believers, which is supposed in these words, "The glorious liberty of the children of God." First, their bodies shall be free from those evils and infirmities which they are here subject unto. Here we see how many sicknesses (2 Cor. xv. 45). This may serve very much to satisfy them in all the present inconveniences and disparagements which may now fall upon them. Secondly, as there shall be a liberty of the body at that time, so of the soul likewise. First, from those natural defects which are now adherent to it, as ignorance, forgetfulness, indiscretion, weakness of imagination. And secondly, from spiritual distempers and inordinacy of passion, &c. And this is another sweet encouragement likewise to all the servants of God, especially such as groan under their present weaknesses and imperfections and the bondage of a distracted spirit, which cannot perform holy duties with that freedom and enlargement as they desire. Thirdly, for their whole persons; there shall be a liberty of them also. They shall be free in their names from those reproaches which are here cast upon them. The use which we are to make of it is, that seeing there is such a blessed estate as this is to be expected, that therefore we would for our parts labour to have a share in it. Those who do not partake of a gracious liberty in this world, they shall never be partakers of a glorious liberty in the world to come. The second, which is the principal, is the correspondency of the creature to this condition, as that which is declared, that the "creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption" into this glorious liberty of God's children. In what manner this is to be done, and how this deliverance of the creature here spoken of is to be accomplished. Now it may be reduced to two opinions. The first opinion is this—that this deliverance of the creature from the bondage of corruption shall be by abolition or annihilation. The second opinion is this—that this deliverance of the creature from corruption shall not be by way of annihilation, but only by way of alteration; that they shall not be destroyed, but changed and become new; not for substance, but only for quality. The former is repugnant, and will not hold good upon these following grounds. First, because this future estate of the creature, which is here mentioned in the text, it is expressed to be such as is earnestly desired by the creature; but now there is no creature whatsoever which doth naturally desire the extinction of itself, but rather the contrary. Nature, it does abhor nonentity, and chooses the preservation of itself oftentimes, even in the greatest extremity. Secondly, that which shall befal the creature at the day of judgment is here in the text expressly called the deliverance of it. Now a deliverance does necessarily suppose the being and existence of that subject which is delivered. Thirdly, it is said here also in the text, that the creatures shall be delivered into the liberty of the children of God; that is, that they shall be delivered in like manner as God's children are delivered. But God's children are not delivered by annihilation. And so again, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be made like to His glorious body," &c. (Phil. iii. 21). It is not annihilated, but changed. And so it shall be also with the other creatures. Fourthly, it is not probable neither that such a special monument of God's power as the heavens and earth indeed are should be absolutely and totally abolished, and turned into nothing; but rather that they should still remain as so many pillars of His greatness and goodness to all eternity, as they prove to be in their excellent variety. The second opinion is that which makes this deliverance of the creature to consist, not in abolition, but in alteration; not in destroying of the substance of it, but only in changing of the qualities. The Scripture itself does expressly call it a restoration (Acts iii. 22). In fine, to sum up all, and to close up this present passage of the text before us: "Of the creatures being delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God." This expression may be taken three manner of ways. Contemporancively, as denoting the time of this deliverance. Causally, as denoting the occasion of this deliverance. Terminatively, as denoting the thing itself. We see here the great

benefit which we have by Jesus Christ, and our redemption through Him. In that He hath taken away all the evil and mischief which our sins have done unto us. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Spiritual liberty*:—The liberty of—1. A child's access to God. 2. A child's idea of his father's government. 3. A purified conscience. 4. Well grounded and confident hope. Liberty is not lawlessness. The first condition of liberty is harmony with the infinite will. How is that will made known? By the life and work of the revealed God—Jesus Christ. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Our present attainment not the end of God's design*:—We are quite certain that what we are cannot be the end of God's design. When I see a block of marble half chiselled, with just, perhaps, a hand peeping out from the rock, no man can make me believe that that is what the artist meant it should be. And I know I am not what God would have me to be, because I feel yearnings and longings within myself to be infinitely better, infinitely holier and purer, than I am now. And so it is with you: you are not what God means you to be; you have only just begun to be what He wants you to be. He will go on with His chisel of affliction, using wisdom and the graving tool together, till by and by it shall appear what you shall be; for you shall be like Him, and you shall see Him as He is. Oh, what comfort this is for our faith, that from the fact of our vitality, and the fact that God is at work with us, it is clear and true and certain that our latter end shall be increased. I do not think that any man yet has even got an idea of what man is to be. We are only the chalk crayon, rough drawings of men; yet when we come to be filled up in eternity we shall be marvellous pictures, and our latter end, indeed, shall be greatly increased. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The chrysalis state of man*:—In truth, we are like the chrysalis, if we suppose it to be gifted with a conscious intelligence. Faint motions come to it within its sleeping frame; its limbs, its wings, strive dimly to extend themselves; dreams come to it, through its physical changes, of another life, dim suggestions of some wonderful new birth; yearnings after something which it calls freedom, and light, and beauty, and movement. They deepen, and at last one day the shelly case falls off, the insect queen appears, and in the opened wings, and the swift flight, and the flowery food, and the blue sunlight in which it moves with joy, all the problems which disturbed but enkindled it are lost in the splendour of their answer. (*Stopford A. Brooke.*) *Divine Sonship*:—I. THERE ARE SOME MEN WHO ARE ACTUALLY AFFILIATED TO GOD. "They are the sons of God." What does this mean? 1. Not mere creatureship. All things, mountains and valleys, suns and stars, are the creatures of God; but we do not call them His children. 2. Not mere resemblance. Moral spirits everywhere are in some humble measure like God; yet we do not call devils His children. It means the possession of the true FILIAL SPIRIT. To give this is the great end of Christianity. II. THIS AFFILIATION IS CONNECTED WITH "GLORIOUS LIBERTY." 1. It is the purchase of an immense cost. The struggle of the slaves, the sacrifices of the patriot give value liberty. But this liberty has cost infinitely more. "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things," &c. 2. It involves the entire freedom of man. Some men are free in some respects and slaves in others. The limbs may be free, the passions may be free, the intellect may be free, and yet the moral heart may be in chains. This is the freedom of the entire man in all his faculties and relations. 3. It is in harmony with the rights of the universe and the glory of God. There is a liberty which implies the slavery of others. But not this. 4. It will never find a termination. The powers, the sphere, and the facilities, of this liberty will be ever increasing with the ages. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Nature perfected through man*:—1. To those who believe in free will, the difficulties attaching to the problem of *human* suffering are not formidable. If we take away all the wretchedness that springs from depraved hearts, it is a very small minimum indeed that is left behind. And then assuming immortality, there are surpassing compensations. But these principles are scarcely applicable to the lower creation. Much of the earth is desert, and the most fertile lands produce what is noxious more freely than what is good. And then animate nature is a pandemonium of internecine war and hunger and pain. And the explanations that help us somewhat in the enigma of human suffering scarcely serve us here. 2. But the Bible anticipates this difficulty, and foreshadows a conclusive answer in the text. Nature is linked with man. Its imperfections are explained by his. It falls and rises again with the fall and rise of man. Just as the law gives to the parent the custody of his own child, so God gives to man power over the world to modify it for good or evil at his will. Man stands in relation to the inferior creation as the Divine Mediator does to all mankind, and by the revelation of the glory of God's sons the

whole creation will be lifted at last to higher beneficence and more perfect majesty. J. S. Mill said that "the facts of the universe suggested to his mind, not so much the idea of a beneficent and all-wise Creator, as that of a demiurge dealing with an intractable material, over which he had not acquired complete mastery." The true demiurge is man. God has given him an all but unlimited stewardship over nature, and we should not go to her anarchic realms to find out what God is, but rather to find out what man is. The kingdom suffers through the misconduct of an ill-regulated king. A slave may be virtuous and kindly in character, but if his master be evil, he will have to be the instrument of many an unholy behest. However benign the qualities latent in nature, it will necessarily exhibit at times the sinister character of the lord it is compelled to obey. 3. The savage believes that every part of the creation is animate; and the truth in fetichism is that the spirit of man reflects itself in nature. His identical soul does not pass into it, but the shadow of what he is always rests upon it. It seems to echo the groans of his more conscious pain. It is feeling towards deliverance from the bondage into which he has brought it. 4. If we do not get our full share of nature's gifts, we are apt to charge upon it, and its Divine Author, things that in no proper sense belong to them. The street Arab will not think very gratefully of the kindliness of nature, even if he should be taken for a day into the country, and see the ripe cornfield, or fruit orchard, or vinery. Nature's hand may be lavish, and her heart large; but the famishing millions of Asia will not be very profoundly impressed by her kindliness, although they may hear that in Western America wheat is so abundant and so cheap that the farmers have had to burn it for fuel. To these poor wretches Nature will be tormentor rather than friend. Some time ago a political speaker gave utterance to an aphorism that would form an admirable comment upon the text. "The laws of nature," said he, "preside over the creation of wealth, but the heart of man over its distribution, in sympathy, justice, brotherhood." That defines the whole question. Nature, after all, is only truly beneficent to the subjects of her kingdom when she is helped by the intelligence, the justice, and the kindliness of man. I. GOD DISTRIBUTES THE BREAD HE IS EVER MULTIPLYING BY NATURAL PROCESSES, AFTER THE PATTERN OF THE SYMBOLIC MIRACLE IN GALILEE. He commits it into the hands of servants, who are to be the channels of His bounty. Suppose for a moment that the sordid elements hidden in some of the disciples had come to the surface in connection with that miracle. Judas slips into his capacious bag the food he should have distributed to a hungry woman and her babes. Thomas, dreading the privations that may come, keeps back that which should have been given to decrepit old men. If we could listen to the speech of weary men and fainting women as they creep to their homes, we might possibly hear some reflections upon the character of the Wonder-worker which would be very wide of the mark. Whatever failure there is in nature arises not from any lack of generosity in the Power that multiplies the bread, but from the selfish, partial, short-sighted distribution of the disciples. Nature provides for the needs of all, but man robs her of her rightful reputation to beneficence. He projects upon her kind and radiant visage the shadow of his own tyranny and greed. Nature waits for the coming of a higher life. She can only find that life through the regeneration of man. II. NATURE HAS FERTILE FIELDS READY FOR HER SONS THAT THE FOOT OF MAN RARELY TREADS. Every pauper in our unions might be a lord of wide acres without confiscating any one's property. Thousands of artisans prefer starvation wages to the life of the health-giving prairie. In the swarming lands of the East millions cling to the soil on which they were born, and risk death by famine every decade, rather than move to unoccupied lands that can be reached without crossing the sea. How is it that the beneficence of nature throughout these vast virgin territories is wasted? She shares man's bondage. She cries out: "Emigrate your destitute. I am ready to clothe, feed, and shelter them." Nature's challenge is not accepted, and why? We insist upon dealing with chronic pauperism by pittances and palliatives. And the selfish capitalist cries out too: "We can have no emigration schemes. The labour market will be depleted. When prosperity returns we shall not be able to get sufficient hands." And starving people themselves are reluctant to cut the tie that holds them to fatherland. The man pressed to emigrate thinks he might be taken in by the land-jobbers, or fail to find in his new neighbours the helpfulness he can always find in his own kith and kin. He will stand at bay in the presence of famine rather than run that risk. Nature has spread a table for the needs of every man. But in the craft, selfishness, and vices of man, a file of demon-terrors have been

planted about the table, that effectually ward off the famished crowds. Nature cannot rise above the moral level of those to whom she is placed in subjection. In his fall and in his rise alike man carries with him the creation of which he is the head. III. "The laws of nature preside over the creation of wealth," but "THE HEART OF MAN" ITSELF OFTEN PRESIDES OVER THE LAWS OF NATURE. Sceptics point to the fact that a great proportion of the earth is occupied by desert, and they suppose that they have disproved the idea of benevolent design. But may not the very desert be Nature's benign call to labour? Some of the most fruitful soils were once bog and rock and sand, and have become what they now are by human labour. The time wasted in a generation by the idle and dissolute would be sufficient to turn the Sahara into a fruitful field. There are very few deserts that could not be fertilised if the capital were forthcoming, and the difficulty nowadays is never to find capital, but to find men honest enough to direct and control it. The old prophecies about the blossoming deserts are meant to teach the lesson that the life of regenerate man will connect itself with the regeneration of nature. IV. WHEN WE JUDGE GOD BY HIS WORK IN NATURE, WE MUST LOOK AT THE IDEAL CAPABILITY HIDDEN IN IT, RATHER THAN AT THE ATTAINMENT. "The heart of man," no less than "the laws of nature," presides over the creation of all kinds of wealth. God created the life beneath us, with "a seed in itself," "put man into the garden, to dress it and keep it." These inspired traditions contain the important truth which will solve not a few of our difficulties, that God never meant nature to be looked at apart from its relation to man. Do not look to the berry of the hedgerow, or the dwarf flower of the bleak hill-top, for the gauge of God's beneficent work. Look at what fruit and flower may become under the most skilful culture. Judge God's work in man by all that man may be trained to, and judge God's work in nature by the potential excellence that sleeps in its mysterious depths. If some exquisite porcelain painting had been spoiled in the after-firing, you would not judge the artist by the blunder of a drunken furnace-man. Do not judge God's work by the blurred lines you see in nature to-day. It has been put in subjection to man, and can only be all that for which God has fitted it with the redemption of man. V. ALMOST ALL THE FORCES OF NATURE WAIT TO RECEIVE THE MORAL IMPRESS THEY ARE TO BEAR FROM THE CHARACTER OF MAN. If he is of the temper of Cain, or driven by the evil of others to the defence of life or home, he takes the iron furnished to him by the hills, and puts on it the broad-arrow mark of murder, welding it into death-dealing scimitar or assegai, mortar or mitrailleuse. In the hands of renovated man the metal shall lend itself to peaceful industry and navigation and travel. Unrenewed man takes the chemical forces of nature and manipulates them into charges which shall create a chaos of carnage and flame. These forces in the hands of man renewed in the image of God's gentleness shall be used only to tunnel the separating mountains and make canals and highways to bring near to each other the different fragments of the human family. Nature sometimes seems malignant in not only producing thorns and thistles, but plants infinitely more dangerous. But the very poison plants borrow their terror either from our ignorance or from the character with which the secret murderer has clothed them; and with the renewal of the human race in knowledge and humanity they shall be known only as healing herbs. If Nature sometimes seems cruel, it is because man has made her so. Nature can only be "very good," as at first, with man's full redemption. VI. Man's sovereignty over animate nature is not so obvious as his power over inanimate nature. And yet there is proof that THE DIFFERENT CIRCLES OF LIFE IN SEA AND FOREST AND AIR RISE AND FALL IN HIS RISE AND FALL. We may set aside the poetic but not Mosaic idea that just as soon as Adam sinned snakes suddenly developed poison bags, and wolves suddenly discovered a taste for blood, &c. And yet there is an inverted truth in the grotesque conception. It can be proved that the animal world has been inoculated with the virulence of man's worst passions. The temper of a dog or a horse is influenced by the temper of its master, and the dispositions of all domesticated animals may be modified by selective processes. Some of the most powerful denizens of the forest will never attack unless first attacked. Is not the domestication of animals a problem to which Paul had better clues than the modern naturalist? Is this the fragment of a lost empire, or the first conquest of a new empire that shall one day be completely won and harmonised by man's kindness and skill? "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." John teaches that as well as Paul. The four living creatures placed round about the throne are the symbols of the powers of nature. Conclusion: You are perhaps ready to say, "It will be little

compensation to the dumb creatures that have suffered, even if their far-off descendants should be brought at last into a kindlier world by the regeneration of man." Now I am not going to extenuate the cruelties practised upon dumb creatures. Our descendants will be almost as much ashamed of some of our cruelties as we are ashamed of the cannibalism of our ancestors. But are the sufferings of the brute creatures as great as we think? Imagination adds nine-tenths of the terror with which human suffering is invested. Unimaginative races suffer comparatively little under appalling mutilations. Brute creatures possess imagination in a very inferior degree, if they possess it at all. That may be accounted as an anodyne to soothe their pain. But is there to be no compensation? Some have held a resurrection of animals. There are perhaps only two objections to that view. Our interest in the animal world is so slight that it scarcely seems worth while. And in animal life we detect no forecast of immortality. Possibly in some of the lower spheres of life the doctrine of the transmigration of souls may be truer than we think. Some modern naturalists hold, and with a fair show of reason, that whilst human consciousness centres in the individual, animal consciousness tends to centre itself in the species. If that be the case, the suffering individual may be compensated in the improved and perfected life of the species. We may leave the "how" to the unseen Hand that will not fail to redress the disturbed balance in the minutest life. The whole creation falls in man, and is to rise again in his moral uplifting. That is the great lesson for us. (*T. G. Selby.*) **For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.**—*The travail of the creature*:—First, to speak of the creature's passion. It groaneth and travaileth in pain. We have a very full expression of the creature's estate in the time of this present world, which is full of misery, and perplexity, and distraction. And this they may be conceived to do in sundry respects. As first, from that hard labour which they are put to for the use of man. The ox, and the ass, and the horse, and such as these, they groan under the pains and travails which they undergo for our accommodation. Secondly, when they are made instruments to man for his sinning, as sometimes they are; there are divers creatures in the world which people choose to the fulfilling of their lusts, their pride, and luxury, and malice. Now in this respect, amongst others, they cannot but be subject to a great deal of trouble and vexation. And then thirdly, as in their service of us, so likewise, which we may take in with it, their dying for our use likewise. Lastly, the great disorder and confusion of all things here below; it does speak this much unto us, "The whole creation travails and groans"; that is, the whole frame and composure of the world, being a world of trouble. And this groaning, it does not so rest in itself, but it is carried to a further end, namely, to make the creature desirous of a better and happier condition, when it shall be freed from its present bondage. Therefore there is added to it another word, which signifies travail. The main use which we are to make of this groaning which at present lies upon the creature, is still to make us sensible and apprehensive of the heavy burden and grievousness of sin. Again, it teaches us also to take notice of God's hand, when it is at any time upon ourselves, and accordingly to be affected with it. And so much may suffice of the first thing considerable of us here in this verse, which is the creature's passion. The second is its compassion. It groans and travails in pain together. Whereby is signified to us the sympathising affection of the creatures which they do sustain in this present condition. First, the creatures do groan and travail in pain together; that is, they do so with us, who have the lordship and dominion over them. First, the creature groans and travails together under our sin. Take notice of that, the very unreasonable creature itself, it does in a sort lament and bewail the sin of man. This is expressed unto us in Jer. xii. 4. Again, as this sympathising of the creature with us in sin teaches us to lament and bewail sin in ourselves, so it teaches us also proportionably to bewail sin in others, and to have the same affections for them in their sins, as the creatures have for us in ours. The second is their sympathy with us in our misery, and not only with us, but with one another; we will here join them both together. The creatures, they are not only sensible of their own particular bondage, but also of the bondage of each other, and of us to ourselves. Of the bondage of one another (Hos. ii. 21). The heavens hear the complaints of the earth, and the earth hears the complaints of the corn, and wine, and oil, &c., of the bondage and misery of us men. Thus the sun was darkened by way of sympathy at the passion of Christ (Joel i. 18). This, it serves to shame the senselessness and hard-heartedness of many men and Christians in this particular,

us wanting this follow-feeling of the miseries of their brethren. The second is the extent of it, "until now"; that is, from the first fall of man to this present day. This shows us the long continuance of this vanity and misery upon the creature. This misery which the creature does thus groan and travail under hath been a long time upon it. This, it serves to satisfy and compose our minds in all the evils which here in this world we are exposed unto, as no new or strange matter. The third and last thing is the discovery of it, in these words, We know it. Know it? How? First, by the Word of God, even by Divine revelation. Secondly, by common sense, and daily and frequent observation. Thirdly, which is the worst knowledge of all, we know it by woful experience. "And not only they, but," &c. (ver. 23). These are a further argument which the Apostle Paul here brings to the Romans to confirm the former conclusion; to wit, that there is a future glory to be revealed hereafter in the saints. This he had proved already from the earnest desire and expectation of the creature. But here now he does further confirm it, from that desire which is in believers themselves. And not only they but we, who have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves, &c. First, the persons mentioned. First, all true Christians whatsoever, they have more or less received the Spirit; not the Spirit in the miraculous gifts of it, but the Spirit in the sanctifying, which is that which is here intended. A Christian is described not so much from his gifts as from his graces, which are most essential to him. This the children of God come to be partakers of upon a twofold account. First, by virtue of God's covenant made with them in Christ. Secondly, by virtue of that union which they have to Christ. Th emay therefore serve as a trial of our state. We may see what we are, according to this character now before us, as it is imprinted upon us. All true Christians whatsoever, they have more or less received the Spirit. The second point is this, that the Spirit of God in believers is in them in the nature of first-fruits. The first-fruits of the Spirit as it is here expressed. This it is both in regard of the graces of it, and also in regard of the comforts; and according to each of them, in divers and sundry resemblances, as pertinent thereunto. First, in regard of the order, and beginning, and first appearance of them. The first-fruits of the earth are those fruits which the earth first of all produces (Deut. xxvi. 2). We have not the following accomplishments of glory till we have received the first fruits of grace. These must go before the other, and first of all show themselves in us. There must be holiness before there can be happiness. There must be grace before there can be glory. The first-fruits are here in this life. Secondly in regard of their quantity; that is, their smallness and imperfection; we know how the first-fruits under the law, they were but a handful in comparison of the whole, but a small and little portion. Even so it is here in these things, which we now speak of: grace, it is here but a little, and comfort here, it is but small. We have not these things in the fullest measure, but sparingly communicated to us. Therefore we should not be discouraged when we reflect upon ourselves or others, which are near unto us in this particular; God will not cast away the first-fruits which Himself hath wrought in us. Though grace be but small, yet it is grace for all that, and a fruit of His own blessed Spirit, which He will not refuse, but rather make much of. This is not so to be understood as if we should rest ourselves satisfied with these. We must not be always in our first elements and beginnings of goodness. No; but we must labour to come up to perfection, and to proceed from one measure and degree of grace to another. We must not be always in our entrances, but go forward, and make a further progress in the ways of religion. Beginnings are well for beginners, but not for such as are long standers in Christianity. Thirdly, in regard of their signification. The graces and comforts of the Spirit of God here in this life. They are pledges to us of that eternal glory which we shall one day more fully partake of in the kingdom of heaven. Fourthly, in regard of their quality. The first-fruits they are commonly and for the most part the best and choicest, so are the graces and comforts of the Spirit above anything else—above parts, above gifts, above riches, above all outward excellency (Prov. iii. 14, 15). Fifthly, in regard of their influence. The first-fruits, they sanctified the rest as in (chap. xi. 16). If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy. Even so does grace make everything else which at any time comes from us. It puts an excellency and loveliness upon it. Men's parts, and estates, and employments; all they are, and all they have, and all they do—it is all sanctified by grace, and made well-pleasing and acceptable to God. Lastly, in regard to their dedication. The first-fruits were consecrated to God, and given to Him; so should all the gifts and graces of God's Spirit which He bestows upon us, we should devote

them, and consecrate them, and improve to His honour and glory. And that is the second part here observable, that the Spirit of God in believers is in them, in the nature of first-fruits. The third and last is this, that those who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit they do long and wait for more, even the full accomplishment of that which is begun in them. First, these first-fruits of the Spirit, they do not stay their longing and satisfy them. That the children of God, they are not satisfied with their beginnings of heaven here, though it be a mercy. The reason of it is this, because they are but small and imperfect. Look as there is a great deal of difference between the first-fruits and the full vintage, between the gleanings and the full harvest. These first-fruits they do not stay their longing. The second is, that they do further increase, and make them more eager. The more that Christians do partake of the comforts of the Holy Ghost in this world, the more earnestly do they desire the accomplishments of glory in the world to come. And there is a double reason for it. First, because the things themselves have so much sweetness and delightfulness in them. If the first-fruits be thus comfortable, what then are the fuller enjoyments? Secondly, their appetite itself is from hence so much the more increased, and thereby more enabled to favour and relish these heavenly delights. Their mouths are hereby put in taste, as I may so express it. This, it serves to give us an account therefore of the temper of men's spirits in this particular. We see whence it is that many people are no more enlarged in themselves with such desires as these. It is because they have no more pre-apprehensions of these things in themselves; which if they had, they would be otherwise affected. Men's desires are conformable to their dispositions, and employments, and exercises, and such things as they are most occupied about. The second is, the actions attributed to those persons, "Groan within ourselves, waiting," &c. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The whole creation groaneth under the burden of our sins:*—I. WHAT IS THIS GROANING? 1. There are two causes of groaning in sensitive creatures—(1) Labour and motion. So we may say the creature is worn out with hard labour to serve the uses of man; because it is in continual motion (Eccles. i. 5; Job xxxvii. 11). The earth is digged, rent, and deprived of its sabbaths. The rivers flow, and the sea hath its ebbs and tides; all things in the lower world are full of labour; and so the creature is wearied and worn out to serve man. (2) That which answereth to pain, is their passing away by corruption. The four elements being contrary one to another, are still wasting one another till all fail; heat against cold, and moisture against dryness. And besides, the creature is often blasted in its greatest glory and beauty. Look, as in a fruitful season the valleys are said to laugh with fatness (Psa. lxv. 12, 13); so on the other hand it doth, as it were, mourn (Jer. xii. 4, xxiii. 10; Isa. xxiv. 4, xxxiii. 9; Joel i. 10). Now this may come to pass, partly, by external drought (1 Kings xviii. 5); by storm and tempest (Prov. xxviii. 3); by vermin (Joel i. 4); by the irruption and invasion of an enemy (Isa. i. 7); by pestilential diseases (Amos iv. 10). 2. These things premised, we may see in what sense the creature is said to groan. (1) In a way of supposition. If they had reason, they would be thus affected. If God should open the mouth of the creature, as he did that of Balaam's ass, it would groan under its hard servitude (2 Pet. ii. 16). (2) By analogy. There is something in them which is a shadow and resemblance of reason. The grass groweth as if it knew how to grow; a stone in descending, falleth by a straight line as if it had reason to pick it out; so that they do in their kind groan under their present burden, till they be delivered from it. II. HOW ARE WE CONCERNED IN THESE GROANS? 1. They are upbraiding groans. We that have reason are more senseless than the creatures: the creature groaneth, and we are unaffected with our sin or misery (Jer. xii. 14). "For swearing, and lying, and stealing, and adultery, the land mourneth" (Hos. iv. 2, 3); but doth the swearer or the adulterer mourn? "The vines howl, and the fig tree languisheth" (Isa. xxiv. 7); but doth the drunkard mourn, because God is provoked by his excess? It is very observable that the prophets often turn from men and speak to creatures (Lam. ii. 18; Micah vi. 1, 2; Jer. xxii. 29: Jer. xxii. 29). 2. Awakening groans. The creatures speak by our thoughts, and groan by our affections; namely, as they excite us to sigh and long for a better estate. 3. Instructive groans. They teach us (1) the vanity of the creature, which is now often changed, and must at length be dissolved. (2) The evil of sin; it is the burden of the whole creation, of which it would fain be eased. (3) Patience. We live in a groaning world, and must expect to bear our share in the common concert. (4) Long-suffering. The continuance of the universe is much longer than the continuance of our lives; therefore let us not repine at so short a time, for the creature hath been in

a groaning condition these six thousand years. (5) Hope in long sorrow. We should keep up hope and expectation; the creature groaneth till now; yea, but still it expecteth its final deliverance (John xvi. 21, 22). The throes of our sorrow may be sharp; but the birth will occasion joy enough to countervail the tediousness of it. 4. Complaining, accusing groans. Because of the slavery we put them into they groan for vengeance (Hab. ii. 11). III. How WE KNOW IT? For who ever heard the groaning of the whole creation? 1. By sensible experience we know the vanity of the creature (Psa. cxix. 96). 2. The word affirmeth—(1) That this came in by man's sin; and the common apprehension of mankind attesteth it, that wicked men are unprofitable burdens of the earth, and bring a judgment on the place where they live. (2) That God having repaired the world by Christ, there is a better estate appointed for man; and so by consequence for the creatures, which are an appendage to him (Isa. xi. 6–9). 3. The Spirit improveth it, both the vanity of the creature, and our mortality, and the hopes of restoration (Psa. xc. 12; Deut. xxix. 2–4; Eph. ii. 8). Conclusion. From the whole take these corollaries: 1. That sinful man is an enemy to all the creatures, as well as to himself. The creation was a well-tuned instrument, upon which man might make music to the praise and honour of God; but the strings of the harp are broken; and there is nothing but jarring instead of harmony, and groans for praise. 2. That every particular land fareth the worse for wicked men (Prov. xi. 10, 11). 3. That we must not ascribe the alterations and changes of the creature to chance or fortune, but to God's providence punishing man's sin. 4. Why a righteous man should be merciful to his beast (Prov. xii. 10). There is burden enough upon the creature under which he groans. 5. The wonderful dulness of man in the case of sin and misery; so that the creatures are fain to supply our room. 6. Our great need to draw our hearts from the inordinate love of the creature, and to lay up treasure in heaven. What can we expect from a groaning creature? 7. How unsuitable sensual rejoicing is unto the state which we are now in. It is a groaning world, and here we seek our pleasures and contentments. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Creation groans*:—In the text we have—I. THE PARTY WHOSE UNEASINESS IS TAKEN NOTICE OF. "The whole creation." Yet this phrase is not so universal but that it admits of some exceptions. 1. The angels, for as they were not made for man, so they are already perfectly happy. 2. The devils. The creature here is subjected in hope (ver. 20), but the case of devils is hopeless. 3. The reprobate. Their groans shall never have an end. 4. The elect. Some of them are in heaven, and groan no more, and those on earth must also be excepted (ver. 23). Now, these being excepted, it remains that by the whole creation we understand the creatures made for the use of man. They are all uneasy. The visible heavens were made the roof of his house, the earth his floor; the sun, moon, and stars were made to be his lights, the air to breathe in, the wind to refresh him; the various produce of the earth to afford him necessaries, conveniences, and delights. He was lord of sea and land. Fishes, fowls, and beasts of the earth, were all at his command. While he stood they were all of them most easy in his service. But now that matters are reversed with him their situation is also reversed. II. THE AGONY THAT THE WHOLE CREATION IS IN. 1. They groan. This is a metaphor taken from a man with a heavy burden on his back, which so straitens him that he cannot freely draw his breath, and when he gets it it is a groan. 2. They "travail in pain." A metaphor taken from a woman bringing forth a child. III. THE MOURNFUL CONCERT THEY MAKE. They groan and travail together. Before sin entered into the world they all looked blythe, and as it were sung together; but now they have changed their tune and groan together. IV. HOW LONG THEY HAVE SUNG TO THE MELANCHOLY TUNE. "Until now." And how long it may be to their delivery we know not. But one thing we know, it will never be till the world end. V. THE AUDITORY THAT LISTENS TO THE MOURNFUL CONCERT. "We," believers, hear the mournful ditty. Can the shepherd not observe when the whole flock is crying together? Were all the men of a city groaning, and all the women travailing, that person must be deaf that would not hear the sound, and he must have an heart of adamant that would not be affected. But the whole creation, above us and about us, are groaning and travailing together, and that for our sakes; yet a sinful generation has no ears to hear, no heart to be affected with it, and with sin which is the cause. But serious Christians, awake to it, cannot miss to hear, and their ears affect their hearts. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Creation's groans*:—I. IN WHAT RESPECTS THE CREATURES ARE SAID TO GROAN, for many of them are properly incapable of groaning. 1. The sensible part of creation really groans, each after its

kind (Joel i. 18). 2. The whole creation appears in a mournful mood and groaning posture. The sun, the eye of the world, has often a veil drawn over it for many days, and he with the rest of the lights of heaven are covered with blackness, like mourners. The earth, trees, and plants upon it, lay aside their ornaments, and every head among them is bald. 3. The whole creation, if they could, would groan, for they have good reason (Luke x. 40). And it is well for man that the creatures cannot represent their misery as it deserves, otherwise they would deafen him with their complaints, and make him continually uneasy with their groans. 4. The Spirit of God is grieved, and groaneth (so to speak) in the creatures (Amos ii. 13). God is everywhere present, quickening, influencing, preserving, and governing all the creatures, according to their several natures (Acts xvii. 25; Heb. i. 3). Hence it is evident that the abuse done to the creatures riseth to God Himself. 5. Serious Christians groan in behalf of the creatures. II. WHAT DISTRESSES THE CREATURES SO MUCH THAT THEY GROAN? Why, truly, they got a large share of the curse to bear for man's sake (Gen. iii. 17). 1. The whole creation, by man's sin, has fallen far short of its beneficial and nutritive quality in comparison of what it originally was at its creation (Psa. cvii. 34). 2. The whole creation, by man's sin, has come far short of its ultimate end, the glory of God. The whole creation was made to be a book, wherein men might read the name of God; a stringed instrument, by which men were to praise Him; a looking-glass in which to behold His glory (Rom. i. 20). The book is as it were sealed. They have lost the art of praising, hence the instrument is hung by, being to little purpose in the possession of such persons. They care not for beholding His glory, therefore the looking-glass is overlooked, and very little use is made of it. Under this vanity they groan also. 3. The nature of the whole creation is in some sort altered. When God looked on His creatures He saw that they were very good (Gen. i. 31). Where is the creature that has no evil about it now? The sun sometimes scorches man and the fruits of the ground; at other times his absence makes the earth as iron that he cannot stand before the cold. The air often sickens and kills him. The distempered winds often sink him in the sea. Out of the earth, where he is to get his meat, sometimes he meets with poisonous herbs. 4. The creature has fallen into the hands of God's enemies, and is forced to serve them. When man left God, all the creatures would have left him if God had not subjected them anew to him (ver. 20). We see how far some of them have gone in renouncing their service to him (Job xxxix. 7, 8). 5. They are used by sinners to ends for which God never made them. Never did a beast speak but once (Num. xxii. 28, 30), and that was a complaint on man for abusing it to an end for which God never made it. And, could the creature speak to us, we would hear many complaints that way. There are two things which make hard service—(1) Continual toil without profit. The creatures have no intermission in their service (Eccles. i. 5, 8). But oh, where is the profit of it all? The sun never rests. But, alas! men see to sin more by it. The night waits on us in its turn, and the thief and adulterer get their lusts fulfilled with it. The air waits about us continually, and the swearer gets sworn by it, the liar lied by it. The earth and sea wait on us with their produce, and people get their sensuality and pride nourished by it. What wonder they groan to be brought to this pass? (2) Hard labour, and much loss by it (Hab. ii. 13). The creatures not only toil for vanity, but as it were in the fire, where they smart for their pains. The covetous oppressor's money groans (James v. 4). The oppressor builds his house by blood and oppression, and the very stones and timber cry out (Hab ii. 11). 6. The creatures partake with man in his miseries. They that have life live groaning with him; they are liable to sickness, pains, and sores as well as he; and they die groaning with him. In the deluge, in Sodom, in Egypt they were destroyed with him. The inanimate creatures suffer with him also (Deut. xxviii. 23; Job xxxvii. 10; Hosea ii. 21). III. HOW, AND BY WHAT RIGHT, CAN THE HARMLESS CREATURES BE MADE TO GROAN FOR OUR SAKES? 1. Because of their relation to sinful man, who has a subordinate interest in them, and that by the same justice that the whole which a malefactor has smarts with him (Josh. vii. 24). The sun is a light to him, therefore it is overclouded; it nourishes his ground, therefore its influences are restrained. His flocks furnish him with conveniences, therefore they suffer. 2. Because of their usefulness to him, by the same right that, in war, one takes from his enemy whatever may be of use to him. Pharaoh will not let Israel go, and the cattle, and the very trees and water of Egypt, smart (see also Hosea iv. 3; Hagg. i. 4–11). 3. By the same right one takes a sword from a man wherewith he is running at him. The creatures are idols of jealousy often to provoke God, and therefore He strikes

them down. Often, and most justly, does God punish sinners in that wherein they have sinned. 4. By the same right one takes back his loan when he gets no thanks for it, but, on the contrary, it is improved against himself (Hosea ii. 8, 9). 5. By the same right a prince levies a fine on a man when he might take his life. It is a mercy God deals not with ourselves as with the creatures for our sake (Lam. iii. 22). IV. THE IMPROVEMENT OF THIS DOCTRINE. The creatures groan out these lessons to us: 1. That God is angry with us (Hab. iii. 8). 2. That sin is a heavy burden which none are able to bear up under. 3. That God is a jealous and just God, who will not suffer sin to go unpunished. 4. That creatures are ever weak pillars to lean to (Eccles. i. 2). 5. That the service of the creatures to sinful man is an imposition on them (ver. 20). 6. That the creatures are wearied of the world lying in wickedness, and would fain have it brought to an end (ver. 19). (*Ibid.*) *The creation groans for deliverance:*—Apply the text to—I. THE UNGODLY. 1. The assertion will sound strangely to many ears, and there are certain outward appearances at variance with it. (1) There are, for instance, those who fix their hearts on coarse enjoyments. Are they not happy? Now, even if we granted that the drunkard or the impure had so effectually unstamped themselves of the image of God as to rejoice in the likeness of brutes, I should count them of all men the most miserable. I should be ready to weep for their dreadful delusion, as for a madman who fancies himself a king. But I need not grant so much as this. No such men are happy—their Maker has taken good care of that. There is conscience, a troublesome guest whom they cannot expel. I care not for their snatches of merriment, for that intoxication of the senses which every now and then makes the brain whirl and puts the blood on fire. I would tear the bosom open and look upon the heart, and at the bottom of that I see wretchedness. And, at all events, even if you would allow that all this was delightful, yet the end of it must come. What is there to uphold these pleasure-seekers in the valley of the shadow of death? "Then, indeed, all is turned into groaning and travailing!" (2) There is the same lack of peace and real joy in the world's vanities. I speak of squandering away noble capacities in baubles and playthings, which is just as absurd as giving pearls and diamonds for feathers or stones. That constant idle flutter of life, with no aims worthy of a rational being, not to say a never-dying soul, is not only the most contemptible, but the most miserable of existences! And it has its end; when the poor soul which has lived on shadows finds itself in the presence of realities more terrible than it has ever dreamed of, and God and eternity, and heaven and hell, supply for ever the place of the childish delights of vanity and the laughter of fools. Then to it comes the groaning and the travailing with pain. 2. When we have disposed of these two classes, we have removed the only exceptions to the sad statement in the text. (1) I need say little of those who wear out heart and soul in the pursuit of wealth, which the moth consumes and the rust corrupts, and which, some time or other, will turn into fire and burn into their very souls. If the earth were forced to render up all its treasures it could neither feed the soul nor satisfy one single noble desire or real want of the heart. And then, naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out of it. The pursuit of gain, like that of pleasure, is vanity and vexation of spirit. (2) So with those few nobler things on which men set their hearts, the pursuit of power and influence over our fellow creatures, and the cultivation of knowledge. God forbid that I should undervalue this, but it has no remedy for our real evils. We have affections, and it does not touch them—we have souls with boundless longings for an eternal resting-place, and it cannot supply it; we have sin, it cannot make us holy; we are subject to death, and it cannot strip it of its sting. And as for greatness, if you think that you would be better off because you might hide your heart-ache in a palace, why then thus much it can give, but no more (Eccles. i. 1, 12, 16, &c.). Out of this mighty kingly heart, the most capacious of wisdom and satiated with all which the heart could give, power, wisdom, pleasure, comes the same sad cry which gives an articulate voice to the universal sorrow. (3) So with youth. With what a sad pleasure we look at the light and buoyant hopefulness, unchastised as yet by failure. All this is beautiful, and if a thing would last for ever because it was lovely, this would certainly. But then comes sorrow and disappointment, and hopes prove dreams that lie and disappear when one awakes, and the joy of youth departs, and nothing remains but the profound conviction that though all that was so pure and beautiful has a home somewhere, yet certainly it is not to be found upon earth, which is a place of sighing and earnest longings for deliverance. II. THE SAINTS OF GOD. Are we to suppose that they too are groaning under the same

load, and that joy and gladness are not to be found with her, all whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace? Yes, to a certain extent. "We ourselves groan within ourselves." True, they are reconciled to God. True it is that peace and joy in believing always accompany the reception of Christ. But—1. They live by faith and not by sight—they have not received their reward, they have not entered into their inheritance. Surely they may be excused for longing and sighing after this. 2. They have indeed their earthly consolations, and take sweet counsel together with them who are heirs of the same hope; but what is this to that Divine company wherein is no sinner, nor so much as one soul which is not a-flame with the love of God. Surely they may be excused for sighing after this. 3. They, even now, see dimly, yet surely, reflected on the face of nature the image of the Creator. But what is this to the temple where there is neither day nor night, but the unveiled God is in the midst of it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 4. Their hearts are fixed on the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, &c. Surely it is but natural that they should mourn over all which detains them from this unutterable glory. 5. Their happiness is dashed by all the common sorrows of humanity; but more than this, they have a sorrow of which the men of this world know nothing. (1) They mourn over sin in themselves, subdued as indeed it is. (2) They mourn over it in others. It makes their hearts die within them, and their eyes fountains of tears to look at a perishing world. (*J. Garbett, M.A.*) *Groans of unrenewed and renewed nature.*—Highest and lowest are bound in one in Christ. God is One, and that oneness He impressed on His creation. Before the angels' fall all things in heaven were one. Before man's fall things on earth were one; one, by reflecting His image who is One, by fulfilling His will. And when disunion was brought in, God willed to knit all things again in one in His Son. Our text applies. I. To THE INFERIOR CREATION. 1. The very lowest have in some way suffered by man's fall, and they, too, shall in his restoration gain in glory. Mysterious power of sin, that it should so defile the very creation which itself partakes not of it! Mysterious efficacy of our Lord's atonement, that all things which shut not out God shall partake of the glory which He hath purchased! 2. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity." Nothing comes to any perfection; nothing continues at one stay; things subsist but by renewal and decay: all things by change foretell their own destruction (Eccles. i. 5–8). 3. But more! It was all formed "very good," to its Maker's praise; and now, through which hath not He been dishonoured? If beautiful, man loves and admires it, without or more than God, or worships it instead of Him. If any brings outward evil, man, on occasion of it, murmurs against its Maker. "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." "She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." What even now is not, even by Christians, offered to some Baal of pride, or luxury, or "covetousness, which is idolatry"? Of what sins are the daily supplies of our daily food, the occasion! "Whose god is their belly." In unthankfulness or luxury, or daintiness, or hardness of heart, if we have much; if little, through sin in procuring it. All "good things of this life" serve to pride when men have them, to covetousness if they have them not. And therefore, as God elsewhere saith that the whole earth is oppressed and loatheth and "vomiteth forth her inhabitants, through whom she is defiled," so now that regenerate man panteth after his heavenly home, "all creation groaneth and travaileth together" with him, that having, with him and for his sake, been "made subject to vanity" and corruption, it may, with him, be made partaker of incorruption and of glory. 4. Things animate and inanimate, as being the works of God, bear in themselves some likeness to their Maker and traces of His hands. Things seen speak of things unseen. And yet all around us and in us bear also sad tokens of the fall. As then to us death is to be the gate of immortality and glory, so in some way to them. Whence Holy Scripture says, "the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner." We are to die "in like manner" with the earth. As then we, so many as are in Christ, perish not utterly, but put off only corruption, to be, by a new and immortal birth, clothed with incorruption, so also they. Again, as Holy Scripture says of us, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," so in their measure of them; "as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed." The fire which burns up heaven and earth shall but free them from the wrongs which they endure at our hands, the bondage in which they have been held to corruption and vanity, and cleansing them from the stains of our sins,

shall yield them pure, "a new heaven and a new earth," so that as our dwelling-place has as yet been marred by our sin, then should the love of God for us overflow upon it, and the glory of His presence, which shall be our joy, shall array it too with a glad brightness, in harmonious sympathy with our joy (Psa. xcvi. 12, 13; Isa. xlv. 23). II. THE HOLY ANGELS. Not as though they can be thought to have pain and grief! Yet, as God is said to "grieve and repent of the evil," when He doeth that which we should do out of our imperfect feelings, much more may the holy angels be said to groan and travail in birth-pain together with us, while they long for our immortal birth, which is yet delayed by our sins. "They," says a Father, "who rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, must in a manner mourn over the sorrows of so many sinners." III. OUR NATURE. For in some sense all are "made subject to vanity, not willingly." Willingly man sinned, against his will he is punished. Willingly he binds himself with the cords of his sins; unwillingly often does he remain in them, galled by the bondage which he cannot break, or, with a maimed will, wishing that he could in earnest will. And so the heathen world yearns at times to be freed, and even, by its mute wretchedness, utters a speechless groan that it is an outcast from its God. And think you not that here, at your very doors, in the heart-sickening desolation of this wilderness of souls, there are those sick at heart at their estrangement from their God, and will ye be deaf to the common cry? Will ye by petty ineffectual efforts and cold prayers or heartless apathy, still, year by year, delay the time of their redemption? IV. THE SAINTS. 1. More do God's faithful ones mourn than all things around, because that for which they mourn, their remaining imperfect state, the strife of flesh and spirit, is their own. They mourn more because they know in some degree the blessedness for which they pant, God, for whom they long. Angels know, in part at least, the bliss reserved for us; yet they know not the weariness of our strife. Some who know the misery of strife and defeat, know not the object of their longing, who "have the first-fruits of the Spirit." 2. Weary indeed were an eternity of such a life as this! Imagine the fulness of all outward things, "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," all delights, all knowledge, all power, all honour, all possessed for ever. What weariness were it all, with our imperfections; what a void, without the face of God! All things by turn fatigue, as if to teach us that none of all is our rest. The more we would find rest in any, the more they weary. What so wearisome as continual amusement, or lengthened rest, or too long refreshment. Less painful are watchings and fastings, though these, if too lengthened, would wear out the frame. Yet, in itself, what vanity is this very variety with which God has tempered our weariness. To fill the body, lest it fail; to make it hunger, unless it be oppressed with food; to rest it, lest it be exhausted by labour; to labour, lest it be weary through repose; to sleep, lest it be worn with watching; to wake, lest it be listless through rest: what were life so lengthened out but a long disease? 3. But much more weary, even if victorious, our strife, sweetened though it be by hope. What to have that within still rising though still subdued, at variance with the perfect law of God! This, then, is chiefly the groaning whereof St. Paul speaks. The taste of heavenly things kindles but the more burning thirst. If such be the first-fruits, what the whole? If such it be, to "have tasted the good word of life, and the powers of the world to come!" what must it be to be for ever blessed through the bliss of God! And then what "bondage of corruption" again to sink down to earth! What weariness to those who love, to be absent from Him they love; to dwell in banishment by the streams of Babylon, while they remember the heavenly Jerusalem. Conclusion. How is it then that we have so little of these heavenly longings? Why have we so little of the apostle's desire to be loosed from his bonds, to be dissolved and be with Christ? Weary we all must be, sooner or later, of this world's vanities. How can we exchange mere weariness of the world for hopes of future rest in God? First, unlearn the love of self and of the world; secondly, contemplate God, His loving-kindness and His promised rewards. The eye of the soul must be made clean, else it cannot "see God." We cannot long for things unseen while we are so taken up with things of time and sense. We cannot love God while we love the world. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*). *Creation's travail and delivery*:—I. WHEN THIS DELIVERY OF THE CREATURES IS COME TO PASS. God, that has appointed a set time for everything, has also appointed the time for this, viz., at the end of the world (vers. 19, 21; Rev. xx. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 10, 13). II. WHAT DELIVERY THE WORLD SHALL THEN GET. The creature conceived vanity and misery from the time of Adam's sin, then they shall be delivered of that burden

(vers. 20, 21). 1. They shall fully answer their end, viz., God's glory; and if He design any benefit to man by them they shall not be plagued by vanity therein. (ver. 20; 2 Pet. iii. 13). 2. They shall be freed from all that evil that cleaves to their nature now by reason of man's sin. For now they have undergone a sad alteration, but then they shall undergo another (Psa. cii. 26; Rev. xxi. 1). 3. They shall no more be abused by sinners (vers. 21). 4. They shall serve God's enemies no longer. Their long captivity shall then be at an end (ver. 21). Then they shall bid an eternal farewell to the masters they served so long against their will. 5. All their misery, brought on them by man's sin, shall then be at an end. They have shared long with man in his plagues, but then they will get the burden off their back (ver. 21). As to the way this shall be brought to pass the Scriptures are clear—(1) That the world shall go all up in flames at the last day (2 Pet. iii. 7). (2) That upon the back of this conflagration there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1). The fire shall not annihilate, but only purge the metal from dross. III. CONFIRM THE DOCTRINE OF THE CREATURES' DELIVERY. As to this, consider: 1. That the great day is the day of the restitution of all things (Acts iii. 21). 2. That our Lord Jesus is the heir of all things (Heb. i. 2). God gave Adam the great estate of the world. But, rebelling against God, his estate was forfeited, because it depended on his good behaviour. The Second Adam coming in his room, the forfeited estate is made over to him (Psa. viii. 5-7; Heb. ii. 6-9). As Jesus Christ has a right to all the elect, though some of them are yet under the power of sin, but Christ at that day will recover them; so the creatures yet in the hand of His enemies, He will then restore, seeing they are all His by His Father's gift (Acts iii. 21). 3. That all the effects of the curse are to be gathered together, and confined for ever with the wicked in the lake (Rev. xx. 14, 15). The creatures' share of them, which makes them groan now, shall then be taken off, and they for ever made free. IV. IMPROVEMENT. 1. In a use of information. This teaches us—(1) That every wicked man shall at length get all his own burden to bear himself alone. Many a one takes a light lift because there are so many to bear a share of it. But remember, O impenitent sinner, the day is coming when the creature shall escape, and leave thee in the lurch for all. (2) That people had need to take heed how they use the creatures while they have them. The day of their freedom is approaching. Let us not abuse them to the service of our lusts, lest they witness against us at last. (3) That this world, and what is therein, passeth away (1 John ii. 17). What marvel is it that man dies, seeing he lives by deaths; but this bondage of the creatures will not continue, and God will support the life of man another way in eternity. (4) What glorious things will be the new heaven and the new earth! If they be so glorious, even while so far unmade by sin, how great must their glory be when they are again new made! (5) However large a share the wicked may have here, they will have neither part nor lot in them (2 Pet. iii. 13). 2. On use of terror to the wicked. (1) The misery that lies on any creature for thy sake, shall be taken off it, and laid on thee thyself. (2) As thou wilt be deserted of God, so thou wilt be deserted of the creatures in thy misery (Isa. viii. 21, 22). 3. On use of comfort to the serious and godly, who notice the groans of the creatures under sin, and join their own groanings with theirs. (1) The mournful spectacle of the creatures which you see to-day, if that day were come, ye shall see no more for ever. The day is coming when they will groan no more; nor shall you need to groan for them. (2) If that day were come ye shall also be delivered. You shall groan no more under your own burdens (John xvi. 20; 1 John iii. 2). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *The universal travail*:—To all seers this truth has unveiled itself. They seemed to catch the voice of a groaning. The deep sadness of the Homeric poems is plain. Tragedies, or sadder comedies, are the masterpieces of the golden age of Athenian literature. The interest of Greek philosophy centres round a cell where an old man lies cheering his friends with the hope of the welcome which awaits him "in some happy state," while the poison steals up to his heart. The wisest seer in Rome, weary of the rout of Olympus as the groundwork of the order of the universe, thought that a wild concourse of atoms, by some dull chance, shaping themselves into an order, might be the key to the mystery of life; but he left life sadder than he found it. Next came Christianity to guide men through new depths of pain to the issue in which the travail of man and nature shall ultimately fruit. In the Sagas the bright God dies under the stroke of destiny, and twilight settles over all. To Goethe Nature seemed "like a dumb captive sighing to be delivered," and

art was to be the minister of her redemption. And now the struggle for existence is the key to the order and progress of life. I. LET US SURVEY THIS TRAVAIL. 1. It begins very low down in the scale of creation. The very molecules are in ceaseless conflict, defeat, and victory, and yet everywhere an order and progress slowly evolve themselves out of all. 2. But as we pass up, the struggle becomes more intense and dire. Each particle of rock has as hard a fight for its place as the molecules of air and water. See how the mountains have writhed in their agony. Enter the gates of the hills and pass up to their wilder altitudes; trees are there, lonely, scattered, fighting sternly with rock and avalanche. A flower is there lifting up its delicate bell, pallid with its struggle, through a gap in the ghastly snowdrift. Nature grows more stern and savage daily unless mastered by man. The seeds of lovely and goodly things in her perish by millions. How rare a perfect crystal, frond or flower. And yet a gleam of beauty lies upon it all, prophetic of the glory in which all the gloaming shall issue at last. 3. As we ascend to the higher region of animate creation the struggle becomes apparently more dire and destructive still. The race is to the swift and the spoil to the strong everywhere. For one living thing that survives and brings forth a progeny myriads perish. Each organism has its parasite that preys on it inwardly, and its natural foe that is born to pursue it. But this ceaseless struggle is the method by which the Creator wills that stronger, nobler forms shall constantly be brought forth. The terror and anguish are largely in our imagination. There plays everywhere the light of a glad and victorious life. Even the prey of the carnivora seems emancipated from the terror; the pain is of the moment, while life on the whole is good to them and glad. 4. But the groaning becomes articulate and is burdened with anguish when we rise to the human world. The stains that redden the track of civilisation, the masses of victims who lie crushed under the chariot wheels of progress, the anguish that writes its record on the faces of the myriads who, too weak for life's struggle, fall out of the ranks of the advancing army, struggle awhile painfully in the rear, and then drop in broken-hearted despair, are appalling. When we read of heroic achievements our eye flashes, our blood fires. We have no thoughts for breaking hearts and desolated homes. But it is well to survey the wreck. Cæsar at the cost of a million men brought that country which has been one of the morning stars of progress within the field of civilisation and ultimately of the gospel. Read the history of the tremendous wars by which the Reformation finally upheld itself against Rome. And now in this nineteenth century the largest hosts which Cæsar could have put upon the field would have been swept like straws before the armies whose "blood and iron" have cemented the edifice of German unity. This thing for which millions of earnest hearts were pining seems to have been possible only through agony and blood. II. It is essential that we should understand that ALL THIS IS TRAVAIL. And this truth casts a glorious lustre over all. Out of all the struggle and wreck nobler and more beautiful things and beings are continually being born. 1. We have but to compare the huge saurian monsters with the finer, compacter creatures which have taken their place to measure the enormous advance. 2. Out of this tremendous struggle man somehow, somewhere appears; and with man a host of nobler forms, while the grosser fauna and flora rot into coal, or petrify into rock, to bear up the structure, and to minister to the life of the human world. 3. As man commences his career of development, we find him in a vision of a serene and holy order of life in which the dire confusion of the struggle shall be ended, and heart shall be knit to heart, and hand to hand in fellowship and love. He surveys the struggle, and the idea shapes itself within him that he is born to end it, and that in him the travailing creation is to see "the beginning of peace." Men have prayed for the realisation of this vision, fought, suffered, and died for it. 4. The dream is realised in Christ's "kingdom of heaven"; where the healing, helping, saving ministries are strong, where the weak have a stay, the poor a shield, the gentle honour and the good power, where all that is precious grows and flourishes. 5. We believe in development. We only ask our philosophers to help us to complete it. First the natural, then the spiritual, is the Divine order. The creature at its highest, by a last and crowning effort, brings forth the human form; man at his highest, by the supreme act of travail, in and through God, brings forth the new man. We yield ourselves to the force that draws us upward, and gain new and larger thoughts of the future developments of being as we rise. And then cometh the crowning triumph. "This corruptible shall put on incorruption." (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *The solidarity of man and nature*:—The physiologist is forced to see in the human body the intended goal and masterpiece of animal organisation which appears as nothing

else than a long effort to reach this consummation. As the breaking of the bud renders sterile the branch which bore it, so the fall of man involved that of the world. As Schelling said, "Nature, with its melancholy charm, resembles a bride who, at the very moment when she was fully attired for marriage, saw the bridegroom to whom she was to be united die on the very day fixed for the wedding. She still stands with her fresh crown and in her bridal dress, but her eyes are full of tears." The soul of the poet philosopher here meets that of the apostle. The ancient thinkers spoke much of a soul of the world. The idea was not a vain dream. The soul of the world is man. The whole Bible and this important passage rest on this profound idea. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The connection between man and nature:*—Just as the infectious disease in the dying sufferer contaminates the garments which he wore and the house which he inhabited, and throws its mysterious virus, and hence the seeds of death, into the atmosphere on all sides, so by the judgment of God the sin of the tenant has infected the whole of this creation, and cast in some sort and degree its seed of vanity and corruption everywhere. The disorder and rebellion in which the great usurper revels have obtained everywhere in the world which he won by his first temptation, and the peace and order of the rightful King have passed away before them. (*C. J. P. Eyre, M.A.*) *The upbuilding of the race:*—The unfolding of the race, taken as a whole, is like the building of an organ. There is no single pipe in an organ that is not made in the shop. Every little flute-stop, each particular note, is made and perfected there, and is tried on a machine kept for the purpose, to see how it sounds. And when all the various mechanical parts have been constructed and tested, they are carried to their destination and set up. There are things in an organ of which you have no conception. To you, when you look at it, there is a case outside. That is about what men see when they look at an organ. But to one who knows how it was built, it is a multitudinous mass of stops. When this organ was set up, all these stops could not be put in at once. Stop by stop, department by department, was put in separately. There are three or four organs in this organ. They took one of them and began with one stop or department of pipes, and put each in its place, and tried to see how it sounded relative to itself. Then they put in another stop, and tried to see how it sounded relative to itself. Thus they put in the different stops, and each one had to be in accord with itself. Not only that, but each stop had to be in accord with every other stop that was added. And there was a great deal of tinkering, of opening and shutting, of fixing of the reeds. Little by little each stop was put in accord with itself, and with its neighbours; and at last the complex whole stood complete. But the amount of groaning, and whining, and screaming, the amount of tapping, and cutting, and driving up, and driving down, that was required before we got this noble organ in tune, no man could imagine who did not make the instrument, or who did not stand by and see the process by which it was brought into harmonisation. The whole creation groans and travails in pain until now. You are not the whole of it. You are single pipes in one stop—in a family. You are to be attuned, each in himself—voiced; and you are to be attuned with each other. You are to be brought into accord with your neighbours. They, again, are to be brought into accord with the whole state. The state is to be brought into accord with the neighbouring states. The globe is yet to be touched by the hand of God; and every pipe in the vast multitude is to stand out with beautiful voice, and in absolute harmony with every other voice. We are in that process of upbuilding. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 23. **Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit . . . groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.**—*The firstfruits of the Spirit:*—I. WHAT THEY INCLUDE. 1. Pardon. 2. Regeneration. 3. Communion with God. II. WHAT THEY INSPIRE. 1. Hope. 2. Aspiration. 3. Patience. III. WHAT THEY PROMISE. 1. Final adoption into the family of heaven. 2. The glorification of the body. 3. The beatific vision. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The groaning believer:*—If our action upon and relation to the creature cause the creature to be subject to so much travail and pain, so, in return, the creature acts upon us, causing us to groan under a burden which it is hard to bear. The action is reciprocal, and our present life appears, for the time, to be a life of vanity and vexation of spirit, and is only partially mitigated by the prospect of the final redemption. Here, then, we have just the counterpart of the picture presented in ver. 22. I. A DESCRIPTION OF BELIEVERS. We who have the Spirit as "the firstfruits," or "the earnest" of our inheritance. Take man as man; compare his rich endowments with the shortness of his existence and the vanity of his occupation. And if we

pass to the Christian man endowed with the fruits of redemption, what we see of his present life only still more impresses us with a feeling of its vanity. For only look—1. At the endowments he possesses—the firstfruits of the Spirit. Not merely high mental powers, but the rudiments of a Divine nature fitting for communion with a holy God and fellowship with the pure intelligences of heaven. 2. At the expenditure by which these endowments have been secured. The wisdom of God, the work of Christ, and the operations of the Holy Spirit, are all involved in lifting any one up from the level of mere humanity to that of the family of God. 3. At the consciousness of the endowment as already possessed by us—awakening within us aspirations to do the work that angels do, having a desire to depart and be with Jesus—a training that seems to unfit for the low occupations of earthly life. Who has not wished always to be employed in some heavenly service when he has found himself tied down by the necessity of labouring for the bread that perisheth. II. THEIR PRESENT SORROWFUL CONDITION—"GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES." 1. There seems here a kind of retributive action. We have to do with earthly things, and as we have abused them so they seem to press upon us, and so to resent the wrong we have done them. There are sins that God has forgiven, but the effects upon our temporal condition can never be repaired. 2. The discrepancy that seems to exist between the endowment and the service to which it is here devoted. John Howe speaks of a man clothed in scarlet being set to feed swine to express such discrepancy. And, no doubt, if such were the will of God, a loving servant would yield, but then scarlet is not the proper livery for such a service. It may be a discipline for the servant, though it spoil his clothes. 3. It arises from the actual sufferings to be endured, and no affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. We are not Stoics, nor does God wish us to be. 4. There is the liability to temptation and sin. We may, after all, be overtaken by a fault, and whilst we are so exposed we may well groan. 5. There is our proximity to the evil around us. Righteous Lot vexed his soul with the filthy conversation of the wicked. III. THEIR COMING DELIVERANCE. 1. This is called the adoption, because it will be, not the initiation into the family, but the public inauguration of the heir, on reaching his majority, into the inheritance. 2. It is called the redemption of the body. Redemption is, in Christ, already complete. But in us it is progressive—(1) "There is, therefore, now no condemnation." (2) Death, when the soul is emancipated from all pollution. (3) The resurrection, when the body itself shall be emancipated (Phil. iii. 21). The subject teaches a lesson—1. Of patience. It is God's order. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have suffered the will of God." 2. Of hope. Look on. "Seek not your rest here." (*P. Strutt.*) *The inward groaning of the saints*:—Note—I. WHEREUNTO THE SAINTS HAVE ATTAINED. 1. "We have," not "we hope sometimes we have," nor yet "possibly we may have," nor we shall have, but "we have." True, many things are yet in the future, but we have already a heritage which is the beginning of our eternal portion—"the firstfruits of the Spirit," *i.e.*, the first works of the Spirit in our souls—repentance, faith, love. These are called the firstfruits because—(1) They come first. As the wave-sheaf was the first of the harvest, so the graces which adorn the spiritual life are the first gifts of the Spirit of God in our souls. (2) They were the pledge of the harvest. As soon as the Israelite had plucked the first handful of ripe ears, they were to him so many proofs that the harvest was already come. So, when God gives us "Faith, hope, charity," "whatsoever things are pure, lovely," &c., these are to us the prognostics of the coming glory. (3) They were always holy to the Lord. The first ears of corn were offered to the Most High, and surely our new nature, with all its powers, must be regarded by us as a consecrated thing. (4) They were not the harvest. No Jew was ever content with them. So, when we get the first works of the Spirit of God, we are not to say, "I have attained, I am already perfect." Nay, they should but excite an insatiable thirst after more. 2. What the saint has attained will help us to understand why it is that he groans. Having reaped handfuls, we long for sheaves. For the reason that we are saved, we groan for something beyond. Did you hear that groan? It is a traveller lost in the deep snow on the mountain pass. Hear another. The traveller has reached the hospice, is perfectly safe, and is exceedingly grateful to think that he has been rescued; but yet I hear him groan because he has a wife and children down in yonder plain, and the snow is lying so deep that he cannot pursue his journey. Now, the first groan was deep and dreadful; that is the groan of the ungodly man as he perishes; but the second is more the note of desire than of distress. Such is the groan of the believer, who, though rescued and brought into the hospice of Divine mercy, is longing to see

his Father's face. II. WHEREIN ARE BELIEVERS DEFICIENT? In those things for which we groan and wait. 1. This body of ours is not delivered. As soon as a man believes in Christ, his soul is translated from death unto life, and the body indeed becomes a temple for the Holy Ghost; but the grace of God makes no change in the body in other respects. The greatest piety cannot preserve a man from growing old, nor deliver his body from corruption, weakness, and dishonour. Nor is this little, for the body has a depressing effect upon the soul, and its appetites have a natural affinity to that which is sinful. The body is redeemed by price, but it has not yet been redeemed by power. Now this is the cause of our groaning. The soul is so married to the body that when it is itself delivered, it sighs to think that its poor friend should still be under the yoke. If you were a free man, and your wife a slave, the more you enjoyed the sweets of freedom, the more would you pine that she should still be in slavery. And so, again, with the saints in heaven. They are free from sin, but a disembodied spirit never can be perfect until it is reunited to its body. They do not groan, but they long with greater intensity than you and I for the "adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." 2. Our adoption is not manifested (*cf.* ver. 19). Among the Romans a man might adopt a child privately; but there was a second adoption, when the child was brought before the authorities, and its ordinary garments were taken off, and the father put on garments suitable to the condition of life in which it was to live. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him"; that is, God will dress us all as He dresses His eldest Son. Cannot you imagine a child taken from the lowest ranks of society and adopted by a Roman senator, saying to himself, "I wish the day were come when I shall be publicly revealed, and be robed as becomes my rank." Happy in what he has received, for that very reason he groans to get the fulness of what is promised him. So it is with us. 3. Our liberty is incomplete. As to our spirits, we have liberty to soar to the heavenly places with Jesus Christ; but as for our bodies, we can only roam about this narrow cell of earth. 4. Our glory is not yet revealed, and that is another subject for sighing. "The glorious liberty" may be translated, "The liberty of glory." We are like warriors fighting for the victory; we share not as yet in the shout of them that triumph. Even up in heaven they have not their full reward. They are waiting till their Lord shall descend from heaven, and the whole of the blood-washed host, wearing their white robes, and bearing their palms of victory, shall march up to their thrones. After this consummation the believing heart is groaning. Let me show you again the difference between a groan and a groan. Go into yonder house: there is a deep, hollow, awful groan. Go to the next house, and there is another much more painful than the first. How are we to judge between them? We will come again in a few days: as we are entering the first house we see weeping faces, a coffin, and a hearse. In the next there is a smiling cherub, and a mother who joys that a man is born into the world. There is all the difference between the groan of death and the groan of life. It is not the pain of death we feel, but the pain of life. We are thankful to have such a groaning. The other night two men working very late were groaning in two very different ways, one of them saying, "Ah, there's a poor Christmas day in store for me." He had been a drunkard, a spendthrift. Now, his fellow workman also groaned. On being asked why, he said, "I want to get home to my dear wife and children. I have such a happy house, I do not like to be out of it." So the Christian has a good Father, a blessed home, and groans to get to it, and there is more joy in the groan of a Christian than in all the mirth of the ungodly. III. WHAT OUR STATE OF MIND IS. A Christian's experience is like the rainbow, made up of drops of the griefs of earth, and beams of the bliss of heaven. 1. "We groan within ourselves." It is not the hypocrite's groan, who wants people to believe that he is a saint because he is wretched. Our sighs are sacred things. We keep our longings to our Lord. 2. We are "waiting," by which I understand that we are not to be petulant, like Jonah or Elijah, when they said, "Let me die," nor are we to sit still and look for the end of the day because we are tired of work. We are to groan after perfection, but we are to wait patiently for it, knowing that what the Lord appoints is best. Waiting implies being ready. We are to stand at the door expecting the Beloved to open it and take us away to Himself. 3. We are hoping (ver. 24). Conclusion: Here is a test for us all. You may judge of a man by what he groans after. Some men groan after wealth, some because of their great losses or sufferings. But the man that yearns after more holiness, that is the man who is blessed indeed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Christian experience and aspiration:—That this passage is a magnificent one few would deny. The complaint we are likely to make of it is that it is too magnificent; that it transports us into an atmosphere which scarcely any one but a saint or apostle can be expected to breathe. We need, we think, not grand anticipations of a future, but some help in combating the petty temptations of each day. But if we look at these words again we perceive that the man who wrote them must have been more, not less, conversant than we are with the sufferings which common men are experiencing. He had shut himself in no cloister. He hears arising from all creation a groan coming from the sense of actual misery; and the clearest, fullest interpretation of these words may be found in our daily walks. The streets of London can tell us more about the sense of them than all the folios of commentators. I. St. Paul tells the Roman Church that HE AND THEY WERE WAITING FOR THEIR ADOPTION, or their full recognition as sons of God. There has been a proclamation to men that God has claimed them, without respect of race or circumstances, as His children in His only-begotten Son. And any message less than this has been powerless to satisfy the necessities of men, and has produced no permanent moral effect upon them. If we use all arguments of fear, all arts of rhetoric to convince men that they ought to take care of their souls, a few may be startled out of a sleep to which they will return again. But the more part will feel that you are bidding them forget the real earth for the sake of a heaven which they can only dream of. But if we will recur to the old and simple scriptural phraseology of the hearth and home—if we will bear witness to men of a Father who has sent the elder Brother of the household to bring them into it, to endow them with the highest rights of children, we shall find that it can bring forth as clear a response from the men of the nineteenth century as from the men of the first. II. THE QUESTION HOW THIS CONDITION OF SONSHIP IS CONSISTENT WITH SORROW COULD BE ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO BELIEVED THE SON OF GOD TO BE THE MAN OF SORROWS. In the light of Christ's passion all suffering became transfigured. It was the filial token (Heb. xiii. 8). But St. Paul did not intend that they should hug pain and sickness, because a deep truth might be learnt from them. He admits them in themselves to be discords and anomalies. He could not bear to contemplate it, if he were not sure that they were no parts of its original order; and that not being parts of it they were to cease. The revelation of the Son of God in weakness and pain and death, had vindicated the title of sons of God for creatures enduring weakness, pain, and death. The revelation of the Son of God in the glory of His Father would reveal them in the glory for which they had been created. III. BUT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED IN US. Not simply that no sufferings are worthy to be compared with final rewards. The sufferings of the present time are those of the whole creation, of which man is the head, to be excluded from which would be to be excluded from human sympathy, from fellowship with the great Sufferer. So far from being exempt from them, Paul knew more of them than any, but the blessing of the firstfruits of the Spirit is the possession of a clearer, stronger hope than others. Yet that hope is not a hope for himself, but for his kind. IV. "FOR THE CREATURE WAS MADE SUBJECT TO VANITY, NOT WILLINGLY, BUT BY REASON OF HIM WHO SUBJECTED THE SAME." Here is the apostle's explanation of the puzzle which has tormented men ever since evil entered into the universe. That the guilty will be punished is reasonable, in this our consciences acquiesce. But there is a guiltless part of creation which endures misery. How can that be just? St. Paul feels the difficulty, and this is the refuge. The creation has been made subject to vanity; a very fitting phrase to express the apparent frustration of the end for which it has been called into existence. He frankly admits that the bondage which the mere animal undergoes is not its own fault, and that it has a Divine origin. But in doing so he affirms two mighty propositions—1. That the innocent, involuntary creature is made the victim of vanity and death for the sake of that higher being who has broken loose from that will which he was created to serve. 2. That this subjection is temporary, and contains the promise of a future emancipation, when the end for which it was ordained has been accomplished. Less than this such language (vers. 20, 21) cannot mean—that all the sufferings to which the earth and those that inhabit it are liable, are permitted and designed for the education of those who bear the nature which the Son of God bore; and that no suffering which contributes to this end is, in the judgment of the All-good and the All-wise, excessive or wasted, not even the sufferings and death of the Innocent, the Holy One. But this end being attained, all the forms of physical evil will also be overcome; the involuntary creation will be delivered

from its fetters and its shame; the whole regenerated world, in its primal order and harmony, will offer up its sacrifices, through its High Priest and Restorer, to His Father. V. HIS TEACHING, taken fully and literally, INVOLVES A RENEWAL OF THE WHOLE ANIMAL CREATION. If there is to be a restitution of all things, such as God, who cannot lie, promised by His holy prophets since the world began, I cannot understand how that element should be wanting to it. Must the creatures which have ministered to man's wants and delights be shut out from the renovation of our race, by whose degeneracy they are so deeply affected? From these thoughts others are nearly inseparable. The idea of a redemption of nature as consequent upon a redemption of man has often dawned upon the man of science and upon the artist. The one has seen that the laws of the universe can only be fully vindicated when the self-will which has set those laws at defiance has been extirpated; the other, from his deep sense of the sympathy between man and the forms which he contemplates, has been certain that such a revelation of loveliness awaits the purified vision as the highest prophet has only guessed of. VI. THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY which St. Paul waited for, MUST INCLUDE THE REMOVAL OF WHATEVER HINDERS THE SENSES FROM RECEIVING CLEAR AND SATISFACTORY IMPRESSIONS OF THE WORLD with which they are intended to converse. But there is a more obvious force in the expression. The body is enslaved to disease and pain. These are the signs that Death has rights over the body, and that he will assert his rights. St. Paul says that there is another who has an elder, stronger right over it; that Christ by going into the grave and rising out of it has asserted and made good His right; that He will fully exert it. This redemption St. Paul felt that he was sent to proclaim to men because he was sent to proclaim their sonship to God. And so his teaching assumed a profoundly practical character. Fully believing in this redemption men are never to confess Death as a master. Our homage to Christ, our faith in our Divine sonship, implies that we expect a victory for the body; that it was not made so fearfully and wonderfully for nothing; that it shall at last be made like to the glorious body of Him who will subdue all to Himself. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The aspirations of a Christian soul*:—It is impossible to deny the splendour of the idea contained in this passage. But we are tempted to question the possibility of ever realising it. We fancy that such lofty yearnings rise too far above the common highways to give us any strength in meeting the temptations and work of the every-day world. Such aspirations might thrill the spirit of an apostle or a lonely saint, but they are too unearthly to be realised by us. We need some more homely teaching to enable us to meet the temptations of their career. But Paul was no solitary saint, and the men to whom he wrote were surrounded by earthly temptations of the fiercest kind. And yet this practical apostle tells those tempted men that both they and he were praying for the redemption of the body, And in our day such aspirations, instead of being too lofty for our common life, are the only safeguards against its prevalent snares. Note—I. THEIR NATURE. In illustrating this we must dwell on the two phrases on which this nature depends. "Firstfruits" manifestly refers to the Jewish custom of presenting to God the earliest ears of corn or fruit as a thanksgiving and a prayer. The influences of the Spirit therefore are not merely a promise of the future, they are the actual commencements of the golden harvest of eternal glory. The other phrase, "groaning for the adoption, *even so far as unto* the redemption of the body," means that we are adopted now, but that the body in the bondage of corruption stands in the way of the full realisation of our sonship, and therefore "the firstfruits of the Spirit" are a cry for its perfect deliverance. Note then—1. That the "firstfruits of the Spirit" are a prayer for perfect adoption. We know that "*now* we are sons of God"; but the more we realise that fact, the more profoundly do we feel that the full manifestation has not yet come. Let us illustrate this by looking at three great "firstfruits of the Spirit," experimentally. The Spirit reveals to us our adoption—(1) By revealing the love of God. There are times when we feel that He loves us; and this feeling clothes life in splendour, and brings into the heart the balm and music of heaven, making poverty, toil, sorrow, endurable things. But is not that always a longing, a prayer? The very greatness of that love—the very feebleness of our emotion in responding to it, make us pray to feel it more. (2) By the gift of spiritual power. The sign of a son of God is that he is no more in bondage to the passions and habits of the old life. But are we ever kings over ourselves as supremely as we would be? And there, again, "the firstfruits of the Spirit" are a longing for a perfected adoption. (3) By the gift of Divine peace. But because that so soon fades, who does not long for the sabbath of eternity? 2. We can now see how these aspirations rise, as

Paul says, into a prayer for the redemption of the body. Our present body is the grand hindrance to the attainment of perfect sonship: thought wears out its energies; deep emotion exhausts its vigour; its infirmities, sicknesses, decays, hinder the prayers and aspirations of the soul. And then, above all, the power of the body to perpetuate the influences of past sin renders it a hindrance to the man who feels the firstfruits of the Spirit. And thus it is that we who have the "firstfruits" must cry for the redemption of the body, because we know that until then we can never reach the love, power, and blessedness, which belong to us as sons of God. II. THEIR PROPHETIC HOPES. We hope—1. For the redeemed body; not for the departure of the present body, but for its redemption. We pray not for the death of our present powers of sight and hearing, but for their purified and intensified life. And now mark the prophetic cries which lie hid in that hope. Because it is a firstfruit of the Spirit, it foretells that every bodily power shall come forth, not crushed, but made stronger and brighter from the touch of death. 2. For the redeemed world. This world with all its beauty is fitted rather for a school of discipline than a home of purified spirits, and hence we hope for another and purer world for our final abode. Now mark again how this hope is prophetic of what shall be. Paul, in the context, affirms that the pain and death of the creature form one loud prophetic wail for redemption, *i.e.*, the whole creation joins the Christian cry for a world in which suffering and evil shall have vanished. III. THEIR PRESENT LESSONS. 1. We need them all. Let a man lower his hopes and limit his aspirings, and he will easily decline into a low spiritual life in which he will be "like a reed shaken by the wind," before temptation. Only he who daily claims the whole eternity of hope as his own is guarded against the snares and pollutions of the world. 2. We must live them all. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Christian privileges and prospects:*— I. THE DESCRIPTION WHICH IS GIVEN OF CHRISTIANS BY THEIR PRESENT PRIVILEGES. In this chapter we have a remarkable distinction of character. Those in a state of nature are described as in the flesh, as carnally minded, &c. Those in a state of grace are said to be of the Spirit, to mind the things of the Spirit, to be spiritually-minded, to be led by and to walk in the Spirit. 1. Their character, therefore, is formed by the influences of the Spirit (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27). Our Saviour stated the necessity of being born of the Spirit, and he told His disciples that He would send them the Spirit of truth, &c. The apostle says that we are to "be washed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost," &c. By this the earthliness of the affections is refined, and the whole soul is changed into the image of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." 2. Those who have the Spirit are placed in a high and beautiful relationship. They have adoption into the family of God (ver. 14–16; Gal. iv. 4–6: 1 John iv. 1, 2). The heir of God has to remember that much of his good is future, and he must sketch out to himself those prospects where faith will be lost in sight, and hope in endless praise. "We have the firstfruits of the Spirit." Whatever blessings the Spirit has bestowed, or whatever characters He has impressed, are pledges of the future possession. Has the Spirit destroyed the love of sin, induced a desire for purity—inspired faith, hope, love? These are all to be regarded as pledges of what you shall be in the future; your heaven begun upon earth. These are the seeds of the harvest of glory; the roots of the future tree of blessedness; the embryo of the perfect man; the outline of the picture which shall be finished in eternity; the first streaks of light; the first gleams of that dawn which shall brighten into the splendour of meridian glory. II. THE STATE OF MIND IN WHICH THEY ARE CONFESSED TO EXIST. "We groan within ourselves," &c. These emotions are to be considered in connection with similar emotions through the creation. The whole creation is represented as longing for the glorious period when all its misery shall be over, as if in the throes of a new birth. Yes! and man and brute, hills and valleys, earth and ocean, times and seasons, are passing onwards to a glorious deliverance. Yes! and every cloud that darkens, and every affliction that troubles, and every injury which brute sustains from brute, and the rolling of the storm, and the belchings of the volcano, and the commotions of the deep, and the tremblings of the earthquake, are to be all considered as the pangs of nature passing onwards to that end. Oh, when shall these pangs cease! Then the apostle speaks of the children of God, and he declares that they are not in a higher sphere. We are all in this respect in one mass, "we also groan," &c. 1. Our state of mind is one which involves—(1) Pungent sorrow on account of present imperfection. (*a*) Sorrow on account of what we see in the world around us. I look on the world around me; it came from the hand of God; it abounds with beautiful views; but still it affords cause for mourning. Look at its

sinfulness. It is a world of wickedness. See its misery. Because there is sin there is sorrow. We witness the groanings of poverty, the wasting of disease, the scorn of contumely, the oppressions of power, &c. (*b*) Sorrow when we consider our own characters, and our individual experience. Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am free from sin"? Who has not cause to exclaim with Paul, "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members," &c. Again, we are not only sinners but sufferers. We have much to enjoy, but we have also much to endure; and who among you is not ready to say, "we ourselves groan within ourselves," and long for wings, "that we might flee away and be at rest"? (2) Earnest desire as to the future. "We wait for the adoption," &c. Civil adoption was private and public. Now every child of God is adopted privately at the time of conversion; but there is a day appointed for his public adoption when he will be declared as a son of God. We as Christians wait for this. The time when this shall be is not revealed. But the time shall come when all the redeemed shall appear with Christ in glory. 2. The emotion in reference to this fact, "we wait for it." We stand like men on the summit of a lofty mountain, taking a transient view of the intermediate landscape and looking to the distant horizon for our intended dwelling. We wait for it, our minds are fixed upon it, our desires are influenced by it. Prove that you wait for it—(1) By avoiding the pollutions of the world. (2) By refusing to place your affections on the world. "If ye then be risen with Christ," &c. (3) By showing in constant and active exertion all the principles of the vocation by which you are called. Are you called to love? then love; are you called to vigilance? then be vigilant; to zeal? then be zealous. (4) By anticipating with joy the time of your departure from the world. (*J. Parsons.*)

The yearning of the good for deliverance:—1. That is groaning, which is here again considerable two manner of ways. (1) For the simple passion: we groan. Where that which we may observe from it is this, that even the children of God themselves do groan while they abide here in the world. (2) There are two things especially which are the ground and occasion of this groaning, whereof we now speak, in the children of God; and that is, first, the burden of sin. The stain and defilement of sin. The proneness and inclination to evil which is in the heart. As proneness to evil, so on the other side indisposedness to good. Distraction in duty and weakness and imperfection of performance. The sins of daily incursion, as we commonly call them for distinction sake, in opposition to greater miscarriages; these slips and failings which we fall into before we are aware in every business. 2. Seeing God's children do thus groan under their sins, let then all men take heed how they do at any time upbraid them with them. This serves to confute that opinion which prevails with some kind of people, as if a justified person were exempted from all grief for sin. But secondly, as the servants of God groan under sin in the stain of it, and so far forth as it defiles, so likewise under the guilt of it, and so far forth as it exposes to punishment. The second is taken from misery and the affliction which they meet with here likewise. This proceeds, first, from the consideration of their common nature. Secondly, it proceeds also from grace, forasmuch as they have a real apprehension of deliverance which belongs unto them. This is that which puts them upon groaning to be delivered, because by faith they know that there is One that hears their groans and takes notice of them. Thirdly, it is sometimes also from weakness and want of faith, especially there where it is in the excess and extremity of it. This teaches them accordingly what to expect while they live here below. This world is a vale of tears, wherein the best that are are subject to fighting and groaning. The second is in the additional illustration. And that is in ourselves. Under which phrase and manner of expression we have divers things intimated to us as concerning this sighing and groaning of the children of God, three things especially. First, that it is secret and hidden, it is not always discerned; we groan in ourselves, that is we groan to ourselves. This groaning, it is such as all men are not sensible or apprehensive of nor do take notice of it. That which is done within a man, it is done without the privacy of another, because no man knows the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is within him. This is the dispensation of God's children to be mourning and humbling of themselves for the sins and miscarriages of others, while the parties themselves that occasion it are little sensible or apprehensive of it. Thus does many a godly parent groan for the miscarriages of his children. This, it proceeds from a kind of modesty in them, as in all things else as suitable to the principles of religion. They pray in secret, and give in secret, and grieve in secret. The second is hearty and serious. In ourselves, that is from

ourselves. The groanings of God's children they are not slight, or perfunctory, or superficial; but such as proceed from a deep sense and apprehension of their misery, and the condition in which they are. The third thing implied in this expression is the propriety or peculiarity of their grief. In ourselves, that is by ourselves. We groan within ourselves; that is within our own compass and in our own capacity. We groan not only as beasts do, which are acted only by common sense; nor we do not groan only as men do, which are acted only by natural reason; but we groan moreover as Christians, which are acted by religion and grace, and so have a grief in that respect which is proper unto them. This peculiarity of grief, and so consequently of groaning in God's children, is founded in these considerations. First, their peculiarity of employment; they have such businesses wherein they are exercised, as none have but they. Peculiar employments breed peculiar distractions and cumbrances which are attendant upon them, because they have still some miscarriage which these are liable unto, and miscarriage is a cause of grief. Now God's children they have other businesses and employments than other men have, and which they seriously give themselves to. Secondly, peculiarity of contentment; every different comfort has a different grief annexed unto it, either in the deprival or straitening of it. The more delights that any man has in any condition, the more crosses is he likewise subject unto from that condition when these delights shall be suspended. The children of God they therefore grieve by themselves because indeed they joy by themselves. Thirdly, peculiarity of design; they have proper and peculiar ends and aims which they propound to themselves. Look, as any men's desires are, the more oftentimes are their griefs, because desire and hope disappointed it makes the heart sad. Now God's children they have their peculiar desires and aims and ends: as the glory of God, the good of the Church. The crossing of which unto them is an occasion of greater grief in them. Not so neither. For, first of all, as a Christian has peculiar grief, so he has peculiar joy and comfort which attends it. Secondly, this proper grief of a Christian is a cause of greater comfort to him. His joy is not only joined with his sorrow, but flows from it, according to that of the apostle (2 Cor. 7–10). And so now I have done with the first action attributed to believers in this text, and that is groaning, with the amplification of it; "We ourselves groan within ourselves." The second thing here attributed to the godly and true Christians is waiting, in these words, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Where we have two things exhibited to us. First, it is an expression of their patience. They wait, that is, they stay (2 Cor. iv. 8). The ground hereof is first of all this in the text, because they have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, which though they do not altogether satisfy them, yet they do at least very much qualify them, and occasion this patience to them. Secondly, because they have a spirit of faith whereby they see all those things which do at present befall them working good unto them. The second is earnest expectation. God's children they do wait for their redemption, that is they do look and long for it (thus Tit. ii. 13). First, their present evils and afflictions. They wait because they groan, as it is said before of the creature in vers. 19, 20 of this chapter. Secondly, their present feelings and pre-apprehensions. They have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, and these beginnings do so much the more increase these desires in them. Thirdly, love to Christ. They desire it and long for it as a bride does for the coming of her beloved. Lastly, from the condition of a believer in regard of grace, which is here very weak and imperfect. This waiting of the saints thus declared, it is useful to sundry purposes to us: First, for the intent to which it is brought here in the text, and that it is to assure us that there is such a thing indeed as this is, namely, a time for Christian redemption from their present bondage, and enjoyment of a glorious liberty which shall be bestowed upon them. This it does appear from hence because the children of God themselves do desire it. Secondly, here is a discovery of men's conditions what they are. Those who are indeed God's children, they do not only groan, but wait; not only mourn under present misery, but also pant after future glory, &c. A worldling is all for the present and to have his contentments here; but a Christian is not so satisfied. Thirdly, Let this quicken us to this groaning and heavenly disposition, and make us labour to find it in ourselves. First, for the object propounded, and that is adoption. Adoption in Scripture-language is of a various consideration, and is taken three manner of ways. First, for the adoption of election, whereby God, before ever the foundations of the world were laid, did appoint us, and set us out to be in the number of His sons and daughters. The second is the adoption of vocation, whereby we being effectually called by the preaching of

the gospel, and justified by faith, are by the spirit of adoption incorporated into Jesus Christ and confirmed in the inheritance of sons. The third is the adoption of glory, whereby we shall fully at last obtain the glorious inheritance of children together with Christ. The second is the particular exposition, to wit, the redemption of our body. The redemption. This likewise, as well as that other term of adoption, does admit of a different signification, either namely, as taken for the paying and laying down of the price, or else for the receiving of the thing itself for which the price is paid. Of our body. This is expressed, rather than of our souls. First, because our souls are in their actual redemption already before that time. Secondly, it is here said of the body, because all miseries and afflictions in this life are conveyed to the whole man by the body, so that the redemption of the body is in effect the redemption of the whole person. That which we may more particularly observe here is this, that there is a day coming wherein the bodies of all the saints as well as their souls shall be freed from bondage and corruption. Thus it follows upon these special considerations: First, as they are the instruments of a sanctified and regenerate soul, whereunto also they have been companions in duty. Secondly, as members of Christ, who is the Head and redeemed before them; "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20). Thirdly, as they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who still abides and dwells in them as His own, and accordingly will raise them (Rom. viii. 11). Lastly, as together with the soul they do make up the whole person which God hath taken into court with Himself (Matt. xxii. 32). The consideration of this truth is very comfortable to the servants of God. First, in all corporal infirmities and disparagements which are incident to the body here in this life, of sickness and distempers, and restraint and persecution, and the like. Secondly, as to the horror of the grave, and the dreadful apprehensions of that from rottenness and putrefaction, our bodies shall at last be freed from all corruption (Hos. xiii. 14). (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Adoption still future*:—1. As embracing the whole man. 2. As consisting in absolute deliverance from bondage. 3. As including manifestation and public acknowledgment. 4. As belonging not merely to individuals, but to the Church as a body. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The redemption of the body*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN IS A MAN GATHERING "FIRSTFRUITS." The harvest is not come. He looks out upon the beauty of nature, and he sees a "firstfruit" of a renewed and perfect creation. He has a happy thought, it is a "firstfruit" of an endless and universal joy. He tastes the delights of a pure affection, it is the "firstfruit" of a world where all is love. He catches a glimpse of Christ, it is a "firstfruit" of an eternal presence. He plucks from the tree of truth a holy feeling, it is the "firstfruit" of the rich abundance of a matured saintliness. To him, everything is a "firstfruit." If it is not the full glow of summer yet, it is not winter, "If the early grapes be so sweet, what shall the vintage be?" II. A MAN UNTAUGHT MIGHT SAY, "SURELY THOSE WHO GATHER FIRSTFRUITS AT LEAST WILL HAVE AN IMMUNITY FROM SORROW." St. Paul said, "We which have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves." I do not find that the Church has less suffering than the world without, only I find it more "inward." This "inward groaning," what is it, and whence? As soon as a man really receives one of the "firstfruits" of the Holy Ghost, immediately a very great change takes place in that soul. But how with the body? Is it altered? Some little degree of physical refinement may grow out of the spiritual change; but in the main the body is the same. It prompts the same desires, it leads on to the same sins. Sometimes it inflames us, sometimes it drags us. And so it will be to death, the changed soul in the unchanged body, the redeemed in the unredeemed. Now here is all the conflict. Of all our misery this is the painful element, the inability of the body to carry out the higher aspirations of the soul. Other things may bring the sigh, the tear, but this brings the groan, "When shall I be holy? When will the contest cease?" "O wretched man that I am," &c. So—III. Because we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, "WE GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, TO WIT, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY." The moment of death comes, the body and the soul are parted for a while. From that date the redemption of the body begins. It dies, it dissolves, it lies hidden, God works in it as He pleases. Presently, it comes forth; it is another, and yet the same, identical to be known, to be loved, to be embraced, and yet how changed! It is in sweetest harmony with the soul; it is not a whit less spiritual and heavenly than that which once it thwarted. It has taken the image of God; it perfectly reflects Christ. And then, and not till then, its redemption is complete. Here is the great result of the travail of the believer. Conclusion: I. All you have to do now with the body is to hold it

down and keep it under. And that effort will be your "groaning." But only "till He comes." His second advent will perfect the reformation of your body, as His first did your soul. 2. There is probably a very close analogy between the redemption of the soul and that of the body. The seed of life sown in death, the long hidden process, the dying first before there is life indeed, the maintenance of the original character, where, nevertheless, all is new, the likeness to Christ in both, the intention of all to serve, in all the perfect sovereignty of God. 3. The focus of faith and hope to all is the coming of Christ. The groaning soul of the believer, carrying the burden of the flesh, looks there. The emancipated spirits of the departed "longing to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven," look there. Even while they wait in paradise the redemption of that body, still perfect, is going on, and they stretch on with ardent desire for the moment when He shall bring forth the whole man in the integrity of his being. And in those at this moment who lie in the grave, out of our sight, it is that holy, blessed work which is going on. For that reason we gave them up. "We ourselves groan within ourselves" till we see them again. But we shall see them lovelier than before, but still the same, more ours, more His, the needful absence for the needful work done, no absence more, all ours and all one for ever. Wait on; He hears the groans of the waiting. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Insufficiencies accessories of beauty*:—Heaven does not take perfect beings and make them more perfect. It takes fallible and incomplete ones, and glorifies them. Even time and the discipline of pain are beforehand in this, turning the very defects of Christians into graces. It is a paradox of art that our glassmakers can only reproduce now the perfection of the ancient "stained glass" by reproducing its imperfections:—"Singularly enough, examinations made of the painted windows, so celebrated as works of artistic genius and skill, of the old cathedrals of England and continental Europe, show that their superiority really consists in the inferiority of the glass, its richness in the poverty of its constituents, in the very perfection of its uneven thickness, and in the imperfections of its surface and its body, all covered, as they are, by the accumulating dust of ages, and honeycombed by the corroding effect of time. Like the facets of a diamond or ruby, each little wave and thread and blister becomes, by interference, refraction and reflection of the light which plays upon it, a new source of the gem-like brilliance, harmony, and beauty which distinguish the painted glass of former centuries." So the inferiorities and insufficiencies of God's children become accessories of beauty when the rays of His heavenly glory play upon them. The culture of eternity must complement the trial and wear of this lifetime to bring out every charm that here lay in disguise.

Vers. 24, 25. **For we are saved by hope.**—*Saved in hope*:—According to our version "we are saved by hope," but that is scarcely in accordance with other parts of Holy Scripture. Everywhere we are told that we are saved by faith (chap. v. 1). The original should be rendered "*in* hope." Believers are saved *by* faith and *in* hope. At this present moment believers are saved, and in a sense completely. They are entirely saved from the guilt of sin, from its defilement, its reigning power, and its penalty. Yet we are conscious that there is something more than this to be had. There is salvation in a larger sense, which as yet we see not; for at the present moment we find ourselves in this tabernacle, groaning because we are burdened. We have not yet attained, but are pressing on. I. THE OBJECT OF THIS HOPE. 1. Our own absolute perfection. We have set our faces towards holiness, and by God's grace we will never rest till we attain it. 2. The redemption of the body (vers. 10, 11), to consort with our purified spirit. 3. Our eternal inheritance (ver. 17). 4. The glory which shall be revealed in us (ver. 18) tells us which is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 5. "The glorious liberty of the children of God." 6. "The manifestation of the sons of God." Here we are hidden away in Christ as gems in a casket; by and by we are to be revealed as jewels in a crown. II. THE NATURE OF THIS HOPE. 1. It consists of three things. (1) Our hope of being delivered from sin as to our soul, and infirmity as to our body, arises out of a solemn assurance that it shall be so. This is our belief because Christ is risen and glorified, and we are one with Him. (2) This also we desire at all times, but especially when we get a glimpse of Christ. (3) This desire is accompanied with confident expectation. Thus our hope is not a hazy, groundless wish that things may turn out all right. 2. It is grounded upon the Word of God, the faithfulness of God, and His power to carry out His own promise, and therefore it is a hope most sure and steadfast, which maketh no

man ashamed who hath it. 3. It is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Ungodly men have no such hope. 4. It operates in us in a holy manner. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." It makes us feel that it is a shame for princes of the blood imperial of the skies to dabble in the mire like children of the gutter. III. THE ANTICIPATORY POWER OF THIS HOPE. We obtained the first part of salvation by faith. But, besides this, we have in hope the fuller range of salvation. How is this? 1. Hope saw it all secured by the promise of grace. Knowing that the whole of the promise is of equal certainty, hope expected the future mercy as surely as faith enjoyed the present blessing. 2. Hope saw the full harvest in the firstfruits. When the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the body, hope concluded that the body would be delivered as surely as the soul. 3. Hope is so sure about this coming favour that she reckons it as obtained. You get an advice from a merchant beyond sea: he says, "I have procured the goods you have ordered, and will send them by the next vessel." The deed is done that makes them yours. So it is with heaven. I have advices from One whom I cannot doubt that He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for me, and that He will come again and receive me to Himself. The apostle is so sure of it that he even triumphs in it (ver. 37). IV. THE PROPER SPHERE OF HOPE. "Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" 1. A Christian's real possession is not what he sees. Suppose God prospers him and he has riches: let him be grateful, but let him confess that these are not his treasures. One hour with the Lord Jesus Christ will bring more satisfaction to the believer than the largest measure of wealth. 2. But it is clear that we do not at present enjoy these glorious things for which we hope. The worldling cries, "Where is your hope?" and we confess that we do not see the objects of our hope. For instance, we could not claim to be altogether perfect, but we believe that we shall be perfected. By no means is our body free from infirmity, yet our firm conviction is that we shall bear the image of the heavenly. 3. Away, then, with judging by what you do, or see, or feel, or are. Rise into the sphere of the things which shall be. When there is no joy in the present, there is an infinite joy in the future. V. THE EFFECT OF THIS HOPE. "Then do we with patience wait for it." We wait, but not as criminals for execution, but as a bride for the wedding. The joy is sure to come, therefore do not complain and murmur, as though God had missed His appointment. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Salvation by hope*:—Hope saves inasmuch as—I. IT REVIVES. 1. While despondency benumbs, hope sends a thrill of life through every fibre of our being. If, *e.g.*, you tell a sick man that he has no chance of recovery, how rapidly he sinks; but if you tell him there is hope, he revives, the blood circulates through his veins with a vigour which all the medicines in the world cannot inspire. Take the case of Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii.). 2. Transfer this to the spiritual. Look at a man who is struggling with evil around and within him. If you make him believe that it can never be subdued, paralysis and death settle upon his energies. But if, in moments of depression, you meet him with instances of success, and show him that the work must succeed, you inspire him with life. How often hope revived St. Paul we know. The hope of his calling, the hope of salvation, the hope of Israel, the hope of the glory of God, the hope that his work would yet bear fruit, that blessed hope, the glorious reappearing of Christ, in his moments of depression, came to him like inspirations from heaven. Had they had no power, the world would have borne a very different look. It is the same with ourselves. Take the hope of forgiveness, the hope of heaven breathes life into the dullest. And when sorrowing for those we have lost, that which reconciles us to the will of God and sends us back to duty is the hope that they are as the angels. II. IT SUSTAINS. It is the principal cause of success. In those who watch by the sick this is evident. How it sustains through long nights of weary watching, and enables them to make sacrifice after sacrifice! Without hope, again, who could endure the myriad anxieties of life? Or look at the advocates of an unpopular cause. How hope sustains them! That of St. Paul and his companions is a case in point. To their heart and hand hope gave courage, labour, patience. III. IT INCITES TO ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR. If we wish to incite children to diligence, we use hope. It incites the student, the workman, the merchant, the soldier, the sailor, the artist, the statesman. Hope, in fact, is the great mover of the human mind. The hope of doing good is the inspiration of our noblest deeds. The hope of subduing our evils, and of being transformed into the image of Christ, incites us to struggle against them. IV. IT PURIFIES. "Every man that hath this hope purifies himself even as He is pure." Conclusion: 1. This hope is Divine. God

is the God of hope—its object, its source. The hopes by which men are revived, sustained, or incited, are not their own. They are inspired by the Holy Ghost. And what solidity is here given to our hopes as believers, as citizens of heaven! Their mere existence is a pledge of their reality and truth. 2. The gospel of Christ is a gospel of hope. It does not contradict the soul. Men have always believed that their parentage is Divine. The gospel confirms this: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." They have always believed in immortality. The gospel says, "In My Father's house are many mansions." They have always believed in the Divine nearness. The message of the gospel is, "Lo, I am with you alway." 3. See the necessity for preaching it. Tell men they are the children of the devil, and you do the best you can to make them such. But tell them they are the children of God, and you give them hope. (*W. M. Metcalfe.*) *Salvation by hope*:—The gospel, as the term denotes, is glad tidings to all, not excepting the chiefest of sinners. It is a Divine dispensation of encouragement. Its salvation is a salvation "by hope." To understand this doctrine, it will be necessary to begin by considering generally what mankind stand most in need of as a motive and means to that change of heart and life on which salvation depends. And, first, in case of hardened and abandoned sinners. With respect to such men, at least, I believe the impression is almost universal, that what they stand most in need of is, to be thoroughly alarmed by the terrors of the law, by vivid pictures of the judgment to come if they die impenitent. The argument is, that as bad men, through the indurating effects of sin, have become insensible to higher and better motives, they must be moved, if moved at all, by a fear of God's indignation and wrath. Sin hardens men, I admit, against a sense of duty and a sense of shame; but it hardens them, if possible, still more against a sense of any spiritual dangers. Howard and Elizabeth Fry, with the men and women who have followed them in their mission to carry the gospel into prisons, are found to have trusted almost exclusively to the power of Christian sympathy, aided by a gentle and kind manner, as a means of subduing those who feared neither God nor man, neither death nor hell. But if this is true of abandoned sinners, how much more so of all such as still have their relentings, whose sin consists, for the most part, in halting between two opinions, having determined that they will become religious at some future day, but not yet. They think it would be harder work for them to be Christians than for most men; that it is beyond their reach, at least for the present; that it would be vanity or presumption in them to make the attempt. Now, I ask, how are these obstacles, all consisting radically in a want of confidence, most likely to be overcome? Clearly as the gospel aims to do it—by inspiring new confidence, by holding out the promise of sympathy and help; by a Divinely authenticated dispensation of encouragement. "We are saved by hope." But if I were to stop here, half of my purpose would be left unaccomplished. All will agree, I doubt not, that life without hope from any quarter would be insupportable. Still, some may ask, why look to religion, why look to Christianity for this hope? 1. In the first place, the Christian hope is not limited and bounded, like all worldly, irreligious, infidel hopes, by what men can do. Unless we recognise the being, and trust in the presence and agency of a Higher Power, the hour is coming when the soul will be without hope. Despair will take the place of hope. Here also it is of importance to observe that, with persons of reflection and forethought, whatever is seen to end in despair, begins in despair. 2. Another distinction of the Christian hope consists in its not being limited and bounded, as all worldly, irreligious, and infidel hopes must be, by the present life. Almost the entire language of condolence under grief, hardship, and oppression is borrowed from the Bible, and owes its force to the Christian doctrine that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." 3. A third circumstance distinguishing the Christian hope is that, unlike all worldly, irreligious, infidel hopes, it does not profess to measure itself by the real or supposed deserts of the individual, but by the boundless goodness and mercy of the Supreme Disposer. Under the Christian dispensation it is impiety to despair of God's mercy on account of our past sins: for this would be to suppose these sins to be greater than His mercy. Of course, when we compare what we are and what we can do with what we hope to receive, we cannot fail to be struck with the infinite disparity; but neither is this just ground for misgivings. What is promised is to be regarded, not as being of the nature of wages for work done, but as being of the nature of a gift on condition of obedience; and in this character as a gift, it takes its proportions, not from our poor earnings, but from the munificence of the Giver. 4. Who, it may be asked in conclusion,

does not feel his need of this hope? 5. Again, who would not cultivate this hope? As religious dispositions are not of this world they are not likely to spring up spontaneously under worldly appliances amidst worldly avocations. Religion, religion at least in its highest forms, is a delicate exotic, which must not be expected to grow wild in the fields; it must be nurtured with effort and care; it must be sheltered from all ungenial influences, and surrounded, as far as may be, with the atmosphere, so to speak, of its native heaven. 6. Finally, who would knowingly and willingly disappoint or frustrate this hope? Because a man has hope in Christ it does not follow that this hope is well founded in his case. Our very hope may perish; nay, it will do so, unless we establish it in righteousness, and unless "we show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. (*Jas. Walker.*) *Salvation by hope:*—I. WE CAN TRACE SOME ILLUSTRATION OF THIS GREAT GENERAL LAW IN OUR OWN LIVES. "Saved by hope." Upon how many lives, how many works, might that be written! 1. One man is saved by hope from indolence: a poor form of hope it may have been, but it kept the life in him till the worthier motive claimed him. 2. Another is saved by hope from the insanity of self-satisfaction: hope startled him with the challenge of a hero's life or the pathos of a hero's death, and the snare was broken and he was delivered. 3. Another may have been drifting towards the utter loss of self-respect: drunkenness or impurity may have been quenching all the light out of his soul, but hope came to him—the hope of a noble love—and his chains fell off. Yes, hope is the spur of every effort—the strength of every enterprise—the stay of all endurance. As one may go round a garden after winter and there mark the signs of lingering life, and say, "Ah! that may come right after all": so may God look into unnumbered hearts, wintry and dull as death itself, and see the half-conscious germ of hope, and know that there is that whereby they may be saved. Aye, and as in the individual life, so also in the whole race of man, hope wields its saving energy. It is the great impulse of all onward movement: the mainspring of progressive civilisation: the instinct of mankind towards the amendment of every circumstance of life. Any hope that is not sinful is better than no hope at all. St. Paul puts terribly near to one another "having no hope" and "without God in the world." Even a hope which could never call out all the power that is in a man may yet serve to keep his head above water till better help comes. II. IF HOPE IS TO HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK, THEN IT MUST FULFIL AT LEAST TWO CONDITIONS—it must rest on a sufficient ground, and it must point to a sufficient object. 1. The hope that leads us on must not be like a will-o'-the-wisp, hovering over dangerous ground, and vanishing altogether where we thought we must come up with it. Many such hopes there are: *e.g.*, of a startling career, of brilliant originality, of large but vague philanthropy; hopes, hazy and delusive, corresponding to no solid reality, marking out for us no clear course. 2. Other hopes there are which will direct us definitely enough: the hope of money, of success, of power; we may follow them with confidence, but it is like walking down a street that leads us nowhere; we may reach the end, but only to find it as dull and disappointing as a blank wall. In regard to one such hope, the commonest perhaps of all, the hope of wealth, a working-man said to me once, "I suppose no one is rich till the day when he's got a little more than he has." His paradox exactly told the truth: the clearest of worldly hopes are at the same time most disappointing. 3. The hope that really saves, and maketh not ashamed, is a hope which points with clearness to an aim which cannot prove inadequate; a hope which will not halt till every power and energy of our life has found its rest, its joy, its perfect and unwearied work. To such a hope hath God begotten us by the resurrection of Christ. It is an infinite enrichment of all human life that we commemorate at Easter; even the gift of one steadfast, serious, sufficient hope. III. THERE IS NO DEPARTMENT OF LIFE WHICH MAY NOT BE LIBERATED AND UPLIFTED BY THE HOPE WHICH THE RISEN LORD REVEALS. Some seem to shrink from laying stress upon the future life lest it should be used to disparage or obscure the duties of the present. But was it so when the living hope was freshest and strongest? Who, for instance, in those first Christian days, really made the most of the great trust of this life? The heathen poet, laughing at the idea of being serious when you have but a few years in which to enjoy yourself? The philosopher, inculcating suicide whenever the pains of life outweighed its pleasures? The heathen emperor, leaving the vast duties of his position to plunge more freely into every phase of vice? Or Paul, the slave of Christ? In all the change that came with the faith of Christ few things are more remarkable than the advancement of hope from the place of a weakness to the power of a great motive

for a good life. And we need never fear that a man will grow careless or half-hearted about the concerns of time, because in and through them all he seeks those things which are above. Much rather does the saving hope that firmly rests on Christ's resurrection avail, as nothing else avails, to give steadiness and calmness and confidence to every worldly hope which can be pursued in this life. 1. What a change, *e.g.*, passes over the hope of the student when, beside the empty tomb, he begins to discern the true vocation of the intellect, the range, the use it may hereafter have. In Christ the human intellect has passed to the sphere of its perfect and unending exercise. 2. But what shall we say about that other sphere of effort where the real crisis of our life must find its issue; how can we measure the moral life the saving power of the Easter hope? Here we renew the experience of the Psalmist, "I should utterly have fainted; but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." 3. Let us see whether the words have not a bearing also upon the life of nations. Is it not to be feared that many cherish less reverently than of old the salutary grace of a true hope? Hope, as we have seen, is essential to the vigour, the harmony, the welfare and happiness of each separate human life. If we were to give up hoping, how would for us the sun be darkened, and desire would fail and purpose falter, and all joy and courage and helpfulness fade out of our life. Must it not be so, in some degree, if the temper, the character, the current literature of a nation begins to discard or trifle with the duty and the strength of hope? Oh! if this he so, then there are two things at least that we can do for England now. Let us see to it that, by the grace of God, we stand sure and steadfast in that only hope which maketh not ashamed, which is nothing else than faith in the omnipotence and in the love of God. And then let us humbly and constantly pray to Him who spanned with an unfailing hope the interval of earth and heaven that He may renew and purify with the knowledge of His truth the heart and thought of England. (*Dean Paget.*) *A saving hope* :—We begin with the first of these parts, viz., the general proposition, "We are saved by hope." The present salvation of a Christian lies not so much in possession as it does in expectation. The word "hope" in Scripture does admit of a double signification, either as it denotes the grace or else the object of hope. Now, here in the text it seems specially to be understood of the latter. First, seeing we are saved by hope, it concerns us to strengthen ourselves in the hope of Christianity in general, namely, that there are such things indeed as a Christian doth hope for. Thus St. Paul speaking of himself (Acts xxiv. 15). This hath divers grounds whereupon it is raised. First, the promise and covenant of God (Isa. lv. 3). Secondly, the oath of God (Heb. vi. 18). Thirdly, Christ Himself in the performance of all His offices. That is another ground of our hope. Christ, He is called the hope of glory (Col. i. 27). Lastly, the firstfruits of the Spirit, and the beginnings of glory here in this world, which Christians have in their own hearts and consciences, they are great assurances of this hope unto them. But secondly, not only so, but further, we are to strengthen ourselves in our own hope for our particular condition. That as there is such a hope as this is for the thing itself, so that we also have hope of this hope. Forasmuch as we are saved by hope, it concerns us very much to keep up hope alive in ourselves, not only to have it in the ground of it, but also in the discovery. How may we come to do so? First, by conscionable walking and watchfulness over ourselves. The more holiness, still the more hope. These things they run in a circle. Hope, it provokes to holiness, and makes us to walk more warily; and holiness, it encourages hope, and makes us to walk more comfortably (Prov. xiv. 32). To this I may add sincerity, and uprightness, and fruitfulness, in our places. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish" (Job viii. 13). Thirdly, by meditation on the promises, and often looking over our evidences and grounds of hope. And lastly, by frequent prayer. The more that we are acquainted with God, the more shall we hope from Him (Psa. lxii. 8). Thus should we confirm our hope for our own particular. Yea, further, we should not only nourish and strengthen this hope in ourselves, but be ready likewise to give a reason and an account of it to others (1 Pet. iii. 15). Lastly, seeing we are saved by hope, as is here in this present Scripture declared unto us. This serves for the just reproof of three sorts of persons: First, desperate, which do exclude themselves from all hope at all. Secondly, presumptuous, which do hope there where there is no ground of hope for them. Thirdly, carnal, which do place their hope in things of the world. First, such persons do plainly offend against this doctrine who are absolutely desperate and hopeless. Forasmuch as we are saved by hope, in what a sad condition are they which do cast themselves out of hope, and do shut

up the grace of God against themselves! We see from hence the great aggravation of the sin of despair. It is a trespassing upon the blood of Christ, who hath purchased salvation for us; and it is also a disparagement to the Holy Ghost, whose office is to comfort and to persuade us to come up to Christ's terms and conditions. In a word, we overthrow the whole scope and tenour of the gospel, and the rule of God's grace in it. Secondly, presumptuous persons, they are also from hence condemned, because we are saved by hope; for as despair is a trespass upon hope on one hand, so is presumption likewise on another. Those therefore that take up a hope of their own making, who, though they walk in sinful courses, yet hope for all that they may come to heaven, do exceedingly deceive themselves. Presumption is one thing, and hope is another. Thirdly, carnal and worldly persons, they come under this censure likewise, from the consideration of this point in hand, that we are saved by hope, which is not such a hope as is founded in the things of the world, but in matters of a higher nature (1 Pet. i. 3; Col. i. 5). It is the condition of many people "that their portion is only in this world," as the Psalmist speaks of them (Psa. xvii. 14). All their happiness it lies here below, and they rest themselves satisfied with it. Give them but their desires here, and take heaven who will. For hope, &c. The second is the particular description of this hope, what it is; which is laid down negatively, by denying it to be of such things as are seen; but does include the affirmative also in it as being of such things as are not seen. The hope of a believer, it is the constant expectation of good things to come. Let us take notice of that. It is not of things visible, but of things invisible (2 Cor. iv. 18; Heb. xi. 1; 2 Cor. v. 7; Col. iii. 3; 1 John iii. 2). The ground hereof is not only the nature of hope itself, which is so in all other things, as looking at things which are future for the object of it; but when we speak of Divine hope, as it is considered under the notion of a grace, and proper to a Christian, so there is a further reason why it should be (to choose) of things not seen. And that is that by this means it may bring the greater glory to God by trusting Him on His bare word. Thus do we by hoping for things invisible. We honour Him so much the more in His power, goodness, and all His attributes. And so likewise it shows us the reason why God's children are so much scorned and contemned by men of the world. It is because they are such persons as have their good things only in reversion. Lastly, seeing hope is of things which are not seen. We may here, by the way, take notice of the difference of these two saving graces—faith and hope. While the former is of those things which are present, the latter of those things which are to come; and though the same things happen to be the object of each, yet under a different notion and consideration. As, for example, eternal life: hope looks upon it as a thing which is future, in regard to its remoteness; but faith looks upon it as a thing which is present, in regard to its sureness. The third and last is the adjunct and concomitant of this hope, which follows in these words, "But if we hope for," &c., where we may observe and note thus much, that true and right hope indeed, it is accompanied still with patience, and waiting, and quiet resting, and dependence upon God for the things hoped for (Heb. x. 36). Hope, if it be such as it should be, it hath still patience annexed unto it. This is requisite upon divers grounds. First, the ground which is intimated here in the text, because we hope for that which we see not. Forasmuch as the object of hope is invisible, the companion of hope must be patience. Especially if we shall add, moreover, that they are things of special worth, and which do move the appetite to them. Here, now, there is required patience so much the more, for men to be some time without those things which they have no need of, nor no great desire towards them, this is no patience or forbearance at all. Secondly, this hope of a Christian had need have patience to be joined with it, not only from the distance of the object, not only for that the time is long, but also for that the way is troublesome and dangerous and full of annoyance. If a man have never so brave a palace or stately dwelling which he is to come unto, yet if he have a great way before he comes thither, his patience will be exercised about it. But now, further, if as the way is long, so it be also dirty and subject to thieves, here the life will be still so much the worse, and the greater patience required in it (Acts xiv. 22). Thirdly, things contrary to our hope, these likewise do call for our patience. And those are our own corruptions, and the assaults and temptations of Satan, whereby he labours to discourage us. Soldiers had need of patience, that they may go through those several hardships and encounters which they shall meet withal. The contradictions of sinners and the discouragements which arise from wicked men.

These made up another consideration for the necessity of this patience likewise. Lastly, patience is very justly and properly required as an attendant upon hope, because hope in the nature of it breeds patience. The more we hope, the more patient we either are, or at least have cause to be, in that regard. Those that have nothing to sustain them, it is no wonder that they should be impatient (Heb. vi. 19). Now, the application of this point to ourselves may be reduced to these two improvements: First, as a just censure of many people for their defect in this particular, who are many times out of patience when any evil does at any time befal them, or that anything does fall cross to them, from whence they are ready to complain and murmur even against God Himself. This impatience of Christians not walking worthy of their hope does discover itself upon sundry occasions. First, in case of wants, when they have not presently that which others have or which themselves have a mind to. Secondly, in case of delays and procrastinations. Thirdly, in case of distress or any particular trouble and affliction. This is another discovery of this impatience. This impatience, besides that disparagement which it casts upon our Christian hope and profession, is very prejudicial to us in sundry regards. First, it increases our misery and adds to the affliction which is upon us. This it does two manner of ways. In respect of the condition itself, as it provokes God oftentimes to multiply afflictions upon us. Impatience under loss provokes God to the sending of greater. A burden in our condition from the affliction, and a burden upon our spirit from the distemper, and both together do very much press upon us. Secondly, impatience, it puts men upon the taking of indirect courses and the use of unlawful means. Thirdly, this impatience it does disturb all good performances in any way or kind whatsoever. No man can serve God so cheerfully who has this distemper prevailing upon him. Therefore, for a second use of this point, let this serve to stir us up, as a proof of our faith, and the hope which is in us, to labour for this spirit of patience, which is here commended unto us. First, for the encouragements, take notice of them, as, namely, first of all, that here in the text, "The earnest expectation of the creature, waiting," &c. The creature, though it groans, yet it waits; let not us be worse than that. Secondly, the practice of the saints, and of such persons as have received the firstfruits of the spirit, who are said here also to practise this patience (James v. 10). Thirdly, the practice of all other men besides in other things as to their particular concernments: the merchant in his way, the soldier in his, the husbandman in his, as it is also there expressed in James v. 7. Fourthly, the practice of God Himself. How patient is He towards us, and waiting for us! These and the like are arguments, and encouragements, and inducements for it. There are also helps and conducements to it for the obtaining of it. As—First, prayer and supplication. Secondly, study the promises, and dwell more upon the attributes of God. Thirdly, reflect upon former experiences. "Experience breeds patience" (Rom. v. 4). Fourthly, let us set before us future glory, and therein imitate Christ Himself upon the like occasions (Heb. xii. 2). (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*)

Salvation by hope:—1. This is a very strong expression. But not more so than some others. It is described as one of three cardinal virtues of the Christian character (1 Cor. xiii. 13); as the great object of God's gift to us of His Holy Word (chap. xiv. 4); as an attribute to God Himself as its Author, and as the end of prayer for other graces (chap. xv. 13). 2. Such is the place of hope in the Christian system. Its real place in ours is one widely different. Who ever speaks or thinks of the duty of hope? Who ever prays for hope as a necessary part of the Christian character? Who is ever ashamed of being without hope? To be desponding, to be filled with religious fears and doubtings, is by some regarded as almost a sign of grace. And by most Christians hope is regarded rather as one of those late and precarious attainments, or even as a matter of temperament, which belongs only to those to whom it comes naturally. I. WHAT IS HOPE? 1. In general it is the anticipation of a pleasant future. (1) It admits of degrees. Like fear, its opposite, like faith, its next of kin, hope is capable of every shade of variety, from the first faint glimmering of a possibility, to fulness of persuasion and conviction. (2) It is progressive. The cherishing of the thought that a certain thing is possible, tends to form the idea that the possible is probable, and that the probable is certain. 2. And now what is Christian hope? It, too, is the expectation of a pleasant future. But the Christian's pleasant future has to do mainly with things inward, and with the time after death. But do not suppose that it is therefore less real, less sensible, or less practical. Nothing surely is so real as that which is absolutely imperishable. Nothing is so sensible as to see things as they are, refusing to be

put off with things as they seem. Nothing is so practical as the making a vigorous daily effort to be that which we shall certainly one day rejoice to be, or else vainly wish that we had been. The pleasant future of the Christian is a time when he will be quite holy, when he will so have the mastery over his own rebellious will, as to be entirely in harmony with the will of God. No more struggles therefore, but quietness, peace, and rest for him in God, with Christ, with all the good, for ever. This is a faint glimpse of his far future. And his near future is like it; pleasant in proportion as it is like it. II. ITS DIFFICULTIES. 1. One of these arises from the observation of the world around us. The Christian sees vast tracks of land still heathen or Mahometan; worst of all, some in which Christ was once known, but which have relapsed into darkness. He sees, too, that superstition has laid its hand upon a large portion of Christendom itself, and that even a perfectly pure faith is no safeguard against a predominantly worldly or sinful life. Now all this is deeply discouraging. 2. Then he turns within. Alas, there chiefly he finds hope difficult. His individual life is by no means all sunshine. How often does he pray, and no answer seems to come! Nay, how often does he pray without praying, striving in vain to summon his own heart to the offices of praise and devotion! How often, yet again, has he heartily prayed, and risen from it refreshed and hopeful, and then, almost before the heavenly radiance has faded from his heart and brow, some little trifling temptation comes across him, and he has fallen! These things sadly overcloud hope. III. ITS ENCOURAGEMENTS. In general it must rest entirely on God; His character, His revealed intentions and relations. Some of the most elementary of all His revelations are felt in times of despondency to be the most available. Such is the thought of—1. His holiness; a holy God must desire that we should be holy; and that is what we wish to be, though so far from it. 2. His power; what the holiness of God desires His power can effect. 3. His mercy; a God of love cannot but, if holiness and happiness be one, design to help through their difficulties, and save from their sins, those who in His name and strength are facing them like men. 4. Creation. Do we suppose that a God of infinite knowledge created and endowed man with such gifts only to discard him? IV. ITS USES. 1. It stimulates exertion. I know nothing in the world so indolent as despondency, nothing so paralysing as discouragement. But what can we not do with a prize in view? One victory, ever so small, gained over self contains within it the germ not of a second victory only, but of all victory. "Experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." 2. It inspires charity. "Charity hopeth all things." He who hopes for himself, in spite of many discouragements about himself, may well hope also for another, in spite of many discouragements about another. He who knows in detail what God's forbearance and longsuffering have been towards himself, will not limit God's forbearance and longsuffering in cases of which he knows not the details. We hope, and therefore we labour. Conclusion: 1. Hope itself has limits. We are in a day of grace; but every day has its night. When that night comes hope ends; either perfected in enjoyment, or annihilated in despair. 2. The way to hope is through humility. It does not come from ignorance of ourselves, but from that deep self-knowledge which drives us for refuge to God only. 3. It has Christ Himself, not only for its basis, but for its object. "The Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope." (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Salvation by hope:*—1. Hope is not simple foresight or expectation, because the foresight and the expectation may be of mischief. We never hope for misery, for mistakes, but for victory, coronation, love, and joy. So hope has this peculiarity, that it is sweet-minded and sweet-eyed. It draws pictures. It fills the future with delights. And then, having created them, it brings them near, and appropriates them. The greatest and most needed architect is Hope; and it builds with the flimsiest material—the fancy. 2. The Christian religion stands contrasted with all others by the hope that is in it. He who represents the Christian faith in any other light than that of joyous hopefulness, misrepresents it. In the Old Testament day there was a certain element of hope; but it was undeveloped. The Jews lived mostly in the present. They said, "This do, and live." They pointed to the round of duties which belonged to each day, saying, "Perform these, and God shall be well pleased." The Christian faith is for ever looking forward, and cheering men, by the perpetual vision of the future. The contrast of the Christian faith with the faiths of the heathen is still greater. They were mostly religions of fear. 3. Hope is a distinct and peculiar faculty, and exists in different degrees in different persons. Some live by the power of conscience. Duty is their watchword. Some live by the power of caution, constant anxiety.

Others are cheerful and expectant. There are many who, if you bend them down to the ground, break short off at the stump. There are others who, like the young hickory, the moment the pressure is removed, spring back again. Yesterday was disastrous; but to-day has come. To-day is dark; but it will clear off before to-morrow. This has miscarried; but no matter, begin again. Hope is a charming trait in men. There is something very admirable in conscientiousness; in the acceptance of unwelcome duty which it carries with it. There is also in fear much that is to be admired. It carries with it great activity and intense provocation. But, after all, commend me to the sweetness and the inspiration of hope. 4. Hope has its own peculiar dangers. (1) The whole generation of what are called schemers are children of hope. They are not balanced by suitable caution, but they are pioneers of success. If you are starting in an unknown channel, you are not glad of any mishap to him that goes ahead of you; but if he run upon a sandbank he is a buoy for you, and you do not go there. The men who go ahead, however, often scheme, laying the foundation for valuable results, though they do not reap them. The inventor, in his day, received nothing from his invention; but that invention bore fruit in another man's hand a little later. Let me, therefore, speak an encouraging word for the men who drift through society, and are said to be "rolling stones that gather no moss." Fortunate are we in the hopefulness of these precursors of society. Blessed is the society that is full of hopeful men. (2) But there is a disease of hope; there is such a thing as perverted hopefulness. It is hope, in one or other of its perverted forms, that leads men into all manner of gambling. Unperverted hopefulness is specially needed—I. By ALL THOSE WHO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE THE FABRIC OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. You are called, not to a toilsome and burdensome life, unalleviated by promise or cheer. You are called to a higher manhood, to a nobler spiritual ideal, and you find your way beset and obstructed on every side—hope. But God will wait for you, and be gentle with you. Ply, therefore, every instrumentality, and do not give up in despair, saying, "There is no use in attempting to be a Christian." II. By those who are appointed to POVERTY. When a man is poor, having been rich, or without having tasted of riches, and finds himself perpetually at variance with his circumstances, he needs indeed the light of hope. Now, in ten thousand ways, if men have poverty, they may rise above it by the sense of hope. You are not poor, except among men. Is not your Father infinitely rich? This is not your home. Do you suppose a traveller at a caravansary thinks the cold, desolate building in which he rests is his home? III. By those who are in THE STRUGGLES OF DAILY DUTY. This man is thrown out of business. Sickness befalls another man, and destroys his prospects. What to do they do not know. Some are overthrown by their own mistakes; but they are quite as likely to be overthrown by their connection with friends and neighbours. But, whatever the cause, if it comes to them in mid-life, or late in life, it is most unfortunate, unless they are versatile, fruitful of resources, and hopeful in disposition. If despondency be superinduced upon disaster, in the case of any man, woe be to that man! When you are checked in your career, begin again. Do not let go of manhood and courage. The inward man is better than the outward man. Hold on. Many and many a man carries himself over the critical point by hopefulness. But do you say, "I am too old to hope"? Do you say, "I have, constitutionally, too little hope"? Then open your heart to God. Draw near to Him in His great providential relations. "I will not let a sparrow fall to the ground without My notice, and are not you of much more value than many sparrows? If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children," &c. IV. By those whose MIND BECOMES GLOOMY THROUGH MORBID CONDITIONS OF THE BODY; as where men find themselves entirely shut up from all the sources of ordinary enjoyment. While there are kinds of sickness that are quite compatible with the exercise of Christian feeling, there are other kinds which carry such distemperature that it is very difficult for a man under their influence to maintain hopefulness. But whatever your condition may be, do the best you can; and do not think that it is a part of the prerogative of sickness to bemoan one's state, and pity one's self. As much as possible, look away from yourself toward God. I have never seen insects that, if they fell into the water, did not attempt to fly out again as soon as possible. V. By THE AGED. It is a very painful thing to see a matron who has lived in toil go back over her experience. One has died; another has died; another remains. Would to God he had died also! Poverty comes in, with disappointment. She is seventy. This woman, whose life has been a heroism, goes, it may be, to the poor-house. And it is sad enough. But cheer up. It ma/

be that you have laid up more than you think. You have built no house; there are thousands of things that men rejoice in here that you have not; but you do not know how many comfortable words you have dropped as you have gone along; how your kindness has thrown radiance on the paths of others; how much good you have done with your faith; how much you have lightened the burdens of your fellow-men by the example of your life. When you go hence, one, and another, and another, whom you have directly or indirectly helped in their trouble, will throng the gate of heaven with gratitude. You will be surprised to learn how many know you that you do not know. There is a life not far beyond where the silver cords broken here shall be brought together again. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Hope:*—Let us look at hope. I. IN ITS RELATION TO HOME AND PRESSING WORK. 1. The nurse and loving friend who watch by the sick say, "While there is life there is hope." It is curious to see how God, who puts us here as mere strangers and pilgrims, mere grubs, about to burst into the beauty of the heavenly life, should implant in us a keen and obstinate love of life such as we see it here. But so it is. We cannot bear the idea of being dead, and fly for medical help directly there is danger to health. No doubt this is right. Jesus raised bodies to toil a few years more, to die a few years later. 2. But God reverses the saw of the nurse and says, "While there is hope there is life." When we can look onward in our work, and believe in progress, then we work with life. Even the sluggard is inspired by results. Thorwaldsen was once found deeply dejected, if not in tears. On being asked why, he confessed that he was satisfied with the work he had in hand; that he accepted this satisfaction, which he had never felt before, as a sign that his powers were decreasing, that he had no higher aim, that the turning moment of his decline had come. So it is in the commonest handicraft. He who hopes to see shoes made better will always work with a reserve of energy and enjoyment. But the moment a man loses heart, *i.e.*, hope, his value is diminished in the labour market; he is merely writhing in the clutch of death, and unless rekindled by the fire of God, will before long disappear vanquished. Hope is the sun, and when it sets the night creeps on from place to place in the soul. II. IN ITS HIGHER ASPECTS. The constant looking forward to victory is the secret of the Christian life. 1. Life in the Psalms is the confidence of help. David rises before us inspired, irresistible, when he looks beyond the years of guilt and persecution. When he had eaten and was full, when his course was nearly done, there was much in his history we do not like to dwell on. 2. When we turn to the New Testament our eyes are drawn at once to Jesus. In the judgment hall He looks beyond the mob, the scourge, the shame, and thinks aloud, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God." More or less this spirit inspires all true disciples. Hope is the true elixir which confers perpetual renovation. III. A MYSTERIOUS INCOMING SPIRIT IS THE GIVER OF THIS HOPE. "We have received the firstfruits of the Spirit . . . for we are saved by hope." Have we realised the existence of such a Spirit? or do we look for mere spiritual luxuries which will help us to say a "Nunc dimittis"? Do we look merely to a calm, comfortable ending of all desires, or to a growing power to take in the things of God? (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) *Hope* is evidenced—1. By the mother of it—faith. 2. By the daughter of it—patience. 3. By the companion of it—love. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Hope or sunshine:*—You have all experienced the difference between a sunny and a foggy morning. When you have risen and beheld the sun shining in its strength, have you not felt an irrepressible emotion of joy? But when the fog has begloomed your atmosphere a shadow has been cast over your very mercies. 1. There is a foggy side morally over which broods "blackness of darkness"; where hope refuses to take root; where all happiness is evanescent or imaginary. This foggy side is owing to sin. Upon it, we admit, there are clouds which promise much, but they have no water; trees, but they bear no fruit—"having no hope, and without God in the world." 2. From this fog there is a way of escape. Just as your lungs were not framed for fogs, so your spirits were not framed for moral gloom. God is light, and coming to Him, instead of darkness earth shall smile with the foretastes of heaven. 3. Let us, then, turn to the sunny side. The hope of the Christian respects—I. THAT WHICH IS GOOD. And this in common with the world. No man hopes for sickness, failure, misery, death, but the opposite. All men hope good for themselves, even the worst, which shows that God has lodged in the common heart a buoyant hope. Hence hope is opposed to fear. But all hope and no fear would not do. We fear evil while we hope for good. Noah feared as well as hoped when he built the ark. Nevertheless, excessive fear kills hope, and unfits man for duty. How delightful

to feel that we hope for nothing but good for ourselves and others! This is to be in sympathy with the mind of God. II. THAT WHICH IS FUTURE. "Hope that is seen is not hope." Here is a vast difference between the good and the godless man, who is *all* for the present. Well may our hope respect the future when we consider the promises relating thereto. There may be hope in heaven. How do we know that God will not give us another revelation and roll of promises, and enter more fully into the details of eternity. Anyhow, if we have hope only in this life, if it do not carry us beyond, we are of all men the most miserable. III. THAT WHICH IS POSSIBLE. Worldlings often hope for the impossible—without any foundation for what they wish. Hence their "expectation is cut off." But the Christian says, "All things are possible to God," and therefore to him that believeth in God. If God has said a thing we may confidently expect it. IV. TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS. Every grace is tried in this world of trials; so hope. David, looking at the foggy side, said, "I shall one day perish." Looking on the sunny side he exclaimed, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him." So Abraham, "in hope believed against hope, and became the father of many nations." "Experience worketh hope," for having gone through six trials we may confidently expect victory in the seventh. Consequently "hope maketh not ashamed." The worldling is often ashamed because of the failure of his hopes; but the Christian's hope moderated by the Divine promises cannot fail. V. THE SUPPLY OF ALL TEMPORAL NEEDS: light in darkness, strength in weakness, sufficiency in indigence, ballast in prosperity. VI. A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION. When the wicked man comes to die there is an end of all his hopes, but "the righteous hath hope in his death," because Christ hath abolished death, &c. Hence, when bereaved, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." VII. EVERLASTING LIFE. (*Mortlock Daniell.*) *Hope, its power and usefulness*:—We are saved by means of faith, and on the principle of hope. The land we are to possess is chiefly one of promise. We have a wilderness to pass through with its trials, dangers, and temptations. Salvation on the condition of hope is advantageous. A state of waiting is one of moral worth, and helpful in the spiritual life. It tends to produce and develop the active qualities of endurance and fortitude, and the passive qualities of patience and resignation; and it also fits us to appreciate and form a right estimate of the blessings in prospect. In daily life we see that the prize in the future frequently makes a man what he is; and when his wishes are realised, and his ambition satisfied—in fact, when hope has found its accomplishment and ceased to exist—the same individual has not been unknown to deteriorate. The knowledge that the reward is ours at the end of the course, and would be forfeited or lessened by failure on our part, tends to call out our latent powers, stimulate our efforts, and produce states and habits of the soul which otherwise, without a miracle, could hardly exist. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Hope and faith*:—Hope is closely allied to, but is distinct from faith. By faith we believe the promises made to us by God; by hope we expect to receive the good things which God has promised: so that faith hath properly for its object the promise, and hope for its object the thing promised, and the execution of the promise. Faith regards its object as present, but hope regards it as future. Faith precedes hope, and is its foundation. We hope for life eternal, because we believe the promises which God has made respecting it; and if we believe these promises, we must expect their effect. Hope looks to eternal life as that which is future in regard to its remoteness; but in regard to its certainty, faith looks to it as a thing that is present. "Hope," says the apostle, "maketh not ashamed"; and he delares that "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Thus he ascribes to it the same certainty as to faith; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews he speaks of "the full assurance of hope." Faith and hope are virtues of this life, which will have no place in the life that is to come. "Now abideth faith, hope, and love." Faith and hope will cease; and in this respect love is the greatest, as love will abide for ever. (*R. Haldane.*) *Hope's outlook*:—A captain in a prayer-meeting recently, by way of testimony, said that when, many years since, he crossed the old ocean, he was much in the habit, from day to day, of looking over the ship's side, particularly near the prow, and watching the staunch and noble vessel as she steadily and irresistibly ploughed her way through the waves. Just under the bowsprit, and serving the purpose of a figure-head, was the image of a human face. This face to him came to be invested with a wondrous interest. Whatever the hour, whether by night or by day; whatever the weather, whether in sunshine or in storm, that face seemed ever steadfastly looking forward to port. Sometimes fearful tempests would prevail. Great surges would rise, and, for a time, completely submerge the face of

his friend. But as soon as the wrathful billow subsided, and the vessel recovered from its lurch, on looking again over the ship's side, there, notwithstanding the fearful shock sustained, the placid face of his friend was to be seen still, as heretofore, faithfully, steadfastly looking out for port. "And so," he exclaimed, his countenance meantime radiant with the light of the Christian's hope, and of spiritual joy, "and so I humbly trust it is in my own case. Yea, whatever the trials of the past, notwithstanding all the toils and disappointments of the present, by the grace of God I am still looking out for port, and not long hence I am anticipating a joyful, triumphant, abundant entrance therein." *Hope the boon of man*:—Oh, blessed hope! sole boon of man, whereby on his strait prison walls are painted beautiful, far-stretching landscapes, and into the night of very death itself is shed holiest dawn. Thou art to all an indefeasible condition and possession in this God's world. To the wise, a sacred Constantine's banner, written on the eternal skies, under which they shall conquer, for the battle itself is victory! To the foolish some secular mirage or shadow of still waters painted on the parched earth, whereby, at least, their dusky pilgrimage, if devious, becomes cheerfuller, becomes possible! (*Thomas Carlyle.*) *Christian hope*:—I. THE OBJECTS IT CONTEMPLATES. 1. The raised body. 2. A perfectly holy nature. 3. Blessed society. 4. The vision of God. II. FROM WHAT IT SAVES US. 1. Immoderate sorrow in affliction. 2. Earthly-mindedness. 3. Slothfulness. III. BY WHAT IT IS SUSTAINED. 1. Meditation on God. 2. Communion with Him. 3. Union with Christ. 4. The exercise of itself. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*)

Vers. 26, 27. **Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.**—*God's sympathies with man's infirmities*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY INFIRMITIES. There is a wide difference between an infirmity and a sin. Sin is the deliberate choice of wrong. A man's failure to comply with a Divine command is not always a sin. The failure may arise from inherent weakness or ignorance. 1. Men and women come into life with physical infirmities. Some are born blind, some deaf, some consumptive, and it is impossible for them to wholly overcome their physical defects. They may do something in this direction, but they will never be the men and women they would have been had they been better born. 2. Some are born with mental infirmities; some with less or poorer brain than others. Go into a public school and look at the heads and faces of the children. It does not follow that the scholar at the foot of the class is less industrious or less ambitious than the one at the head. 3. So people come into life with moral infirmities, and they are no more responsible for being born with these than for being born with physical or mental infirmities. "The creature," Paul says, "was made subject to vanity, not willingly." It is as though we came into life with a protest against our nature and surroundings. There are hereditary moral diseases as well as physical. It is their infirmity, and not their sin. Some are not only badly born, but born under conditions that are not favourable to growth in goodness. Man's physical nature demands certain conditions for its full perfect development. He will never grow to man's stature unless he has appropriate food, warmth, clothing, exercise, &c. As the foot of the Chinese girl is cramped by circumstances over which she has no control, and as the flat-headed Indian's child has its head flattened by the board put on it by its ignorant parents, so the moral nature of millions is dwarfed and starved because they are born and reared under adverse influences. Here is a little one beginning life in a den of vice. By precept and example it is taught the decalogue of the devil. Its first steps in life are on the burning pavement of hell. It grows up through the formative periods of childhood under immoral influences. Thousands are thus born and reared. Is their immorality their sin? I say it is their infirmity. You might as well blame the bruised reed for bending before the hurricane, as to blame these people for falling under the sweeping tides of temptation. There are thousands of fallen men and women who have done what they never intended to do. They were deceived. They were "overtaken in a fault." II. WHAT ARE THE FEELINGS AND ATTITUDE OF GOD TOWARD THIS INFIRM MASS? There are a multitude of passages which clearly reveal God's sympathies with man's infirmities (Psa. lxxiii. 36; ciii. 13, 14). I would not preach so as to lead men to excuse themselves for their wrong-doing, or lessen their sense of responsibility. The knowledge of the sympathy of the Divine Spirit for you should quicken you to seek a higher, holier, nobler life. There may be much against you. The conditions of your birth, early education, or habits, may be against you. But do not forget that God is for you. And if God be for

you, who or what can be against you? III. WE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SYMPATHY AND HELP OF GOD TO REMEDY THEIR MORAL DEFECTS AND INFIRMITIES. The fact that a man has been born morally infirm is no excuse for remaining so, any more than being born poor is an excuse for continuing in poverty. Men born with physical defects seek, by the aid of medical science and skill, to remedy these defects. We overcome the obstructions of Nature. We convert the forest into a fruitful field and make even the desert blossom as the rose. What we do in the physical realm we may do in the moral. As a matter of fact, we all begin life at zero. The child in its mother's arms is nothing more than "a little bundle of possibilities." It has no original mathematics, philosophy, poetry, or anything else. It has undeveloped capacities for knowledge, but that is all. They are latent, and must be exercised and trained. So it is with our moral and spiritual faculties. They are there in embryo, and must be developed by exercise. By the grace of God you may overcome all natural inherent weaknesses, and attain unto the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Moses in his early life was rash, hot-tempered, and violent, but by the grace of God he became the meekest among men. Peter, by nature, was impulsive, vacillating, but by the grace of Christ he developed self-control, and became as steadfast as a rock. The heart of Mary Magdalene was once the home of seven devils, but by the love of Christ it was cleansed, and became the home of the Holy Ghost. Saul of Tarsus was brought up in the narrowest school of the narrowest sect of religionists, but by the grace and truth of Christ he became a leader in liberal Christian theology. Such transformations of character are possible to-day. There is a gospel for all of us in this short text, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." There is encouragement for the worst man to go to God for help. The Divine Spirit can enlighten the darkest soul, cleanse the foulest heart, ennoble the lowest life. (*J. B. Silcox.*) *The sympathy of the Divine Spirit:*—1. Everybody loves to see a great nature that devotes itself to those beneath him. We expect that those who are drawn together by affinity will be devoted to each other. We should expect that if one Lord Bacon were in conference with another, they would sit together and commune all through the live-long night. But to see a man whose head is a vital encyclopædia, take care, not of children that reward his pains, but of children that are dullards—to see him patiently continuing this labour of love from week to week, working the child along, until he succeeds in getting something into him, is divine. 2. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our"—what? Our high aspirations? Our noblest dreams? Our grandest purposes? Yes; but that is not it. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." 3. What do we understand by infirmity here? Feebleness of the whole economy by which we are to come into knowledge, and through knowledge into virtue, and through virtue into vital godliness—this is the general meaning of infirmity. The attempt to maintain a spiritual life in this world is an attempt against great adversarial powers. It is no small thing for a man borne into a fleshly body, connected with the material world, and beat in upon by ten thousand biasing and sympathising influences which come from the body of human society, to lift himself out from all that is low and carnal into an atmosphere where he can see clearly, and understand, and maintain vigilance, persevering unto the end. And God is not indifferent to the task and tax which one undertakes when, with so many obstacles to contend against, he endeavours to live a life of obedience. He sympathises with the poor and the feeble. Let us specialise some of the spheres of sympathy in which the Spirit of God acts with reference to us. I. ALL OUR BODILY WEAKNESSES AND SICKNESSES, AND THE INFELICITIES THAT ARISE FROM THEM—men who are in health, are very hard and uncharitable about. Many with whom you have to do disappoint you. Many let fly casual words which irritate you. But if you knew out of what utter weakness these things often come, methinks it would excite in you, as doubtless it does in God, a spirit of pity, rather than of blame. God has sympathy for those who suffer from over-exertion, hunger, thirst, cold, and various wants, or who in despondency are led to do wrong. Society may disregard them, but there is one Heart that never ceases to compassionate them. II. ALL THE CARES OR TRIALS WHICH ARISE FROM OUR CONDITION OF TEMPORAL LIFE have also the sympathy of the Spirit. Men feel that when they go into business they go away from religion. But God made the secular experiences of life to be a means of grace. God made us merchants, and mechanics, and toilers in every way. To work is not the curse. To drudge is. To work is a part of the blessing of our organisation, and of the organisation of society. Intellectual, social, and moral education inheres in that. And our religion is to go with it. And so all the

burdens which make men so tired of life are infirmities. They are a part of that constitution of things which God recognises, and which draws the heart of God continually toward men in all helpfulness. III. God also sympathises with us in ALL OUR DOMESTIC INFIRMITIES. I have noticed that if two violinists play together, although before they came upon the platform they tuned their instruments, no sooner do they get ready to strike off than they try their instruments again. And by the time they have played one or two pieces there is such divergence between the instruments that they require to be again tuned. But the violin of the musician has not one-fifth as many strings as the human violin has, and it is not half as sensitive to the changes of the weather, and does not need to be screwed up or down half so often. And you cannot keep this little mechanical instrument in tune except with great pains. And do you suppose you can take two instruments, each having fifty strings, more susceptible even than those of a violin, and have them in tune one with another, in the midst of the many and powerful influences which are constantly tending to produce discord between them? A man that knows how to take his mind with all its sensibilities, and bring it into tune with Divine love, and who knows how to carry it harmoniously through all the hours of the day, so that it shall all the time be in tune with other minds, has very little to learn before it goes to heaven. Now, our business in life is to try to keep this fiddle of ours so that it shall be at peace, first with its own self, and then with others. The hardest thing for us to do is first to live right within ourselves, and then to live right with each other. Now, in this great conflict, where is so much rasping, it is a comfort to me to hear God say, by His brooding Spirit, "I help in those respects your infirmities." IV. The sympathy of God is with THE HIDDEN AND SUPERIOR TRIALS OF THE NOBLER PARTS OF OUR SOULS. 1. There are a great many poetic natures who are subject to extreme variations; who are all flush and hopeful in one hour, and all drooping and empty in another. God sympathises with our moods, with the ever-shifting shades of transient and poetic feeling—which are said to be "imaginary," as if the imagination were not a fact as much as any other fact in life. 2. Then there are those who are living in a perpetual discontent of this life. They cannot cease to take an interest in it. But there are times when there comes to them such a sense of its littleness that they seem to be as so many ants or worms. The whole economy of life oftentimes seems to be one of such vanity and vexation of spirit that a man is almost willing to lay down his burden. One is tempted, under such circumstances, to doubt himself, to doubt his friends, to doubt everybody and everything. And where this feeling of contempt for one's fellow-men is accompanied by a sense of one's own worthlessness, the whole world is good for nothing. In such moods a man is ashamed of himself. Nevertheless, there is a Spirit that helps our infirmity; and that by love brings us back to reason, and to charity, and to peace. 3. Then there are moods in which annihilation reigns. There are times when men of a sensitive nature seem to lose their hold on life. They fall off from the interest of the human race, and from everything. And these arid, desert experiences God understands, pities, and helps. 4. Then there are those moments of intense yearning which turn all common feelings pale—those fears lest truth shall have been a fable—those hours of unspeakable anguish in which men seem to be letting go of all that is most sacred in the past. They are afraid to express their doubts, because there is nothing less sympathised with than doubt; but they may be in a state in which God is preparing them, by suffering, to lead men out of their troubles. God broods over them still. So do not let go of faith and trust. Keep the avenue open between you and God. Conclusion: In view of the truths thus opened, I remark—1. That the administrative power of the moral world is love—not power, and not penalty. 2. That cases of the longest delayed repentance are not without hope. The man that has been the worst in life has encouragement to repent and turn to God. 3. That this sympathy of God is not given as a reward of man's own well-doing or of his victory in the struggles which he has been called to wage. There is an impression that Christ is a premium giver, and that He says, "If you will work and acquire a capital, then I will help you." No; there is given you a capital to begin with. "Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God which worketh in you." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The transformation of hope*:—1. There is none in heaven or earth nearer to us than the Holy Spirit; yet there is none whose presence is more deeply hidden. Most mysterious is the manner of His Eternal Being. Fatherhood and Sonship we may in some measure realise; but no earthly relation symbolises the procession of the Holy Ghost. And not less inscrutable is the manner of His presence and work in the human soul. Unseen

because He is so near, unrecognised for very intimacy, there is no depth of personality whither He will not come; and even the soul which He purifies and strengthens may only discern Him in its own new purity and strength. The bodily eye can never see in its simplicity the light whereby it sees all else; and the Spirit of Truth is Himself hidden from the soul which owes its sight to His illumination. 2. But though He be hidden, though we cannot tell whence He cometh and whither He goeth, we may watch and forward and pray for His work, in others and in ourselves; we may discover and estimate the unearthly impulses and attractions which He exercises, as astronomers can be sure of the presence and influence of some unseen star, by the new force which breaks in on the order of the heavens. 3. Already the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Yet this is but the beginning—it doth not yet appear what we shall be. For if we be children, then are we heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, with whom we shall be also glorified together. On this consummation the apostle's gaze is now fixed; and from this there streams back a light which changes the whole aspect of the present life. How shall we direct the course whose end we cannot see? What shall we long for, when we see nothing which can satisfy us? "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." We know not, for it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Not from the blunders of men, but from the inconceivable height of their destiny does the apostle learn how hard it is to pray aright; and his solution of the difficulty is proportionally different. There is a grace which takes the place of knowledge, and brings the will and the aspirations of men into a mysterious harmony with the unseen: a grace which lifts the desires of the human heart above all that this fragment of the universe can offer, and orders its impulses according to a truly universal law; a grace which leads us on when knowledge falters, and will lead when knowledge shall vanish away; a grace which is His gift alone—the grace of hope. 4. By hope we were saved; and prayer is the voice of hope. That same Spirit whose presence disturbs the completeness of this life by the revelation and earnest of eternity, is ever ready to guide the vague craving of our hearts towards His home and ours. Prisoners we must be for a while; but by His help we may be prisoners of hope. He, who comes from the very heart of heaven, He who brings that flush and warmth of Divine joy which can make even the summer of this world seem faint and poor, He can take our restless, bewildered hearts back along the path which He has traversed, to His throne, who made us for Himself, in whom alone we can rest. Not by timid hints of prudent caution, but by the unflagging impulse of an insatiable hope does He teach us what we should pray for as we ought. Then only are we in true accord with the world around us, when we, like it, are pressing towards an unseen end, chafing in hope under the bondage of corruption, judging the present and the visible in the light of the glory which shall be revealed. Then only are we living with the whole energy of our manhood when we rise in obedience to the hope that is in us, and trust the guidance of our prayers to the mind of the Spirit. There is a melody in our life, but we shall never catch its rhythm, or enter into its subtle harmonies, till we learn to listen for those higher notes which are the complement of its imperfection, the resolution of its discords. 5. Therefore let us ever glorify Him who came to help our infirmities by raising our weary and uncertain desires to the only source and end of hope. And let us pray Him never to leave us, but evermore to point our gaze and guide our prayers towards the glory of our unseen goal. May He help us to pray for the world, that through all its changes and losses and strife it may be brought to the attainment of its earnest expectation, the fulfilment of His purpose who created it in love: for the Church, that when all hope is fulfilled by the glorious appearing of her Saviour Christ, she may be arrayed in the righteousness of saints, and the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And lastly, let us watch and strive and pray for ourselves, that no deceitfulness of sin, disappointment, failure, dulness, may break the courage which God gives us, or drag down to earth the effort which His Holy Spirit stirs and guides. In proportion to the saving power of hope are the forces which assail it. Every year we live, the grasp of custom grows firmer upon us, and we find it harder to move with freedom among the thickening hindrances of social life; every year we are tempted afresh to take the ordinary expectation of our fellow-men as the guide of our aspirations, and to think that we may wisely rest when we have found a pleasant background for a life not painfully laborious. There is none in whom the grace of hope is not beset by the easy hopelessness of self-satisfaction. But to some there come fiercer trials than these: the open invitation of sin which is

common enough to call itself general; the lying whispers of temptation. These are antagonists of hope from which only the strength of the Holy Ghost can rescue our hindered souls. He can, He will so rescue and sustain all who seek His presence and listen for His voice; and none can utterly faint who look for the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; for if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (*Dean Paget.*) *Divine help for spiritual infirmities*:—First, the patient with his disease, and that is Christians under infirmities. Secondly, the physician with his care, and that is, the Spirit helping these infirmities. First, to speak of the former, here's the patient with his disease: St. Paul and the rest of believers lying under infirmities. The best Christians have their infirmities and weaknesses. This is true according to a double sense and notion of the word, whether we take it in a moral sense, or a physical. Now, in both of these considerations are the best of Christians subject to infirmities. First, for spiritual or moral infirmities; the infirmities of sin and of soul, God's children they have their infirmities here. First, in matter of judgment; a great deal of weakness here. The best of God's servants, they have been sometimes under great mistakes, and fallen into strange kind of errors and fond conceits. There's hardly any great wit, but it hath some kind of extravagancy with it. Secondly, in point of affection. A great deal of weakness here also; weakness of mind in strength of passion, and that in all the kinds and varieties of it. Thirdly, in point of practice and daily converse. A great deal of weakness and infirmity is there here also, discovering of itself in them upon several occasions, invincible infirmities, and such as they do not easily quit or free themselves from. Infirmities of age and sickness; infirmities of sex and condition; infirmities of temper and natural constitution; infirmities of custom and use, and the like. First, whence it is so for the thing itself. And here there is this brief account which may be given of it: First, the general corruption of nature, which is in part remaining still even in the servants of God themselves. Infirmities are nothing else but branches of the first sin that was committed in the world. Secondly, as from the corruption of nature, so likewise from the imperfection of grace. Thirdly, the assaults of Satan; conflicts with them. To which we may justly add, sometimes Christians own neglect of themselves. Now further, secondly, for the ground of it on God's part, as to His permission of it, we may take it thus: First, hereby to humble them and to keep down pride in them, to show them what they are of themselves, and what need they have of continual succour and supply from Him, and to be dependant upon His free grace. Secondly, as to prevent pride in themselves, so to prevent also in others an over-willing opinion of them, at least that they may not idolise them and set too high a price upon them, and so have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons. Thirdly, God suffers infirmities in His children for the greater manifestation of His own power and strength in those infirmities. Lastly, God orders these His infirmities to His servants as matters of trial and exercise to them in their Christian course. The consideration of this point may be variously improved by us. First, as a very good direction for the regulating of our Christian converse and communion with one another in the world. Namely, with a great deal of tenderness and condescension and meekness of spirit. Secondly, it teaches us also to take heed of addicting ourselves absolutely to any men's practice or example. But yet thirdly, this is no ground of excuse to any persons in their wilful miscarriages. First, they are much distinguished in the matter and nature of them for the things themselves. Iniquities, they are grosser abominations, whereas infirmities are lighter miscarriages. Secondly, they are distinguished from the person and principle from whence they proceed. The former, they are the results of the strength of corruption; the latter, they are the effects only of the weakness and imperfection of grace. Thirdly, they are distinguished from the carriage of them, and manner of acting. Infirmities, they proceed with much reluctancy and opposition against them. The second is, as they may be taken physically for the infirmities of mind and body together, and referring to affliction. Their bodies are houses of clay, and their spirits they have a vanity upon them, and therefore it cannot be strange that themselves should be weak and infirm. And then again, as they have frail bodies for the matter of them, so they have sinful souls for the demerit. And it is these which do deserve and occasion these evils to them. The weakness of corruption will breed the weakness of affliction, and sinful bodies will be diseased. This should teach us not to be offended when these things fall out so to be, nor to be dismayed at them. And so now I have done with the first branch

of this proposition before us: and that is, the patient, together with the disease, Christians under infirmities, our infirmities. The second is the physician together with the cure, and that is the Spirit helping our infirmities. The spirit may be taken two manner of ways, as it is elsewhere in Scripture; either first, for our own spirit, the spirit of man. Or secondly, for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. Now it is true in some sense of either, that it does help our infirmities. First, it is true in some sense of our own spirit, according to that of Solomon, "The spirit of man will sustain his infirmities" (Prov. xviii. 14). "A merry heart does good like a medicine" (Prov. xvii. 22). And a man's reason, it does sometimes help his passion. But secondly, not to trouble you with impertinencies. This is not that which is to be understood here in this place. The Spirit here in the text is not our own spirit, but the Spirit of God, who is here by a special emphasis called the Spirit. The word here also which is translated "help" is likewise very emphatical, which is an expression taken from two persons or more, which are to lift up some heavy burden and do mutually help one another by standing at each end of the burden, one over against the other. Or if ye will, from nurses which, attending sick persons, do stay them and lift them up in their beds, being ready of themselves to fail and faint away. Even thus does the Spirit of God with His servants in their manifold infirmities; He does co-operate and concur with them, and sustain them, and hold them up. Whilst it is said here in this place that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, we are to take those infirmities in the full latitude and extent of them. First, we may take it of moral and sinful infirmities. The Spirit of God helps us here, not to them—take heed of that—but in them, and from them, and about them, and in reference to them. And so His help to this purpose may be ranked into two sorts: First, that help which He gives us against corruptions, for the avoiding of them. First, the Spirit helps our infirmities; that is, He overawes our temptations and removes our corruptions from us. Grace, it corrects nature and takes away the distempers of it. The Spirit of God, wherever He comes, He makes a change in that soul and fits it for His own residence and abode in it. The consideration hereof should teach us to give up ourselves to His gracious guidance and governance of us, and influence upon us. Secondly, He helps us also in our infirmities by giving us strength unto duty. So that the Spirit helps our infirmities so far forth as He assists our prayers. First, by His gracious acceptance. The Spirit helps our infirmities thus by bearing with us in what is done by us, notwithstanding the infirmities which are in us. Acceptance of endeavour is a great help of infirmity. As David says of himself, "The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will accept my prayer" (Psa. vi. 9). Thus does He help our infirmities in reference to His gracious acceptance. Secondly, by His gracious assistance. He helps them here also. "When I am weak, then am I strong," (2 Cor. xii. 10). "And I can do all things through Christ that strengthens us" (Phil. iv. 10). There's a double weakness or infirmity upon us which is considerable in us in point of duty. First, in our indispositions to duty, by provoking us and exciting us hereunto, and putting us upon it. But secondly, in our insufficiency in duty, the Spirit helps our infirmities here likewise; where we flag and are apt to fail in the performance, He does there strengthen us in it. This, for the use of it, serves first of all as a matter of great comfort and encouragement to the servants of God in those duties which are undertaken by them, that they have so strong and able an helper as this to go along with them. In great difficulties men love to have great assistance. Secondly, it serves by way of direction. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, that is, it is His work and office to do it, though for such a particular time and season He may suspend the actual performance, which is to be inquired into by us. And we are to be humbled in ourselves for His occasional withdrawings from us. Thirdly, it teaches us not to go forth in our own strength in any duty which we take in hand, but to fetch strength and power from the Spirit, and to depend upon Him for His assistance. Lastly, in all our performances where we find ourselves to be at any time anything more enlarged than other, let us acknowledge this work of the Spirit in His assistance of us, and be thankful to Him for it. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name we give the praise." Now, secondly, it holds good also as to the infirmities of trouble and affliction. The Spirit of God does help the children of God even in those infirmities likewise. Thus Psa. lxxxxiv. 17, 18. Now the Spirit of God is active in us to this purpose, upon a various account. First, by virtue of His office, and that work which does more properly and peculiarly belong unto Him (John. xiv. 26; 2 Cor. vii. 6; Rom. 15, 5). Secondly, His promise, by virtue of that also. Thirdly, from His nature.

He helps us because He pities us. Lastly, taking this Spirit more particularly for the Spirit of Christ, from the similitude and likeness of condition. He helps our infirmities as having taken our infirmities upon Him. Now, if it shall be further demanded by what ways and in what manner this is done, we may take it briefly in these following particulars. First, by His counsel, directing us what to do and how to carry ourselves in such conditions. Secondly, as the Spirit helps by His counsel, so also by His comfort. Thirdly, the Spirit helps by His assistance and particular relief in our particular condition. Lastly, the Spirit helps our infirmities by His intercession which He makes in our hearts, as it is here expressed in the text. First, seeing the Spirit helps our infirmities, it concerns us therefore to be very careful how we carry ourselves towards this Spirit, and in a special manner to take heed of grieving of Him. Secondly, where we are at any time enabled, or see any others enabled before us, to endure any afflictions whatsoever without fainting and sinking under it. Let us see here to whom to acknowledge it and to give the glory of it; and that is to the Spirit of God alone, who alone is herein helpful to us. Thirdly, we see here the advantage and privilege of the servants of God in all the infirmities which are incident to them, whether moral or natural. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Prayer aided by the Divine Spirit*:—We begin with the first of these parts, viz., the defect or infirmity—"We know not what to pray for," &c. Now, there is a threefold impotency or defect. First, in reference to the very performance itself. God's people are sometimes in that condition, as they cannot set themselves seriously to such a duty as this is, but are very indisposed hereunto. And there are divers causes of this obstruction to them. As, first, distempers of body, and the infirmities which arise from that. When the body is out of frame, it puts the soul out of frame also, and indisposes it to that which is good. Secondly, from distraction of mind and perplexity of spirit. This does likewise very much disturb them in this particular. Thirdly, from some special corruption and inordinate passion which surprises them. This does very much hinder them likewise. Lastly, too much interest and involution in worldly affairs. This, if it be not the better heeded and more carefully looked into, it will very much take off the mind from such a business as this is. It will take up the time as to the undertaking of the performance, and it will take off the heart as to the managing of it. If Christians were more careful to pray when they might, they would be more able to pray when they should; but when they willingly or carelessly withdraw from it, they are sometimes unwillingly and against their minds obstructed in it. Secondly, where it is at any time thus with us, we should accordingly be affected in it. First, to be humbled for it. Secondly, to inquire into the cause and occasion of it, and to examine from whence it proceeds. Thirdly, not to lie down under them, but to strive to overcome them all we can. As we are required sometimes to eat against stomach, for the better strengthening of nature, so we are required to pray against stomach also, for the strengthening of grace. The second is of ignorance, in reference to the matter of it. "We know not what we should pray for." First, in asking things which are absolutely sinful and unlawful. They know not what they should pray for in this. Secondly, in asking things which are unseasonable. There is a miscarriage in this also. There are some things which do well at one time which do not so well at another. Everything is beneficial at its season. Thirdly, in asking things which are unsuitable and inconvenient for us; at least which are very uncertain and under very much hazard. We know not oftentimes what to ask, because we know not many times what it is which is worth the asking. For that which we may judge to be very desirable, it may in conclusion prove the quite contrary. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us. First, as from hence to satisfy us in the denial of those petitions which are sometimes made by us. Secondly, forasmuch as of ourselves, we know not what to pray for, we should therefore beg of God to direct us, and to suggest such things unto us as are fittest to be prayed for by us. It is a great matter to know what to pray for, and that which is exceeding profitable and beneficial to us. Thirdly, this teaches us to ask nothing absolutely, but with submission to the will of God. Forasmuch as we may mistake. The third is in the manner or carriage of it; how, and as we ought. This is another thing which Christians are sometimes apt to fail in. And so now I have done with the first part of the text, which is the defect or infirmity itself here mentioned in these words, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought." The second is the happy supply of this defect in these words, "But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." First, for the assistance itself. "The Spirit maketh intercession for us." There is a two-

fold intercession for us which we read of in Scripture. The one is the intercession of Christ Himself; and the other is the intercession of the Spirit of Christ. The former of these we read of in ver. 34, speaking of Christ, who also maketh intercession for us. The latter we have here in this verse which we have now in hand. The one is an intercession for us, as it is a speaking in our behalf; and the other is an intercession in us, as it is an enabling of us to speak ourselves. The Holy Ghost Himself makes intercession for us, so far forth as He helps us to pray (Matt. x. 20; Zech. xii. 10; Gal. iv. 6). In these and the like places of Scripture, is the Holy Ghost set forth unto us as the helper and promoter of our prayers, and as one that makes intercession for us. Now, this we may conceive Him to do by divers operations. First, by sanctifying of our persons and putting us into such a capacity, as from whence we may with boldness draw nigh to the throne of grace. The wise man tells us, "That the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, and that the prayer of the upright [only] is His delight" (Prov. xv. 8). Secondly, by putting our hearts into a praying and begging frame. For though a man may be a true child of God, yet he may not be always in a praying temper. Therefore the Holy Ghost prepares the heart for this performance (Psa. x. 17). Thirdly, by suggesting to us what at any time we shall pray for. Fourthly, by stirring up such graces in us as are requisite to the performance of prayer in a right and holy manner. This may serve to teach us how to make our addresses to God in prayer upon all occasions, namely, so as desiring the help of His Spirit in those performances. "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," as it is in Eph. vi. 18. And again, "Praying in the Holy Ghost," as it is in the Epistle of Jude and ver. 20. And so much may suffice to have spoken of the first particular in this passage, which is the help or assistance itself, which is here vouchsafed, "The Spirit itself making intercession for us." The second is the conveyances of it to us, or the manner wherein it is effected. And that is in these words, "With groanings which cannot be uttered." By groanings, here in this place, we are not only, as I conceive, to understand secret complaints which do proceed from bitterness of Spirit in us, although these principally and especially; but by groanings we are here as well to understand any other secret workings of the heart towards God in converse and communion with Him. That which we may observe from hence is this, that there may be prayer sometimes, there where yet there is not speech or vocal expression. A man may cry mightily to God even there where sometimes he utters, as to the outward hearing of it, never a word. This, for the use of it, is first of all a very great comfort to all the true children of God as concerns their communion with Him, where they are hindered or at any time denied the opportunity of outward expression. First, it is very satisfactory in a weakness and defect of parts, and such and such gifts. Secondly, it is also comfortable in all afflictions and distresses. Last of all, in the multitude of business and variety of occasions in the day, which take men up, that still they may have converse with the Lord in these frequent ejaculations towards Him. But yet this must also be warily and cautiously taken by us. That we abuse not such a point as this is to sluggishness and neglect. Though this working of the heart in groans and sighs in some cases may be prayer, yet we are not to content ourselves with this alone where we have further ability and opportunity afforded unto us. Prayer is another kind of business than the world thinks it, or takes it to be. It is one thing to talk to God, and it is another thing to pray to Him, which is here in the text expressed by "groaning which cannot be uttered." Where again we must further take heed that we be not mistaken neither. There is a double groaning or sighing which a man is capable of in prayer; the one as a work of nature, and the other as a work of grace. (*Ibid.*)

Our infirmities helped:—I. THE PREDOMINANT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRISTIAN IS PRAYER. This is clear from the preceding context, and from the nature of the case. What is past is for rest and praise—not for prayer and on-reaching. 1. All true believers are praying men. This is and must be a universal characteristic. 2. Prayer must be essentially our own. Another man's hunger is not my hunger, even when both of us are hungry alike. And so another man's prayer or yearning are not mine. II. THE SUCCESS OF PRAYER IS HINDERED BY OUR INFIRMITIES. Everything that deadens hope or that makes us contented to be as we are, will hinder prayer. 1. Infirmities of flesh. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 2. Infirmities of our faith. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Psa. lxxvii. 10). 3. Infirmities of conscience. These arise from the spirit of bondage and lead to timidity and superstition. 4. Infirmities of judg-

ment. The judgments we form of Divine truth will exert a considerable influence over our character. And it is here that our weakness often appears. 5. Infirmities of temper. We all know how irascibility interferes with the calmness of prayer and spoils our devotion. III. THE SPIRIT IS OUR GREAT HELPER, BOTH IN THE OFFERING OF PRAYER AND IN THE SUCCESS OF IT. 1. Our longings are often of a vague and indefinite character. Our religious feelings are often earnest and real, yet shapeless and indeterminate; and so our prayers, which are but our endeavours to utter what we feel, are often nothing better than a groan. We want clear light. Is not this the case supposed in our text? 2. There is One concerned in this endeavour of ours. In this wordless and unutterable longing of the soul there is One who is helping us. 3. Though we do not understand, yet He that searcheth the heart does. We ask for what, if suddenly given, would surprise us, but the Spirit means all that. When I ask "to be what God would have me be," should I become so at once, how wonderful would be the reality—beyond what I thought when I prayed! And so "Thy kingdom come." Truly I mean it; but have I a conception of its meaning and compass? The Spirit means it, and "he that," &c. (*P. Strutt.*) *The Spirit helping our infirmities*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN INFIRMITIES IN PRAYER. The word means weakness, sickness, and intimates debility in our moral constitution. The diseases of our nature once produced moral death. In the process of regeneration our recovery commences; but the condition of the patient is that of great infirmity; this is seen especially in the duty of prayer. His spirit is faint, his desires are languid, his efforts are feeble. This infirmity appears—1. In our ignorance of the proper subject of prayer. "We know not what to pray for." "Lord, teach us to pray." This appears in our supplication—(1) For the blessings of providence. We are mercifully permitted to make these the subject of prayer (Phil. iv. 6). But who knoweth what is good for man? The events of Providence form a system of moral discipline by which God would train us for His service on earth, and prepare us for the enjoyment of His presence in heaven. Now in what danger are we, by our prayers, of interfering with God's plans, and of asking what may be injurious to us, and deprecating what may be good to us. God gave Israel their desire, but He sent leanness into their souls. St. Paul, smarting under the anguish of the thorn in the flesh, prayed thrice that it might depart from him; but God knew better than His servant did what was good for him. (2) Spiritual blessings. The Word of God presents us with an almost infinite variety of topics for prayer. But how often none of these are present to the mind; how often the thoughts are distracted! 2. Our want of the proper spirit of prayer. "We know not what to pray for as we ought." We ought to pray—(1) With the profoundest reverence. But how often we come under the influence of feelings, light, careless, undevout! (2) With the deepest humility. But how often do we pray with a heart cold—aye, proud, impenitent, insensible. (3) With the greatest importunity; for the blessings we seek are of great magnitude—the evils we deprecate are of the greatest duration. But how often do our feelings almost expire through our weakness! (4) In faith, for "he that cometh to God must believe that He is," &c., and in the power of, and in reliance on, Christ. But how often do we question these, and thus expect but seldom the blessings we supplicate! (5) With infinite perseverance, knowing that it will come, though the blessing be delayed. But how often do we grow weary and faint in our minds! II. THE GRACIOUS SUCCOURS, WHICH, IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY, THE CHRISTIAN DERIVES FROM THE AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. He "helpeth our infirmities," He bears them with us. He does not intend to supersede human agency, but to excite, invigorate, encourage. He will not work without you, you cannot work without Him; but you are to be co-workers. He "maketh intercession for us," by helping us to make intercession for ourselves (ver. 15; *cf.* Gal. iv. 6). The Spirit helpeth our infirmities by—1. Exciting us to prayer. Subduing our natural repugnance, convincing us of the advantages and efficacy of prayer, and implanting within us those affections which dispose us to pray. 2. Impressing us in prayer with an affecting consciousness of our wants. Our fervour will be in proportion to our sense of want. It is part of the Spirit's office to produce an urgent conviction of want. If evils are concealed, the Spirit shows man to himself, and places before him attractive in array those blessings adapted to the supply of his wants. 3. Imparting to us importunity in prayer "with groanings which cannot be uttered." It was thus that the cruelties endured by the Israelites could not be told in words, but it is said their groanings reached the ears and pierced the heart of God. It was thus that David said, "Lord . . . my groaning is not hid from Thee," and that Christ

"groaned in spirit, and was troubled." So the whole creation is represented as groaning. And Christians "groan within themselves," "groan being burdened," till mortality is swallowed up of life. The Christian's life is a conflict; and often his sorrows and desires are too big for utterance; there is a feeling, deep, complicated, unutterable, which God only can understand. And He understandeth it, because He knoweth the mind of that Spirit, which maketh intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered. 4. Presenting to the mind encouraging views of the mediation of Christ in prayer. He helps our infirmities by enabling us to plead the blood, and to rely on the sacrifice of the Son of God. 5. Inspiring us with confidence in the Divine promises. 6. Making the duty exceedingly delightful to us. When we pray without the Spirit our prayers are formal, lifeless, insipid, a drudgery. But if we pray under His direction, we engage in the most delightful exercise. The scene of prayer becomes the gate of heaven. 7. Securing the success of our prayers. There is an inseparable oneness between the mind of the Spirit and the will of the Father. If you pray for things which are not according to the will of God, the Holy Spirit does not authorise it, because God cannot deny Himself. But if you are under His agency, you are sure to attain what you pray for. (*J. Bowers.*) *The Spirit helping our infirmities:*—I. THE HOLY SPIRIT STRENGTHENS AND BEARS US UP IN OUR WEAKNESSES AND TROUBLES, THAT WE MAY NOT FAINT UNDER THEM. 1. It is a great infirmity if a Christian should faint in the day of trouble (Prov. xxiv. 10). Partly because there is so little reason for a Christian's fainting. Who should be more undisturbed than he who hath God for his God, Christ for his Saviour, and the Spirit for his Comforter, and heaven for his portion? Partly because there is so much help from God (Psa. cxxxviii. 3); and partly because of the mischiefs which follow this fainting. There is a twofold fainting. (1) That which causeth great trouble and dejection of spirit (Heb. xii. 3). Now this is a great evil in a child of God; for the spirit of a man, or natural courage, will go far as to the sustaining of foreign evils (Prov. xviii. 14). Therefore a Christian, with all his faith and hope, should strive against it (Psa. lxxvii. 7–10). (2) That which causeth dejection and falling off from God. This worse becometh the children of God (Rev. ii. 3; Gal. vi. 9). 2. In this weakness, if we are left to ourselves, we cannot support ourselves. This appeareth partly because they that have but a light tincture of the Spirit give up at the first assault (Matt. xiii. 21), and partly because the most resolved, if not duly possessed with a sense of their own weakness, soon miscarry, if not in whole, yet in part; witness Peter (Matt. xxvi. 33–35). 3. When we cannot support ourselves through our weakness, the Spirit helpeth us (Eph. iii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 5; 1 Cor. x. 13). 4. They that rouse themselves, and use all means, are in a nearer capacity to receive influences from the Spirit than others (Psa. xxvii. 14; xxxi. 24). II. PRAYER IS ONE SPECIAL MEANS BY WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPETH GOD'S CHILDREN IN THEIR TROUBLES. 1. Troubles are sent, not to drive us from God, but to draw us to Him (Psa. l. 15). 2. Prayer is a special means to ease the heart of our burdensome cares and fears (Phil. iv. 6). 3. It is a special means of acknowledging God—(1) As the fountain of our strength and support (1 Pet. v. 10). (2) As the author of our deliverance (2 Tim. iv. 18). III. THE PRAYERS OF THE GODLY COME FROM GOD'S SPIRIT. Note—1. The manner in which the Spirit concurreth to the prayers of the faithful. First, there is the spirit of a man, for the Holy Ghost makes use of our understandings for the actuating of our will and affections; He bloweth up the fire, though it be our hearts that burn within us. Secondly, the new nature in a Christian is more immediately and vigorously operative in prayer than in most other duties; and the exercise of faith, love, and hope in prayer doth flow from the renewed soul as the proper inward and vital principle of these actions; so that we, and not the Spirit of God, are said to repent, believe, and pray. More distinctly the Holy Ghost—(1) Directs and orders our requests so as they may suit with our great end, which is the enjoyment of God. (2) He quickens our desires in prayers. (3) He encourages us to come to God as a Father (chap. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6). (*a*) Childlike confidence (Luke xi. 13. (*b*) Childlike reverence (Mal. i. 6; 1 Pet. i. 17). 2. The necessity of this help. (1) The order and economy of the Divine persons showeth it. God is our reconciled God and Father, to whom we come; Christ the Mediator, through whom we come, and the Spirit our Guide, by whom we come (Eph. ii. 18). (2) That prayer may carry proportion with other duties. (3) Because of our impotency (Cor. xii. 3). (4) With respect to acceptance (ver. 27). 3. Cautions against some abuses and mistakes in prayer. (1) This is not so to be understood as if the matter of prayer were immediately to

be inspired by the Holy Ghost. (2) Nor as if we should never pray till the Spirit moveth us. (3) Nor as if because we have not such freedom of words as may give vent to spiritual affections, we have not the spirit of prayer. There may be a great extravagance of words, without faith, or feeling, or spiritual affections. (4) Nor as if all that pray graciously had the Spirit in a like measure, or the same persons always in the same measure (John iii. 7). (5) Gifts are more necessary when we join with others, and are their mouth to God; but the spirit of prayer is of most use when we are alone. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The Spirit's help in prayer*:—Whatever of good is found in us is the result of a Divine influence. So our Bibles teach us; but the same truth has been affirmed by men who never saw the Bible. "Never did man attain to true greatness," writes Cicero, in one place, "without being the subject of a Divine inspiration," whilst another of the ancient philosophers says, "There is a holy Spirit which dwelleth within us—as we treat Him, so He treateth us, and He it is from whom every good man receiveth both honourable and upright purposes." How these heathens came by this knowledge, except as part of some traditional and half-preserved revelation, it seems hard to explain. Consider—I. THE INFIRMITIES WHICH THE TEXT SPEAKS OF AS BEING SO GREAT A HINDRANCE TO PRAYER. The word describes a sickness or positive disease in the moral system, incapacitating us for the employments which, in a healthy frame of spirit, would be our privilege and delight. 1. Ignorance, unskilledness in not knowing how to order our prayer before God, or to bring our spirit to an adequate appreciation of the work in which we are about to engage. The Divine Being must be felt to be present as an actual personal subsistence—a power willing to be sought, inclined to hearken, able to relieve, mighty to save. The formalist is at no effort to conceive of the presence of such a being while he is praying. The terminating object of his prayer is the prayer itself, and he does not look behind it. But the moment feelings of needed help and desired peace enter into our prayer, those perfunctory performances no longer satisfy us, we must be brought into near converse with God. That this difficulty discourages many in their first attempt at prayer will be readily admitted. "Teach us what we shall say unto God," says Elihu, "for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness." Whilst Job himself exclaims, "O that I knew where I might find Him," &c. Indeed, we may not hesitate to include a regard to this form of infirmity as being among the contemplated ends of our Divine Lord's incarnation. 2. Mistaken desires, hurtful and unwise choices in regard to what will make for our true happiness. Sometimes we pray for things positively hurtful to us, as when the Israelites prayed for meat in the wilderness; sometimes for things not wrong in themselves, but yet wrong because in an unsubmissive spirit, as when Rebecca said, "God, give me children, or else I die." We ask for medicines to be taken away which are working heaven's kindest cures, and we desire change in our outward lot which can only encompass us with new dangers and snares. 3. Unfixed and unworthy thoughts. The apostle prayed for the Corinthians—"That we may attend on the Lord without distraction," which describes a mind divided and rent by a multitude of contending thoughts, each demanding our fixed and earnest heed, all attended to in turn, but none appeased. And the apostle's prayer is, that God's footstool may never be made the place of such unseemly strife, but in that awful presence the heart may be at unity in itself, having one care to absorb, one errand to fulfil, one presence to realise, one voice to hear. II. IN WHAT WAY THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MAY BE SAID TO HELP US AGAINST THEM. 1. He "helpeth," an expression which describes the joint bearing with the person helped, of a burden pressing upon both. The burden is not taken off, but there is a sustaining hand underneath which lightens the grievance of the pressure. The text therefore promises not a removed burden, but an ability to bear; not the supersession of your own exertions and means, but a gracious throwing in of the Holy Spirit's succours to make those means effectual. 2. He "maketh intercession for us." He is said to do that which He enables us to do. He is the source, and strength, and food of our whole devotional life. He moulds us into the praying frame; He suggests to us praying thoughts; He forms in us the praying habit. 3. He "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The help of the Spirit*:—I. AN EQUALITY OF IGNORANCE. "We know not." There are many questions that bring people to this equality. A child may ask a question that a philosopher cannot answer. So Paul was sometimes as ignorant of the will of God concerning him as the weakest disciple. II. AN EQUALITY OF HELP. Our infirmities. Literally, the Spirit lifts "with" us, not for us; our weak effort is

made available by His might. A boy is trying to row a heavy boat: he is powerless to lift the oars, his father comes behind, and lays one hand on each oar, and rows with him. III. A COMMON MEDIUM by which our desires are put in harmony with the will of God. "Groanings which cannot be uttered." The cry of the infant is interpreted by its mother, the sigh of the sick man is as good as words to the nurse, so the groaning (Psa. cii. 5) and the weeping (Psa. vi. 8) are voices in the ear of God. (*W. Harris*). *Our ignorance as to legitimate subjects for prayer*:—Pythagoras forbade his disciples to pray for themselves, because they know not what was expedient. Socrates more wisely taught his disciples to pray simply for good things, the gods knowing best what sort of things are good. But better illustrations are found in Paul's own expression (Phil. i. 22, 3); and in that of our Lord (John xii. 27, 28). (*Archdeacon Gifford.*) *Prayer—for help to pray*:—In Dr. Ryland's memoir of Andrew Fuller is the following anecdote. At a conference at Soham, a friend of slender abilities being asked to pray, knelt down, and Mr. Fuller and the company with him, when he found himself so embarrassed, that, whispering to Mr. Fuller, he said, "I do not know how to go on." Mr. Fuller replied in a whisper, "Tell the Lord so." The rest of the company did not hear what passed between them, but the man, taking Mr. Fuller's advice, began to confess his not knowing how to pray as he ought to pray, begging to be taught to pray, and so proceeded in prayer to the satisfaction of all the company. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The help of the Divine Spirit*:—I go into the studio of my friend the artist, and he makes the outline. I recognise the likeness to some extent as my friend's, but it is not perfect. He takes his pencil, and, as he gazes upon the countenance he wishes to express, he applies the pencil, and by degrees, by touch after touch, the likeness comes out, until at last, when finished, it is perfected so far as it may be perfected, and I say it is the perfect likeness of my friend. So the Holy Spirit has been sitting on your hearts, and, I humbly trust, on mine. There is Jesus, the great example. Here is my heart. The rude outlines have been already formed. I have been adopted into the family. I bear a family likeness; I can be recognised as something like the blessed Saviour, be it ever so little, but the Holy Spirit is changing, transforming, touching this part and that, making me a little more loving and more meek, more self-denying, more active, until by and by I shall be brought into His likeness; it shall be said: "It is enough"; and then, released from mortality, I shall mount up as on wings of eagles; I shall see Him in glory. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Encouragements to prayer for the weak and oppressed*:—Consider—I. THE DISCOURAGEMENTS THAT WEAK BELIEVERS EXPERIENCE IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO PRAY. We do not now refer to the many external discouragements. A devotional spirit may be restrained and destroyed from worldly associations, a multiplicity of engagements, but the apostle calls on us to notice those internal discouragements that arise from "our infirmities." Even the apostles were not exempt from the infirmities which are found—1. In the matter of our prayers. "We know not what to pray for." This arises—(1) From ignorance. (2) From a moral destitution. (3) From a want of suitable dispositions of mind. 2. In the manner of our prayers. We know not how to pray as we ought. So confused, unconnected, and incoherent, are our prayers. If our petitions are not immediately answered, we are unwilling to wait any longer. "We knock at mercy's door and run away." There is oftentimes much pride and selfishness mixed with our prayers. Sometimes the desire of a present indulgence makes us forgetful of duties, an attention to which would yield us more solid and lasting enjoyment. Sometimes the dread of a present evil leads to the use of arguments and expressions unsuited to our true character and condition. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT WE HAVE TO SEEK DIVINE ASSISTANCE IN THIS IMPORTANT DUTY. In reference to this promise of the Spirit's intercession and help. Observe—1. That it does not render the exercise of the mind unnecessary (1 Cor. xiv. 15). We are not dealt with as automatons in religion. 2. Neither does it render nugatory the intercession of Christ (ver. 34). Both are necessary. There is a material difference in their intercession. Christ pleads and procures our reconciliation and pardon, without us; the Spirit co-operates to the same end by His gracious influences within us. Christ by His all-sufficient merits intercedes for His people now in heaven; the Spirit is engaged in applying the benefits of His death to our hearts here on earth. 3. But the promise is designed to teach us that the agency of the Spirit in prayer is indispensable. It is called the Spirit of grace and supplication, and we are exhorted to pray in the Holy Ghost. And our Saviour shows that we cannot rightly perform the duty without it (Luke xi. 10-13). III. THE USE WE SHOULD MAKE OF

THIS SUBJECT. It should serve—1. To quicken the indolent. 2. To encourage the timid. 3. To alarm the presumptuous. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) **But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.**—*The intercession of the Spirit in prayer:*—"We know not." This ignorance is twofold—1. Of the gifts to be asked for. (1) If we knew what we needed our great necessity for prayer would pass away. How many of our prayers are produced by a consciousness of deadness of emotion in which we are tempted to feel that we are "rich . . . and have need of nothing." And because we know this to be a delusion we are driven to cry to God to show us our poverty. (2) Our ignorance of our souls is sufficient proof of our ignorance of the gifts to be sought from God. For before we ask absolutely for any temporal gift we should know what influence as a new temptation it would have on us. What appear the safest requests have a peril of their own. Like Agur we may ask for neither poverty nor riches, but the blessing asked for contains a temptation to fancy oneself free from the sins of both states. Who has not sometimes found it to be a great blessing that his prayers have remained unanswered? (3) The awful fact of human influence seems, when realised, to be an effective barrier to absolute praying. Who, not knowing what result it might produce, dare ask for one gift, seeing that if he fails, he may drag a brother down with him in his fall. (4) Pass on to petitions for spiritual blessings. It may be said that we can rightly ask for such; and so we can when God's Spirit teaches us, but not till then. The strange responses which our prayers often receive seem to indicate that. We cry for faith, and are met with darker doubt; for peace, and are called upon to maintain a fiercer conflict; for happiness, and meet with sorrow. 2. Of the way to ask for them. To ask rightly —(1) We must realise the solemnity of asking. Many prayers are offered from a sense of duty, or force of habit, to some Being, we scarcely dare ask who. Hence we fail to "take hold on God." But when touched by the Divine Spirit we rouse all the powers of being to realise the Divine presence as an overwhelming reality—we feel the solemnity of asking. And if we further realise that by His Spirit He is specially near the praying soul—that the Divine breath is quickening the prayer, while the Great Spirit waits to catch the voice—that prayer is the prayer of His child, and the Father amid the grandeur of His universe, listens to its call. Under such circumstances mechanical or formal prayer is impossible. (2) We must be in the right state of mind. We must be free from the distractions of passion. The wild impulses of the heart beat back the upsoaring of the spirit. Who but the Spirit of God can calm the turmoils of the earthly temper? (3) We must ask with persevering earnestness. We ought always to pray and not faint. II. THE MANNER OF THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION. The awakening of an inexpressible emotion. All deep feelings are too large for language. In the profoundest sense when the soul is touched by the Spirit emotions are awakened which break out in unutterable aspiration. III. THE CERTAINTY OF THE DIVINE RESPONSE (ver. 27). There are two kinds of prayer—that of the Baal worshipper hoping to avert his wrath and change his purpose; and that of a Christian crying for the Spirit which is in harmony with God's will. Note the beautiful thought —the strong Eternal Spirit breathing through the frail child of time for His own fuller descent. On the rock of God's truthfulness prayer stands firm and sure. Our ignorance and feebleness becomes wise and bold. We dare not ask absolutely for any particular blessing, but the Spirit inspires the cry "Thy will be done"; and the right blessings are given. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The intercession of the Spirit:*—I. WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY PRAYING ARIGHT? 1. Negatively. (1) Not praying aright in a legal sense, without any imperfection in the eye of the law. The best prayers of the best saints have always been attended with blemishes (Isa. lxiv. 6). (2) Not praying aright in a moral sense, wherein the most rigid hearer can discern nothing contrary to the precepts of morality. A prayer may be so far right as no unlawful thing may be prayed for in it, and yet may be naught (Luke xviii. 11). The matter may be very good where the manner of praying spoils all. (3) Not praying aright in a rhetorical sense. Words, voice and gesture are of little moment before God (1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Cor. ii. 4). It may be a right prayer where the sentences are broken (Psa. vi. 3), and where there is not a wrong word there may not be one right affection. 2. Positively, it is praying aright in an evangelical sense. This implies—(1) Sincerity in prayer (1 Chron. xxix. 17), in opposition to formality and hypocrisy (2 Tim. iii. 5; Psa. xvii. 1). (2) A perfection of parts in prayer, though not of degrees, *i.e.*, (*a*) Praying for things agreeable to God's will revealed in His word of command or

promise (1 John v. 14). (*b*) Praying in a right manner (Jer. xxxix. 13). Hereunto are required praying graces and affections in exercise, as faith, fervency, humility, reverence, and the like. Where these are wanting the duty will be reckoned but bodily exercise (1 Tim. iv. 8). Such praying is right in so far as it is acceptable in the sight of God, *i.e.*, capable of being accepted according to the rule of the gospel. It is a sacrifice fit to be laid on God's altar, a prayer which may be put in the Mediator's hand, that through His intercession it may be actually accepted. II. ALL OUR PRAYING ARIGHT IS DONE BY THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT. It is done by the help of the Spirit dwelling in us and actually influencing us (Gal. iv. 6). This is clear—1. From Scripture testimony. The Spirit is the Author of our whole sanctification, whereof praying aright is a part (2 Thess. ii. 13; Phil. iii. 3). It is by Him we have access to God in worship (Eph. ii. 18, vi. 18). 2. We are spiritually dead without the Spirit indwelling, and spiritually asleep without the Spirit influencing (Eph. ii. 1; Cant. v. 2). Neither a dead man nor a sleeping man is fit to present a supplication to the king. 3. There is no praying aright without sanctifying grace, nor without that grace in exercise (John ix. 31; Cant. iii. 1). Where grace is not in exercise there is incense indeed, but no pillar of smoke ascending from it to heaven; spikenard indeed, but no smell thereof. 4. To praying aright is required a light of the mind and warmth of affections, the former for the matter, the latter for the manner. And it is a false light and warmth that makes some natural men think that sometimes they pray aright (Isa. lviii. 2). But all genuine light and vital warmth comes from the Spirit (Eph. i. 17, 18; 2 Tim. i. 7). III. IN WHAT RESPECTS OUR PRAYING ARIGHT IS SO FAR DONE BY THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT THAT IT IS JUSTLY RECKONED HIS WORK. 1. All that is right in our prayers is from the Spirit, and all that is wrong in them from ourselves (1 Cor. xii. 11; 1 Pet. i. 22; with 2 Cor. iii. 5). In the incense of our prayers there is smoke that goes up towards heaven, ashes that remain behind on the earth. It is the fire from the altar that sends up the smoke; it is the earthly nature of the incense that occasions the ashes. 2. None pray aright but as they are members of Christ and children of God (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15; John xv. 5). Now it is the Holy Spirit of the Head that dwells in and actuates all the members acting as members (1 Cor. xii. 11, 12). 3. The Spirit is the principal cause of our praying aright; we are but the instrumental causes of it (James v. 16). As the sound of the horn ceases as soon as one ceases to wind it, so does our praying aright on the withdrawing of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 5). 4. All our praying graces, as all others, are in their exercise the product of the Spirit and His work in us (Gal. v. 22, 23). In prayer these are brought forth into exercise—the man acts faith, love, &c.—and therein the soul of prayer lies; but look on them as they are so brought forth from the stock, and they are the fruit of the Spirit, though the believer is the tree they hang on (Isa. xliv. 3, 4). IV. THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN OUR PRAYING ARIGHT, OR WHAT HIS INTERCESSION FOR US IS. Note—1. The difference betwixt Christ's intercession and the Spirit's. (1) Christ intercedes for us in heaven at the Father's right hand (ver. 34); the Spirit intercedes in our hearts upon earth (Gal. iv. 6). (2) Christ's is a mediatory intercession between God and us (1 Tim. ii. 5), but the Spirit's is an auxiliary intercession to us, whereby He helps us to go to God. (3) The Spirit's intercession is the fruit of Christ's, and what is done by the sinner through the Spirit's intercession is accepted of God through the intercession of Christ. In a word, the difference is such as is between one who draws a poor man's petition for him, and another who presents it to the king and gets it granted. 2. The help of the Spirit in prayer. (1) More generally. He acts in it—(*a*) As a teaching Spirit (John xiv. 26). It is our infirmity that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." He helps our ignorance (1 John ii. 27). (*b*) As a quickening Spirit (Psa. lxxx. 18). "He maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered," setting the gracious heart working towards God with the utmost earnestness. (2) More particularly. (*a*) He excites us to pray (ver. 15) He impresses our spirits with a sense of a Divine call to it, and so binds it on our consciences as duty to God; then He inclines us to the duty, that we willingly comply with it (Psa. xxvii. 8). (*b*) He gives us a view of God as a gracious and merciful Father in Christ (Gal. iv. 6); and hereby He works in us a holy reverence in God (Heb. xii. 28), and a holy confidence in Him (Eph. iii. 12). This confidence respects both His ability and willingness to help us (Matt. vii. 11). Without this there can be no acceptable prayer (Heb. xi. 6; James i. 6). This is it that makes prayer an ease to a troubled heart. Hence the soul, though not presently eased, draws these conclusions. He designs my good by all the hardships I am under (ver. 28); He pities me under them (Psa. ciii.

13); He knows the best time for removing them, and will do it when that comes (1 Sam. ii. 3). (*c*) He gives us a view of ourselves in our own sinfulness and unworthiness (John xvi. 8; Isa. vi. 5). Hereby He works in us—humiliation of heart before the Lord (Gen. xviii. 27; Luke xviii. 13; Ezek. xxxvi. 31); cordial confession (Psa. lxii. 8); hearty thanksgiving for mercies received (Psa. cxvi. 11, 12); a high value for the Mediator and His righteousness (Phil. iii. 9). (*d*) He gives us a view of our wants and the need we have of the supply of them (Luke xv. 17). This may be seen, comparing the Pharisee's and publican's prayers (Luke xviii. 11-13). Here He acts as an enlightener, opening the eyes of the mind to discern the wants and needs we are compassed with (Eph. i. 17, 18); as a remembrancer (John xiv. 26); as a forewarner of what we may need (John xvi. 13). (*e*) He gives us a view of the grace and promises of the covenant (Psa. xxv. 14; John xiv. 26). And here the Spirit brings to remembrance the grace and promises suited to our case (Gen. xxxii. 11, 12), and unfolds that grace and these promises, causing to understand them in a spiritual and saving manner (1 Cor. ii. 12). Hereby the Spirit teaches what to pray for, according to the will of God, and in what terms to pray for it, the terms of the promise agreeable to the grace of the covenant. Hereby, too, He fills our mouths with arguments, helping us to plead and pray (Job xxiii. 3, 4), and stirs up in us a faith of particular confidence as to the thing prayed for, so that we are helped to pray believingly (Matt. xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24; 1 Tim. ii. 8; James i. 6; *cf.* 2 Cor. iv. 13), and works in us a holy boldness in prayer (Eph. iii. 12). (*f*) He raiseth in us holy desires for the supply of our wants, "groanings which cannot be uttered." Thus we are made to pray fervently (James v. 16; Rom. xii. 11). (*g*) He gives us a view of the merit and intercession of the Mediator (Eph. i. 17). Hereby He points us to the only way of acceptance of our prayers (John xiv. 6), lays before us a firm foundation of confidence before the Lord (1 John ii. 1; Eph. iii. 12), and furnishes us with an answer to all objections that an unbelieving heart and a subtle devil can muster up against us, in prayer (vers. 33, 34). (*h*) He manages the heart and spirit in prayer, which every serious soul will own to be a hard task (Jer. x. 23); He composes it for prayer (Psa. lxxxvi. 11); He fixes it in prayer, that it wander not away in the duty (Ezek. xxxvi. 27); and reduces it from its wanderings (Psa. xxiii. 3). (*i*) The Spirit causes us to continue in prayer from time to time till we obtain a gracious answer, and so makes us pray perseveringly (Eph. vi. 18), by accounting for the delay of our answer in a way consistent with God's honour and our good, and so satisfying us in that point (Psa. xxii. 2, 3); by strengthening faith and hope, which have the battle to fight in this case (Eph. iii. 16); and by continuing and reviving on our spirits the sense of our need, which, pinching us anew, obliges to renew our suit for relief until the time we get it (2 Cor. xii. 8). (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

The Holy Spirit an internal intercessor:—The text speaks of—I. CERTAIN INFIRMITIES INCIDENT TO CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS. These infirmities are immediately connected with the exercise of spiritual prayer, and they are—1. Ignorance as to matter. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." That there are times when believers are so beset with temptations, or so greatly harassed by the internal conflict, as not to know what they most need. 2. But, again, the infirmities of which the apostle makes mention, include inefficiency as to the manner of prayer. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." The soul's groanings indicate infirmity. Were there no infirmity there would be no groaning; all would then be liberty and satisfaction. He who knows not what to ask for as he ought, is restrained in expressing himself. II. THE ASSISTANCE WHICH BELIEVERS ARE PRIVILEGED TO RECEIVE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR INFIRMITIES IN PRAYER. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." "The Spirit maketh intercession for us." Observe here, the Spirit is not said to supersede our infirmities, but only to help them, and His help comes in the form of intercession. The infirmity remains, and is sanctified by the influence which reaches it. The groanings are not hushed, but they are made a vehicle into which the Comforter throws His interceding voice in its passage to the skies. III. THE BLESSED CONSEQUENCES OF HAVING THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS AN INTERNAL INTERCESSOR. We are told, in effect, that the Spirit's pleading, although it be embodied in unutterable groanings, cannot fail to draw down upon the contrite soul the blessings of covenanted grace. The Holy Spirit, the Son, and the Father are the contracting parties in the scheme of human redemption; and each party must needs take cognizance of every branch of the work appropriated by the other parties. Here, however, it must be remembered that blessings imparted are not always blessings

apprehended. The showers of heaven are not the less fertilising because they fall at midnight; neither are the communications of grace the less real or the less beneficial in their results because they reach the soul during seasons of spiritual gloom. He may continue to groan. The visitation itself may be unperceived by him, while it is working its blessed effects in the hidden recesses of a disconsolate heart. In God's time, however, its results will be made manifest. It is in consistency with the analogy of the Divine proceedings to connect great blessings with severe trials. IV. SOME WORDS OF IMPROVEMENT AND APPLICATION. 1. First, in the way of caution, I would say, Beware of judging of the excellency or of the efficacy of prayer by the medium through which it passes. It is the spirit that prompts, not the language that embodies, to which the Holy One gives heed. The true beauty of prayer, whether as to import or expression, is simplicity. 2. This passage furnishes some salutary hints and some important inferences as to the variations which characterise the Christian experience. The clearest stream may be muddled by an incidental disturbance, and the brightest sky may be overshadowed by a passing cloud. Therefore draw no wrong conclusions respecting your spiritual state from the mere circumstance of your enjoyments being at times interrupted or suspended. 3. The text gives great encouragement to those Christians, whatever may be their standing in the church of the regenerate, or whatever may be the peculiar cast or character of their experience, who want language in which to embody their feelings at the throne of the heavenly grace. (*W. Knight, M.A.*) *The Holy Spirit's intercession*:—I. THE HELP WHICH THE HOLY GHOST GIVES. If in time of trouble a man can pray, his burden loses its weight. But sometimes we are in such confusion of mind that we know not what we should pray for as we ought. We see the disease, but the name of the medicine is not known to us. When we know the matter of prayer, we yet fail to pray in a right manner. Coming to our aid in our bewilderment—1. He instructs us. "He shall teach you all things." He instructs us as to our need, and as to the promises of God which refer to that need. 2. He often directs the mind to the special subject of prayer. We sometimes find our minds carried as by a strong under-current into a particular line of prayer for some one definite object. It is not merely that our judgment leads us in that direction, though usually the Spirit of God acts upon us by enlightening our judgment, but we often feel an unaccountable and irresistible desire rising again and again within our heart. 3. He Himself "maketh intercession for us"; not that He ever groans or personally prays, but He excites intense desire and unutterable groanings in us, and these are ascribed to Him; even as Solomon built the temple because he superintended and ordained all. 4. He strengthens the faith of believers. That faith is at first of His creating, and afterwards it is of His sustaining and increasing. 5. In this whole matter the Spirit acts—(1) As a prompter to a reciter. (2) As an advocate to one in peril at law. (3) As a father aiding his boy. II. THE PRAYER WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES. The prayers which are indited in us by the Spirit of God are—1. Those which arise from our inmost soul. A man's heart is moved when he groans. 2. Such prayers will rise within us when the mind is far too troubled to let us speak. We know not what we should pray for as we ought, and then it is that we groan. Hezekiah said, "Like a crane or a swallow did I chatter." The Psalmist said, "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." 3. They sometimes concern such great things that they cannot be spoken. If it were some little thing, my narrow capacity could comprehend and describe it, but I need all covenant blessings. But it may be that we groan because we are conscious of the littleness of our desire and the narrowness of our faith. The trial, too, may seem too mean to pray about. 4. They are prayers of knowledge. Notice, our difficulty is that we know not what we should pray for; but the Holy Spirit does know, and therefore He helps us by enabling us to pray intelligently, knowing what we are asking for. The text speaks of the "mind of the Spirit." What a mind that must be! And it is seen in our intercessions when under His sacred influence we order our case before the Lord, and plead with holy wisdom for things convenient and necessary. 5. They are prayers offered in a proper manner. The Spirit works in us humility, earnestness, intensity, importunity, faith, and resignation, and all else that is acceptable to God in our supplications. We know not how to mingle these sacred spices in the incense of prayer. If left to ourselves, we get too much of one ingredient or another and spoil the sacred compound, but the Holy Spirit's intercessions have in them such a blessed blending of all that is good that they come up as a sweet perfume before the Lord. 6. They are only in the saints. III. THE SURE SUCCESS OF ALL SUCH PRAYERS. 1. There is a meaning in them which God reads and approves. When

the Spirit of God writes a prayer upon a man's heart, the man himself may be in such a state of mind that he does not altogether know what it is. His interpretation of it is a groan, and that is all. Yet our heavenly Father, who looks immediately upon the heart, reads what the Spirit of God has indited there. "He knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." Did not Jesus say, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things before you ask them"? 2. They are "the mind of the Spirit." God is one, and therefore it cannot be conceived without profanity, that anything could be the mind of the Holy Spirit and not be the mind of the Father and of the Son. If, therefore, the Holy Spirit move you to any desire, then His mind is in your prayer, and it is not possible that the eternal Father should reject your petitions. 3. They are according to the will or mind of God, for He never maketh intercession in us other than is consistent with the Divine will. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Divine aid in prayer*:—First the Person mentioned—God—He searcheth the heart. The Lord knoweth the heart in all the turnings and windings of it. And this is a point which the Scripture does abundantly make good to us in sundry places (thus Jer. xvii. 10; Acts i. 24; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9). This must needs be so upon a various account. First, in regard of His omniscience. He knows all things, therefore amongst the rest He must know the heart of man (John xxi. 17; Jer. xxxii. 19; Heb. iv. 13). Secondly, the Lord must needs know the heart, because it is He only that made it. Who does know any piece of workmanship better than He that is the artificer of it (Psa. xciv. 9, 10)? Thirdly, it is the Lord which does guide it and order it, and has the disposing of it. Lastly, the Lord must needs know the heart, because He shall judge every one, and that according to his heart, as Christ tells the Church of Thyatira (Rev. ii. 23). This is the property of the Almighty: to be the searcher of the heart, not only simply, but exclusively, making it to be such a description of the Divine Majesty, as wherein none but Himself is included. First, it is true of God originally. He searches and knows the heart alone by the power of His own nature, and an immediate excellency which is in Himself, though others may in some sense also know it by participation and derivation from Him. The prophets, as Samuel to Saul, "I will tell thee all that is in thine heart" (1 Sam. ix. 9). So Elisha likewise to Gehazi, "Went not my heart with thee," &c. The apostles, as Peter of Ananias (Acts v. 3). Secondly, it is true of God universally. The Lord He so knows the heart as that He knows all the windings and turnings of it; man knows only some particulars (Psa. cxxxix. 4). Thirdly, it is true of God infallibly, whereas men—yea, even devils themselves—they know it but conjecturally, and so, indeed, do not properly know it. The consideration of this point is useful to us, first, in a way of counsel. Those who think they shall at any time be searched, they are commonly more careful of themselves; and so it should be with us in this particular, and that in divers respects. First, in matter of duty, that our heart be right here. The Lord observes not only men's actions, but likewise their affections. Thus, for hearing of the Word He observes what it is which brings men to such places. And so as for the manner of duty, so likewise for the undertaking of it. It is useful to us here, to put us upon it, and to keep us from shifting it off upon pretence of want of ability or opportunity for it. Secondly, in matter of sin and that which is forbidden to us. It is very useful here also, seeing the Lord searches the heart, we should therefore make conscience of our thoughts and such sins as go no further than them. Seeing the heart is deceitful above all things, therefore above all things go to Him who is the searcher and discerner of the heart. Now further, secondly, it is improvable also in a way of comfort, and that in divers particulars. First, in a way of opportunity for the doing of that good which we desire. The Lord knows their hearts and minds in it (2 Chron. vi. 8; 2 Cor. viii. 12). Secondly, as this is a comfort to God's children in the straitness of their own opportunities, so likewise in the censures and misconstructions of other men (1 Cor. iv. 3–5); to light the hidden things of darkness, and manifest the counsels of the heart. And so Job, "My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (chap. xvi. 19). This is a comfort in secret goodness, and such as the world takes no notice of. That it shall not be altogether unrewarded by God, who searches the very heart, and the secrets and recesses of it. Again, in the temptations of Satan, who is called the accuser of the brethren, and is said to accuse them before our God day and night (Rev. xii. 10). What a great comfort is it that God searcheth the heart! And so for ourselves, when we do not always so clearly discern our own estate and condition in grace; yet to say, "Lord, Thou seest how it is with me," as Peter sometimes to Christ. God sometimes sees that good in His children which they at present do not discern in themselves. The

second is the action attributed unto this Person in these words: "Knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according," &c.; wherein, again, we have two branches more. First, to speak of the action itself, "Knoweth," &c. And this again it may be taken two ways. First, take it notionally and by way of apprehension. The Lord, who is the searcher of hearts, knoweth—that is, understandeth—what is the mind and meaning of the Spirit in those imperfect sighs and groans which do at any time come from us. And this is very fitly brought in by way of opposition to that which went before in the former verse. "We know not," says the apostle, "what we should pray for as we ought" in such and such conditions. Secondly, take it affectionately and by way of approbation. The Lord knows—that is, approves—of the graces and good affections of His people in the midst of those manifold weaknesses and imperfections which are mingled withal in them. He knows them so as to accept them. But here a question may be made what Spirit it is which is here meant when it is said that "God knoweth the mind of the Spirit," whether our own spirit or the Spirit of God. We are hereby to understand directly the Spirit of God, yet with reference also to our own spirit, which is involved in it and with it. God knows what is spirit and grace in us, distinct from what is flesh and corruption, in those prayers which we put up unto Him. This is a point which may be laid forth to us according to sundry instances and explications of it, as—First, in difficulty of utterance, and restraint of words, and outward expressions. The saints and servants of God may not have that gift and faculty of so freely expressing themselves in speech and language. Now what does the Lord in this case—reject their prayer for this defect which is in them? No; He knows the mind of the Spirit notwithstanding. Secondly, as in difficulty of utterance, so also in distraction of spirit, which is mainly here intended in this Scripture. But God is still a gracious God in the meantime, and knows the mind of the Spirit in His children. Thirdly, in case of forgetfulness, where somewhat is left out of the prayer which was intended to be put into it. The Lord knows the mind of the Spirit in this respect also. Fourthly and lastly, in the mistake of our prayers, for the subject and matter of them, and the things which we desire in them. God knows the mind of the Spirit in this sense also. This is another piece of that comfort and encouragement which does belong to God's children: that the Lord passes over that which is flesh in them, and looks only at that which is spirit. And so much may suffice to have spoken of the first particular in this second general, to wit, the action itself in these words: "Knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." The second is the reason or object which this action is conversant about, and that is in these words, because, or that He makes intercession for the saints, &c. We begin with the first, viz., the qualification of the persons—the saints. The apostle in the verse before had said, "for us"; now he adds, "for the saints," that so he might show under what motion and upon what account the intercession mentioned becomes available to us. And it affords us this observation which arises out of it: that none can pray truly and effectually but only the saints (thus Psa. xxxii. 6; Prov. xv. 8; Psa. cxlv. 19). And there is this ground for it: First, because such as these only are accepted and beloved of God. The granting of requests and petitions is a matter of special favour to those to whom it is vouchsafed; every one is not fit to obtain it. Secondly, as such only are accepted, so such only are fit subjects and instruments for the Holy Spirit to work in to this purpose. Thirdly, none but saints have an interest in the blood of Christ, as more particularly applied unto them, and His intercession working for them. The consideration of this point should therefore teach us to prize holiness both in ourselves and in others. This should further teach the saints to improve that interest which they have in God upon all occasions. Again, from this passage here before us we may collect the true nature of prayer, which lies not so much in gifts as in graces, and is a work of the Spirit in the sanctifying operations of it. The second is the manner of the performance, according to God, which we translate, according to His will. This point, from hence, is this: that then, and then alone, are our prayers likely to be successful, when they are made according to God. This praying according to the will of God does include divers things in it. First, the matter of our prayers, that it be of such things as are lawful and warrantable. Secondly, for the manner of them, that they be carried with that spirit and affection which He does allow of, and especially in the Name and confidence of Christ the Mediator (John xvi. 23). Thirdly, for the end of them, and that which we propound to ourselves in them, which is the glory of God (James iv. 3). Thus it first of all cashiers all such prayers as do swerve from this will of God. Secondly, seeing those

prayers alone are acceptable which are made according to the will of God, it does from hence nearly concern us to be well instructed in this will, and to know what it is (chap. xii. 2; Eph. v. 17). Thirdly, this gives us an account of it, whence our prayers sometimes are not heard, because not according to this will. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*). *The intercession of the Spirit*:—I. THE FACT OF THIS INTERCESSION. The word translated "Comforter," which occurs in John xiv.-xvi., means "Advocate" (1 John ii. 1). We have two advocates, one of them in heaven and the other on earth—one of them being always with us, and the other being always at the Father's right hand. II. ITS NATURE. There are two things which an advocate does or may do for his client—he speaks for him and he tells him what to say. There are stages sometimes in the course of a trial when the voice of the advocate is not enough, and when the client himself must break silence. The advocate's function, then, is to instruct his client to speak in the way that will be best for his interests. Where there is but one advocate both functions must devolve upon him; but where there are two, the functions may be divided. So Christ speaks for us, and the Spirit tells us what to say. The intercessions of Christ are in Christ's own prayers; the intercessions of the Spirit are in the prayers of believers. All of true prayer is the result of the working of the Spirit within us (Eph. vi. 18; Jude 20). 1. The Spirit enlightens the mind, and gives the necessary knowledge. It is a function of the Spirit's office to teach. He teaches through the Word, which was given by His inspiration; and through the capacity which He restores to the soul for conceiving of the things of God. He is the Spirit of truth, because He inspired the penmen of Holy Writ; He is the Spirit of knowledge, because His influence disposes and enables the soul to apprehend Divine truth. By the knowledge which the Spirit imparts we learn—(1) What to ask for. "We know not what we should pray for." In this respect "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Through Him we discover—(*a*) Our need. If we do not know what we need we do not know what to ask for. He shows us our need of wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. (*b*) God and His grace, Christ and His salvation; and these discoveries are gladsome. (2) What plea to use when we pray. In prayer there should be arguments as well as petitions. Our requests may be all right, but more is necessary. The text says, not only that we know not what to pray for, but "as we ought." The knowledge of this is supplied by the Spirit. In glorifying Christ, He shows us the excellency and power of Christ's name, and that name comprehends arguments that are sure to prevail. 2. The Spirit excites holy, spiritual desire. Mere knowledge will not suffice for the production of prayer. There may be knowledge without prayer. There must be desire to possess the blessings, as well as knowledge of what the blessings are. Now, it is the work of the Holy Ghost to kindle within us the necessary desire. He takes away the stony heart, which is incapable of this desire, and He gives us the heart of flesh, which quivers with Divine emotions. Through His quickenings we hunger and thirst after righteousness, and we not only know, but have an urgent sense of, our need of grace and strength. 3. He gives us faith in the promises in which God engages to be a Father to us, and to keep us as His children. He gives us faith in Christ's name, and helps us to rely upon it. There may be knowledge, and there may be strong desire; but, without faith, the voice of prayer will sink into the wail of despondency, and die away! Faith inspires us with the confidence of children; and then the winged words go upwards, Abba, Father! and our prayers ascend along with them! III. ITS EXCELLENCY. A first-rate pleader will signalise himself by the matter and the manner of his addresses. The matter will be judicious, and to the point. The manner will be earnest, affecting, eloquent and powerful. 1. With respect to the matter of His intercession, it is "according to the will of God." It is impossible for our cause to be mismanaged from unacquaintance, on His part, with God's will. He never asks what God is not ready to grant, or fails to ask what God is willing to bestow; and He always urges those arguments and considerations to which God is sure to pay regard. 2. As to the manner it is characterised by earnestness and power—"with groanings that cannot be uttered." Much of the Spirit's intercession is unspoken. Much of it consists in feelings that cannot be expressed. But the intercession of the Spirit is not the less powerful for these things. The groanings are proofs of its energy, and God understands them right well. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." IV. ITS SUCCESS. We have an advocate above, as well as an advocate below. Were there any disagreement between the two it would frustrate everything. But between these two advocates there can be no discord. The Spirit's intercession is an effect of Christ's, and flows out of it.

Christ deputes the Spirit to intercede on earth, while He Himself intercedes in heaven. Our text says, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth," &c. It is not mere knowledge that is affirmed, but knowledge carrying approval along with it—the approval being founded on the statement that the Spirit's intercession is according to the will of God. (*A. Gray.*) *The intercession of the Spirit*:—I. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE INTERCESSION OF THE SPIRIT AND THAT OF CHRIST is that the latter is a fact revealed to faith; the former a fact known by experience. Indeed, Christ Himself is God revealed to us; the Spirit is God revealed in us. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"; but by the Spirit of adoption we cry, "Abba, Father." "Remission of sins in Christ's name" is "preached among all nations"; "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free," consciously free, "from the law of sin and death." One or two illustrations will set before us the twofold intercession. 1. An elder sister will, in two ways, intercede on behalf of an undutiful little one. She will plead with her parents for his forgiveness; but she will also plead with the disobedient child himself, and bringing him repentant will reconcile child and parents once more. The intercession of Christians for one another is of this twofold character. James tells us to "pray one for another," and to "confess our faults one to another." Now humanity, in all its sinfulness, has an advocate with God in Christ; the Holy Ghost within us awakens the desire for forgiveness, moves us to penitence, prompts us to confession, and so makes intercession here. 2. The intercession for pardon is an illustration of our text. So, too, is the intercession for grace. Christ is touched with a feeling of our infirmities and pleads, "Father, Thy children are weak and trembling; succour them." The Holy Spirit teaches us our infirmities, and leads us to cry, "Father, we are weak and trembling; succour us." II. WE MUST CONNECT THE GROANINGS OF THE TEXT WITH THOSE OF VERS. 22, 23. Paul tells us that there is the same unutterable feeling, the same vague quenchless yearning in "ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." 1. We have all been conscious of a deep feeling of something wrong in us that no words can express. We feel more than we know about the ruin of our sinfulness; we hope for a blessedness that we see not and cannot utter. If, then, we have tried to pray as we have been feeling, we must have struggled as men oppressed with infirmity, "we know not what to pray for as we ought." But yet, in going thus to God, we have been helped; we have been calmed as our spirits have mutely breathed towards God. 2. The longing for communion with God is often unutterable. There is a power in prayer when we offer definite petitions; when love prompts supplication for a particular person, or penitence draws nigh to confess some remembered fault. But there is a yet mightier energy of prayer when we are led to God, not to ask for any special blessing, but only that we may call Him Father. We want God Himself: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." We ask for no blessing, for we are fully blessed; but "our soul breaketh for the longing" it hath unto God. In silence we look up to Him, peaceful in His presence. 3. The longing for submission to God is also at times unutterable. It may be so because of a conflict of feeling. Some of you know what it is to say with Christ, "Father, save me from this hour"; to kneel with Him in Gethsemane. But against the pleading weakness of the flesh the spirit utters its protest; you know the conflict, the "agony" of prayer. As yet you cannot say, "For this cause came I unto this hour," &c.; "Not my will, but Thine be done." This is what the inner spirit longs for; but the longing to submit can only show itself in "groanings which cannot be uttered." 4. Or it may be that we may have very definite desires, and yet not know what to pray for "as we ought." We may be asking for the removal of a chastisement from a family or a nation; and yet so strong is our conviction of the righteousness and wisdom of God that we dare not ask its removal with absolute and importunate supplication. There are times when, if feelings alone prompted our prayers, we would wrestle with God; but knowing our ignorance, we fear that the answer to our petitions may be more a curse than a blessing. Desire is strong, but faith in the unknown will of God is stronger. We can but bow and trust "with groanings which cannot be uttered." III. Let me now call your attention to THE DOCTRINE WHICH THE TEXT UNFOLDS. Note—1. The reality of the prayer which consists only of unutterable longings. Some may be inclined to treat all this as mere transcendentalism and mystic dreaming. Now, I might remind you that in ordinary life, feeling is often truer, as well as deeper, than thought, and that our profoundest, most powerful feelings cannot be uttered. Friends may find an intense joy in each other's society without a word being spoken; the members of a united family often yearn over one another

with inexpressible love and longing. The aspirations of an ardent heart, the desires of a youth for distinction and service, often so vaguely, blindly put; but we expect far more from such than from one who can most clearly tell us all that is in his heart. But I content myself with saying that this is part of the Christian revelation. Paul knew of what he was speaking, and was sure the Romans would know it too. It was for no circle of enthusiasts he was writing here; but the busy, active society of Rome is bidden mark the care God takes to help the infirmities, and educate the spirit of His children. In feeling and desire, as well as in thought and purpose, God can recognise the spirit of the worshipper. 2. Its Divine origin. As there are some who, never having known feelings too deep for words, would treat an unspeakable prayer with scorn; so there may be others who, being conscious of such desires, seek to suppress them as the offspring of a diseased fancy. Consider the solemn blessedness of these words, "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Perhaps we never feel our infirmity more than when in prayer. We cannot apprehend what prayer is; that the gift might be to us ruin, or eternal blessedness; that God takes note of the defects of our supplication; without feeling that we hold tremendous issues in our hands. Such a thought would check prayer altogether had we not the assurance of being helped to pray. We need not only the assurance of a higher wisdom, a fidelity that can withhold as well as grant, and an affectionate sympathy that can read the spirit rather than the letter of our requests; but also that our spirits be brought into fellowship with God's Spirit, that our wills be made accordant with His. We must be enabled to pray aright, if we are to continue to pray at all. 3. Its intelligibility to God. Often what to cold bystanders seem merely odd antics, to the sympathising father are full of deep and beautiful significance. The boisterousness of a boy just back from school, which a stranger might wish to suppress, the parent sees to be the expression of a gladness in his home too full to be kept down. In the moody restlessness of a girl, who sees her parents burdened by an anxiety she cannot understand, they recognise a desire to share the burden. The blundering efforts of a child in a busy household, which often only increase confusion, are more than mere blunders; they show that the little one desires to help, and the loving wish is gratefully perceived by the parental spirit. So does our heavenly Father search our hearts. In the heavy moanings of the spirit, that even after forgiveness is dissatisfied with itself, He sees the longing to be "delivered from the bondage of corruption," &c. In the unutterable cry for God, He reads a desire for communion with Him fuller than has yet been satisfied. In the struggle of the soul that knows not "what to pray for as we ought," He recognises the passion for submission, however hard it may be to submit. Our text, moreover, speaks of "the mind," or intent "of the Spirit." There is a purpose in these apparently purposeless "groanings," an end after which this dim feeling is groping. God sees a meaning in that which to us has as yet no meaning. He sees the petitions to which the Spirit is prompting, although to us as yet they have not taken the form of petitions. Let us not say there is no reality in feelings too deep for us to set out in language; they are to God full of reality; these are the prayers which are surest of response. "He that searcheth the hearts," &c. (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *Prayer written in the heart by the Holy Spirit*:—The feeblest prayer, if it be sincere, is written by the Holy Spirit upon the heart, and God will always own the handwriting of the Holy Spirit. Frequently certain kind friends from Scotland send me for the Orphanage some portions of what one of them called the other day "filthy lucre,"—namely, dirty £1 notes. Now these £1 notes certainly look as if they were of small value. Still, they bear the proper signature, and they pass well enough, and I am very grateful for them. Many a prayer that is written on the heart by the Holy Spirit seems written with faint ink, and, moreover, it appears to be blotted and defiled by our imperfection; but the Holy Spirit can always read His own handwriting. He knows His own notes, and when He has issued a prayer He will not disown it. Therefore, the breathing which the Holy Ghost works in us will be acceptable with God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The intercession of the Spirit*:—When the Spirit maketh intercession for us, it is not by any direct supplication from Himself to God; but it is by becoming the Spirit of grace and supplication in us. The man whom He prays for is the organ of His prayer. The prayer passes, as it were, from the Spirit through Him who is the object of it. Those groanings of the Spirit which cannot be uttered, are those desires wherewith the heart of a seeker after Zion is charged; and which, in defect of language, and even clear conceptions, can only find vent in the ardent but unspeakable breathings. Now these are called here the groanings of the Spirit,

because it is He who hath awakened them in the spirit of man. It is not that there is any want either of light or of utterance about Him; but He doeth His work gradually upon us, and often infuses a desirousness into our hearts before He reveals the truth with distinctness to our understandings. He walketh by progressive footsteps, in accomplishing the creation of a new moral world—even as He did when employed in the creation of the old. He then moved upon the face of the waters, before He said, "Let there be light." The dark and muddy element was first put into agitation, and the very turbulence into which it was thrown may have just thickened at the first that very chaos out of which it was emerging; and so it often is when the Spirit begins to move upon the soul. There is labour without light—a busy fermentation of shadowy and floating desires and indistinct feelings, whether of a present misery or a future and somehow attainable enlargement. There is perfect light and liberty with Him. But when He comes into contact, and especially at the first, with a soul before dead in trespasses and sins—when, instead of doing the work separately and by Himself, He does it through the opaque medium of a corrupt human soul—we should not marvel, though the prayers that even He hath originated, be tinged with the obscurity of that dull and distorted medium through which they have to pass. We know that to the sun in the firmament we should ascribe not merely the splendour of the risen day, but even the faintest streaks of twilight. It is because of the gross and intervening earth that, though something be seen at the earliest dawn, it is yet seen so dimly, and the eye is still bewildered among visionary and unsettled forms, while it wanders over the landscape. And, in like manner, it is the Spirit to whom we shall owe at last the effulgence of a complete manifestation; and to whom also we owe at present even the misty and troubled light that hath excited us to seek, but is scarcely able to guide us in our inquiries. And this imperfection is not because of Himself, in whom there is perfect and unclouded splendour. It is only because of the gross and terrestrial mind upon which He operates. There is the conflict of two ingredients, even the light that is in Him and the darkness that is in us; and the result of the conflict is prayer, but prayer mixed with much remaining ignorance. It is the mixture of His intercession with our unutterable groanings—an obscure day that precedes the daylight of the soul—a lustre that cometh from Him, but tarnished with the soil and broken with the turbulence of our own nature. And, therefore, to comfort all who are labouring among the disquietudes of such a condition, we affirm that the heavenly visitant may have made His entrance, and have begun the process of a glorious transformation on the materials of their inward chaos. The spiritual twilight may now be breaking out as the harbinger of a coming glory, as the dim flickerings of that light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. There is an example remarkably analogous to this in the old prophets. They spake only as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and though He, of course, knew the meaning of all that He had inspired Himself, yet they knew but little or nothing of the sense that lay under them. And, accordingly, they are described as prying into the sense of their own prophecies (1 Pet. i. 10-12). So holy men of the present day, and more especially at the outset of their holiness, might feel the inspiration of a strong desirousness from above, and yet be ignorant of the whole force and meaning of their own prayers. But this state of darkness is not a desirable one to be persisted in. One would not choose to live always in twilight. Labour after distinct and satisfying apprehensions of the truth as it is in Jesus. Seek to know your disease; and seek to know the powers and the properties of that medicine which is set forth in the gospel. Study and search with diligence, and by a careful perusal of Holy Writ, in the economy of a man's restoration. Even in this work, too, you must have the Spirit to help your infirmities. For He is the Spirit of wisdom, as well as of prayer, and gives you revelation in the knowledge of Christ. You increase by Him in acquaintance with God; and though at the beginning of His work, and perhaps for some time afterwards, there may be a sore conflict of doubts and desires and difficulties—yet such is the process of this work, that you will at length come to experience that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is light—where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Ver. 28. **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.**—*All things work together for good to them that love God:*—I. IT IS ABUNDANTLY OBVIOUS OF MANY A SINGLE ADVERSITY—THAT A GREAT AND PERMANENT GOOD MAY COME OUT OF IT. This is often verified, as when the disease brought on by intemperance has germinated; and the loss by a daring speculation has checked the adventurer,

and turned him into the way of safe though moderate prosperity. Apart from Christianity, man has often found that it was good for him to have been afflicted—that, under the severe but salutary discipline, wisdom has been increased, and character strengthened, and the rough independence of human wilfulness tamed, and many asperities of temper have been worn away. And so of many an infliction on the man who is a candidate for the world above. The overthrow of his fortune has given him a strong practical set for eternity; the death of his child has weaned him from all idolatry; the tempests of life have fastened him more steadfastly to the hold of religious principle. He is made perfect by sufferings. II. THESE ADVERSE VISITATIONS DO NOT ALWAYS COME SINGLY. The apostle supposes the concurrence of two or more events, all verging towards the good of him to whom they have befallen. It has often been said that misfortunes seldom come by themselves; and it is the compounding of one evil thing with another that aggravates so much the distress of each of them. And when we are lost in the bewilderments of a history that we cannot scan, and entangled among the mazes of a labyrinth that we cannot unravel, it is well to be told that all is ordered and that all worketh for good. III. IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES EMANATE FROM ONE EVENT WHICH IN ITSELF IS INSIGNIFICANT, insomuch that the colour and direction of your whole futurity have turned on what, apart from this mighty bearing, would have been the veriest trifle in the world. It is thus that the great drama of a nation's politics may hinge on the veriest bagatelle. The pursuers of Mahomet were turned away from the mouth of the cave in which he had the moment before taken shelter by the flight of a bird from one of the shrubs that grew at its entry. This bird changed the destiny of the world. And therefore it is well that all things are under the control of God who maketh all things work together for good unto those who love Him. Is not the fact that what is most minute often gives rise to what is most momentous, an argument for the doctrine of a providence that reaches even to the least? Should God let go one small ligament in the vast and complicated machinery of the world, it might all run into utter divergency from the purpose of the mind that formed it. IV. HOW AM I TO BE ASSURED OF MY INTEREST IN THE DECLARATION OF THE TEXT? 1. The promise here is not unto all in the general, but to those who love God. Now I may not be sure that I love Him. I may desire to love Him; but to desire is one thing and to do is another. Now it does not follow that you are altogether destitute of love to God because it stirs so languidly within you that you are not able very distinctly or decidedly to recognise it. Your very desire to love Him is a good symptom; your very grief that you love Him not bodes favourably for you. Where there is an honest wish for affection, there is in fact the embryo of affection itself, struggling for a growth and an establishment in the aspiring bosom. Meanwhile it is most desirable that the germ should expand. And the question is, How shall this be brought about? Never by looking to oneself, but by looking unto the Saviour. 2. They who love God are described by another characteristic. They are the "called"—*i.e.*, those who have felt the power of the call upon their hearts, and have complied with it accordingly. It is only upon our entertaining the call of the gospel and consenting thereunto that there ensues a transition of the heart to the love of God. Anterior to this, the thought of God stood associated with feelings of jealousy and insecurity and alarm. A sense of guilt has alienated us from God. It is this which stands as a wall of iron between heaven and earth. And the only way by which this else impregnable barrier can be scaled, and we can draw nigh in affection to the Father, is by accepting the only authentic offer that He ever held out to us of reconciliation. It is by beholding Him in the face of Christ. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *All things work together for good to them that love God:*—I. THE END TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. The "good" here spoken of does not apply to our health, ease, or fortune, but to our eternal interest. Who does not see that afflictions have a beneficial tendency? They bring us to reflection; they quicken prayer; they wean us from the world, &c. But even spiritual good is not the highest reference. "Good" looks to heaven and points to eternity (2 Cor. iv. 17). II. THE MEANS WHICH ARE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS END. "All things," as the subject-matter in hand, and by the context. The apostle is here speaking of afflictions: and of those that will ultimately be beneficial are—1. The trials of those who are called to bear the cross for Christ's sake. Those losses that you may now be called to endure for the sake of religious principle will inevitably enrich the inheritance which grace has prepared for you above all things. If you suffer with Christ, you shall reign with Him. 2. The ordinary calamities which we are all more or less called to endure. The painful sickness, borne with unmurmuring resignation; the

loss of property, submitted to with the knowledge that we have a higher treasure; the departure of friends, whom we have given up without rebellion to the will of Him who had a better right to them than ourselves—all the trials of life enter within the compass of this delightful expression. 3. But observe the words, "work together." The believer's history is not an unconnected series of events; they form a perfect scheme. His life, death, infancy, old age, all enter into the one grand scheme which Providence is causing to produce his spiritual benefit. How many influences strive, even in reference to our temporal comforts, to promote our enjoyment in this world. The sun, the moon, the stars, the elements; food, raiment, habitation, &c. And so it is with respect to our spiritual welfare. How many aids, instruments, influences, are perpetually provided to promote our spiritual welfare? The Deity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; angels, patriarchs, &c.; the Bible, the Sabbath, the fellowship of the saints—all concurring to promote our spiritual welfare. The believer, looking at the scheme of providence, is not unlike an individual surveying some complicated piece of machinery, where the manufacturer himself stands by holding in his hand the articles which this mechanism has produced, and saying to the spectator, "See these apparently contradictory movements; hear this noise and confusion: you cannot tell the design, perhaps, of one of the wheels, much less enter into the combination of the whole; but I can, and here are the results of these various movements." So does God speak to His people, surveying the mechanism of providence, the wheels of which are so varied, and in some of its movements so apparently contradictory. III. THE CERTAINTY WITH WHICH WE MAY CALCULATE UPON THE PRODUCTION OF THIS END BY THESE MEANS. "We know." It is not a mere conjecture; an opinion; it is a declaration of absolute certainty. We have the promise of a God that cannot lie; and we have the power of a God who can do all things that He wills to accomplish His promise. IV. THE INFERENCES FROM THIS SUBJECT. 1. What is true in reference to the individual Christian must, of course, be true in reference to the Church at large. "Christ is exalted to be head over all things to His Church." The rise and fall of empires, the setting up and the pulling down of monarchies, the progress of arms, of commerce, of arts, the collision of human passions and human interests that is perpetually going forward—all these things are working together for good to the Church. 2. The unspeakable value of that sacred volume which contains such a discovery as this. Who could have made it but God Himself? Who that looks abroad upon the chequered scene of human affairs can presume to tell whether good or evil preponderates? And even if they could advance so far as to pronounce a decision, that good now preponderates, yet who, without some infallible oracle to determine the question, can declare whether ultimately good or evil will prevail? But the Bible comes in, and sets the matter at rest, and tells us that "all things work together for good," &c. Nay, without the Bible who can tell us what good is, or how it is to be obtained? 3. The necessity of faith, to rise to the standard of our privileges, and receive that abundance of consolation which God has provided for us. (*J. Angell James.*) *All things working together for good to them that love God*:—I. THE EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT. 1. The nature of the privilege. (1) The extent—"All things," as limited by the context, which speaketh of the afflictions of the saints. (*a*) All manner of trials for righteousness' sake. Stripes are painful to flesh, but occasion greater joy to the soul (Acts xvi.). Spoiling of goods stirreth up serious reflections on a more enduring substance (Heb. x. 34). So banishment; every place is alike near to heaven, and the whole earth is the Lord's (Rev. i. 9). Death doth but hasten our glory (2 Cor. v. 1). (*b*) Ordinary afflictions. Many times we are best when we are weakest, and the pains of the body invigorate the inward man (2 Cor. iv. 16). In heaven you shall have everlasting ease. (*c*) Though prosperity be not formally expressed in this place, yet it is virtually included. For God keepeth off, or bringeth on the cross as it worketh for our good (Cant. iv. 6). It is a threatening to them that do not love God that their prosperity tendeth to their hurt (Psa. lxix. 22). The sanctifying of their prosperity is included in a Christian's charter (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). (2) The manner of bringing it about—"They work together." Take anything single and apart, and it seemeth to be against us. We cannot understand God's providence till He hath done His work; He is an impatient spectator that cannot tarry till the last act, wherein all errors are reconciled (John xiii. 6, 7). God knoweth what He is a-doing with you, when you know not (Jer. xxix. 11). When we apprehend nothing but ruin, God may be designing to us the choicest mercies (Psa. xxxi. 22). (3) The end and issue—"For good." (*a*) Sometimes to good temporal, or our better preservation during our service (Gen. l. 20). Many of us, whose hearts are set upon

some worldly thing, have cause to say we had suffered more if we had suffered less. In the story of Joseph there is a notable scheme of Providence. (*b*) Spiritual good. So all affliction is made up and recompensed to the soul; it afflicts the body, but bettereth the heart (Psa. cxix. 71). We lose nothing but our rust by scouring. (*c*) Eternal good. Heaven will make us complete amends for all that we suffer here (2 Cor. iv. 17). 2. The certainty of this—"We know." Not by an uncertain and fallible conjecture, but upon sure grounds. What are they? (1) The promise of God, by which He hath secured the salvation of His people, notwithstanding their troubles (Heb. vi. 17, 18). (2) The experiences of the saints, who have found it so (Psa. cxix. 67; Phil. i. 19). (3) From the nature of the thing. Two considerations enforce it—(*a*) All things are at God's disposal, and force to serve Him. (*b*) His special care over His people (Isa. xlix. 15; Zech. ii. 8; 1 Cor. x. 13). II. A MORE GENERAL STATE OF THE CASE. 1. This good is not to be determined by our fancies and conceits, but by the wisdom of God; for God knoweth what is better for us than we do for ourselves. Should the shepherd or the sheep choose his pastures? the child be governed by his own fancy or the father's discretion? the sick man by his own appetite or the physician's skill? It is necessary sometimes that God should displease His people for their advantage (John xvi. 6, 7). Peter said, "Master, it is good for us to be here"; but little thought what work God had to do by him elsewhere. 2. Good is to be determined by its respect to the chief good or true happiness which consists not in outward comforts, but our acceptance with God; other things are but appendages to our felicity (Matt. vi. 33). 3. This good is not always the good of the body, or of outward prosperity; and therefore our condition is not to be determined by the interest of the flesh, but the welfare of our soul. 4. It is not good presently enjoyed and felt, but waited for; and therefore our condition must not be determined by sense, but faith (Heb. xii. 11). 5. A particular good must give way to a general good, and our personal benefit to the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's kingdom (Phil. i. 24). 6. In bringing about this good we must not be idle spectators, but assist under God. 7. If it be true of particular persons, it is much more true of the Church; all is for good (Psa. lxxvi. 10). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The co-working of Providence*:—We begin with the first of these parts, viz., the proposition itself, "All things work together for good," &c., wherein again we have two branches more. For the first, the subject, it is "all things"; all things whatsoever they be, they do work together for the good of God's people. All things indefinitely. It is a very large and comprehensive word, and so makes for the greater comfort and encouragement of all believers. First, "all things" in an universality of subsistence, and within the compass of being. There's nothing which can be said to be, but what it is it is one way or other advantageous to those which are God's people. First, for God Himself, who is the Being of beings, the uncreated being. There is nothing of Him but it makes for the good of His children. All the attributes of God, all the offices of Christ, all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, they still make for the good of them that belong to Him. Secondly, for created being, that is all of it for our good likewise. There is not any of all the creatures but they are in their several kinds and capacities subservient to the good of the Church and of every member of it. But secondly, "all things" in an universality of dispensation and under the notion of working. All occurrences, and events, and stations, and conditions, whether good, or bad, or indifferent, whatever is done and disposed in the world. The second branch of the proposition is the predicate or consequent in these words, "Work together for good to them that love God." Wherein, again, we have three particulars more. For the first, the improvement itself, it is this: that they "work together." Where there are two things distinctly and separately considerable of us—first, their simple operation. Secondly, their additional co-operation. First, I say, here is their operation: all things, whatsoever they be, they do work for the good of God's children. It is not said, That all things are good, for they are not. Besides many sins and temptations, there are many crosses and afflictions which God's children are sometimes exercised withal, that in their own nature are evil, and so to be accounted. But work to good that they do. And there is good which comes out of them, even then where there is not good in them, as immediate unto them. "No affliction is joyous, but grievous," &c. (Heb. xii. 11). Again, they "work for good"; here is a further note of their activity: it had been well if it had been said, They turn to good, they are ordered and disposed to good, and the like. But the Holy Ghost does not content Himself with so narrow an expression as that is, but carries it a little further. If He had said, They prove to be good, that had been a word of

casualty, and might have seemed to make it a mere accident and matter of chance. If He had said they are wrought to good: that had been a word of compulsion, and might have implied some kind of enforcement and constraint hereunto. But now He says rather they "work to good," which is an expression of freeness, and forwardness and spontaneity and does denote that particular aptitude and disposition and inclination which is to be found in every creature as subordinate to the good of the Church. The second is their additional conjunction and co-operation—"they work together." And here again there are three things especially observable. First, their efficacy in working: things which work together, they work with a great deal of strength; and that which is defective in one, it is supplied and made up by the other. Weak things, when they are joined together, they are enabled to do great matters. The second is their unity in working: things that work together they work with a great deal of cheerfulness and alacrity and agreement in their performance. Co-operation, it implies conspiration. The third is their concomitancy and connection, and subordination in working. And this again, it may be taken three manner of ways. There is a threefold co-operation or working together of all things for the good of God's children, which is here pertinently considerable of us—First, they work together with God. Secondly, they work together with us. Thirdly, they work together one with another. This is done especially according to these following observations—First, by labouring for a clear and upright conscience. Secondly, by prayer and calling upon God (1 Tim. iv. 4; 2 Cor. i. 11). Thirdly, by studying the providence of God and observing Him in all His dealings with us, we should take notice of the things themselves, and take notice of our own hearts in them, how far forth they are affected with them, that so we may receive good and benefit from them. God has made to such and such conditions; this will suck and draw virtue out of them, and make a happy improvement of them; and all things work together for us so they work together with us. And that's the second co-operation. Thirdly, they work together; that is, they work together one with another. If we take any passage of Providence singly and alone by itself, perhaps we may not so easily see how it does indeed work for our good. But take it now in its complication and connection with many more, and then we shall see it abundantly. The second is the effect or end of this improvement, and that is here expressed to be for good. Here is no good set down, so as to declare what it is, only indefinitely and in the general. First, for temporal good; God sometimes does His servants good in this, by those things which at the first appearance seem opposite and contrary hereunto. As Joseph when his brethren sold him into Egypt. Secondly, for spiritual good, so all things work for good to them however. Every passage of providence to those who are the children of God, it serves to draw them nearer to God, and to perfect their communion with Him. Thirdly, for eternal good which is the main good of all. That's the second thing here considerable, to wit, the end or effect of this improvement, and that is good. The third and last is the persons who are more especially interested in it, and they are the children of God, who are here described from a double qualification. The one of their Christian affection, "to them that love God," and the other of their effectual vocation, "to them which are the called according to His purpose." And so there is this in it, that God's children, and they alone, have all things working to them for their good. There is none that have interest in the privilege but those only that do partake of the condition. As for other people, they are so far from having all things to work for their good as that they rather work the quite contrary, for their greatest evil. God Himself being an enemy to them, everything else is an enemy with Him, and all the creatures are ready to rise up in arms against them. The Word of God is a savour of death to them, the sacraments they are occasions of judgment. Prayer it becomes an abomination; there is a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block in all their comforts. Everything is the worse for them, and they for it. The second is the manner of enunciation, or declaration of this proposition in these words, "we know it," which is an expression of great confirmation; it is not a matter of guess only, or conjecture, but of certainty and assurance. This knowledge of a believer, it may be reduced to a threefold head of conveyance—first, we know it by revelation. Secondly, we know it by reason; and thirdly, we know it by experience. There is very great reason for it. First, that which we have here in the text, the eternal purpose of God Himself. Whatsoever is done in the world, it is subservient to God's decree, and tends to the filling of that. Now, this is that which God hath purposed, and ordained, and appointed aforehand, even to bring His children to perfect happiness and salvation at last. Secondly, God's affection and the love which He

bears to believers, this makes for it also. Especially, if we shall further add His omnipotence and almighty power, that He does whatsoever He pleases both in heaven and earth. Thirdly, the covenant of grace, that does likewise make much for this purpose. Fourthly, the mystical union which is betwixt Christ and every true believer. And now for the improvement and application of all this to ourselves. First, here's ground of patience and contentment in every condition. Again, as this makes for patience in the present condition, so also for hope for time to come. Again further, we may carry on this truth not only to the comfort of such and such Christians in particular, but also of the whole Church in general, by taking the words in the text, not distributively only, but collectively. But secondly, it may serve further to rectify us and to set us right in our judgments and opinions, and that especially in three particulars—First, of God Himself. Secondly, of the children of God. Thirdly, of religion and Christianity. First, it may teach us to have good conceits of God Himself, and to think rightly and soberly of Him. Whilst God has good thoughts for us, we should have good thoughts of Him, and justify Him in His proceedings in the world. There are certain intricacies and perplexities in providence which are not presently discerned or apprehended; there are the wheels moving within the wheels, as it is in Ezekiel, and we must be content to stay God's leisure for the opening and unfolding of them to us. Secondly, to have good thoughts also of the children of God, and to think rightly of them; here is that which may make us in love with the state of God's people, and to set a high price upon them: "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 29). Thirdly, it should make us to think well of religion and Christianity itself, which does carry so much comfort and consolation in the bowels of it, and more than any other mystery or profession whatsoever besides; there is no such sweetness to be found anywhere as in the principles of Christianity improved and lived up to in the power of them. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *All things working together for good to them that love God*:—A lighted taper inserted into a phial of one kind of gas will burn with the utmost brilliancy and beauty; in another phial, charged with a different kind of gas, that same taper will become extinguished in offensive smoke, and in a third it would produce an instantaneous and violent explosion. So the same calamity—sickness, bereavement, commercial disaster—will awaken in one man a slumbering conscience, will drive another to distraction, and a third it will draw nearer to God than ever; so that, whilst it is literally and undeniably true that the same calamities come alike upon the good and evil, it is a transparent fallacy to infer that the same ulterior results will follow in both cases. It is a fallacy to maintain that a curse may not remain a curse, or be transformed into a blessing, according as it is accepted as a salutary discipline or rebelled against as an arbitrary infliction. It is on the temper of the recipient that the result depends, and whether or not all things, good or ill, concur to his advantage. Does it not depend upon the use you make of anything, whether it becomes to you a blessing or a curse? Beneath the petals of a graceful and familiar flower is secreted a sedative poison, of such quality that it will frequently steep a man in such a slumber as only the last trumpet can awake him from. This you at once recognise as opium. You cannot cause water to boil for the most ordinary culinary purpose, but you disengage an element most formidable, the most irresistible power of expansion. This is steam. No summer passes over you, but you see the lightning tear the sky across as if it were a scroll of paper. This is electricity. These three agents, electricity, steam, and poison, to the mind of an untutored savage, are nothing but instruments of death. But a man of science in that deadly narcotic detects the principle of morphine; he compounds it with suitable ingredients, and converts it into one of the most inestimable and indispensable preparations in the pharmacopœia. From death he extracts life. In steam he snatches, as it were, from the hand of Nature one of her most gigantic powers, and compels it to become the most obedient and the most versatile of his servants. Nay, the very lightning he enlists and disciplines into an obedient recruit. And in such wise is all this true of all these forces and many more, that while to the uncultured savage they are agents of death and objects of terror, they are working together for the comfort and benefit of him who has learned how to use them. Such is a faint illustration of the way in which the same occurrence may act with diametrically opposite results upon the practical Christian and upon the man who lives without God in the world. In the godless exciting rebellion and hardness of heart, and in the Christian pointing to filial submission, confiding holiness, and life eternal; forasmuch as all things—all things—work together for the good of them that are

true to God. (*W. H. Brookfield, M.A.*) *The affection and vocation of the godly* :—We begin with the first of these branches, viz., of that description which is here made of the children of God, as taken from their Christian affection, of those that love God. In these, and many like places, are God's children described by this character of their special love and affection to God. The reason of it is this—First, because this is the most excellent qualification of all others. It is that which the Scripture prefers above all other graces ; though they all have their dignity in them, yet love it goes beyond them all, being such as shall last and continue, whilst the other ceases in regard of the exercise and authority of them. Secondly, it is an affection of the greatest influence and extent. It is that which, wherever it is, sets the wheels of the soul agoing for the doing of other things. He that loves God, he will stick at nothing else which God commands or requires at his hands (1 John v. 3). Thirdly, it is that also whereby we most resemble God Himself and become likest to Him. This the apostle John signifies in 1 John iv. 16. Lastly, it is that which is most proper to all those relations wherein the faithful stand unto God as the friends of Christ, as the members of Christ, as the spouse of Christ. For the better opening of this point it may not be amiss for us to consider wherein this our love of God does consist, and what is the nature and working of it. Now for this it does especially consist in these three particulars—First, in our estimation of Him, a high prizing and valuing of those excellencies and perfections which are in Him. And this prizing and esteeming of Him, it does show itself farther in such effects as flow from it. First, in parting with anything for Him ; love, it is a self-denying affection. Secondly, in zeal for Him, and maintaining and defending of Him upon all occasions. Love it is a vindictive affection, and is ready upon all occasions to take the part of the party beloved. Thirdly, this prizing of God as a testimony of our love to Him will show itself in a proportionable estimation both of ourselves and of every one else in reference to Him. Secondly, in a special longing and desire of soul after Him : love it is a desire of union. Thirdly, in special delight and complacency, and contentment in Him ; where there is love, this is a great deal of satisfaction from the company and fellowship and society one of another (Psa. lxxiii. 25). Seeing God's children are thus described from their loving of God, we see what cause we all of us have to make good this character in ourselves, and to be provoked to this heavenly affection. First, as to arguments for it take notice of these—First, goodness, that is one incentive to love; it is the ground of all that love which we bear to the creature because we apprehend some special good and excellency in it. Secondly, beauty, that is another thing in the object of love. It must have some kind of attractiveness and enticing with it, now this is also in God. Thirdly, propinquity and nearness of relation, that also calls for love. It is so betwixt man and man, or at least should be so. Lastly, His love to us ; love it begets love again (Psa. cxvi. 1; xviii. 1, 2). Now further, for the directions and helps to it, take notice of these—First, to beg it of God, there is none that can love God truly but such persons as He enables to do so. Secondly, get our hearts weaned from a loving and admiring of the world. Thirdly, labour to be like God, and to have His image stamped upon us ; love, it is founded in likeness, there is somewhat suitable which draws the affection. And so now I have done with the first branch of the description of God's children, and of such persons as have an interest in the privilege above mentioned, of all things working to their good, as taken from their Christian affection in these words, "To them that love God." The second is from their effectual vocation, in these words, "To them that are the called according to His purpose." Wherein again we have two branches more. We begin with the first, their condition, such as are called—those who "are God's children" are such persons as are effectually called, take notice of that. First, for the calling itself to show you what it is. Now this it may be briefly thus described and declared unto us : calling, it is a work of God's Spirit, whereby, in the use of the means, He does effectually draw the elect from ignorance and unbelief, to true knowledge and faith in Christ, this is the calling which is here spoken of. There is a double calling which is mentioned in Scripture : the one is general in the publishing of the gospel ; the other is special, which belongs only to the elect. And this latter is that which we have here in this text, which are "called according to His purpose." First, as to the former, the parts whereof this special and peculiar calling does consist, they are again twofold—First, God's invitation. And secondly, man's acceptation. The second thing considerable to this calling is (as the parts whereof it consists so) the terms from which and to which it does proceed. And these according to the

language of Scripture are sin and grace: from that miserable and wretched condition in which all men are by nature to the happy estate and condition of the children of God (Acts xxvi. 18). The consideration of this point is thus far useful to us, as it serves to set forth the excellency and all-sufficiency of the grace of God in conversion. And so as an argument of greater power, so also of greater favour and goodness in God towards us. The second is the person calling, and that is God Himself; it is He to whom this work does properly and principally belong. "No man cometh unto Me," says Christ, "except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John vi. 44; so Acts ii. 39). This it serves, first of all to inform us, that religion is not a mere imagination, or a business of man's devising. No, but that it is such as God Himself has invited and called us to. It is also very comfortable as to the perfection and consummation of grace in us, "that He who hath begun a good work in us will perfect it," &c., as it is in Phil. i. 6. Lastly, seeing it is God that calls us, we should therefore be careful to lead a godly and holy life and conversation, answerable to the nature of Him who hath thus called us. The third is the manner, and means, and time of calling, both how and when it is performed. First, for the manner how, or the means by which, this is in an ordinary course by the preaching and publishing of the gospel (chap. x. 17). Therefore this teaches us accordingly to honour this ordinance of God and to set highly by it. Another thing considerable as to this calling is the time and season of it when it is that men are made partakers of this blessing; now for this we find it to be a thing unlimited and undetermined, there is no set or appointed time for it, but some are called at one time, and some are called at another, as it pleases God in His providence to dispose it. Beloved, it is a dangerous thing to neglect the present seasons of grace and effectual vocation, because if we do so we know not whether we may ever enjoy them again. The fourth and last thing here considerable is the persons who are the subjects of this call. Therefore let none either engross this mercy or despair of it. Let none engross it to themselves as if it belonged to none but unto them; nor let none despair of it for themselves as if it did not belong to them at all. Those who are themselves effectually called they will have a high esteem and account both of their calling itself, as also of all other persons who are partakers of the same calling with them. The second is the ground of this condition, as also of the privilege annexed unto it, and that is the purpose and good pleasure and decree of God "according to His purpose." First, this calling here spoken of it is absolute and independent. It is according to God's purpose, not according to our desert, thus 2 Tim. i. 9. This must needs be so; because we see by plain experience that those who might be thought most of all to deserve it are many times excluded from it, whilst others are taken in. The publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisees (Matt. xxi. 31). Therefore let us from hence learn to abhor all doctrine of merit. Let us give God the whole glory of all. Our calling is absolute. Secondly, it is also unchangeable as the purpose itself, from whence it proceeds; the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Lastly, we see here the ground of the universal happiness of God's children, and in particular the certainty of the privilege above mentioned of "all things working to their good." (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *All things work together for good*:—1. With what ease the writers of the Bible give expression to the mightiest and most astonishing statements! Not, however, because the apparent impossibilities—which stand in the very teeth of their verification—are either ignored or overlooked. "The sufferings of this present time"; "the subjection of the creature to the bondage of corruption"; "the groaning and travailing in pain of the whole creation"; the anguish of man's inner and deeper experience; are all painfully vivid to the apostle's eye. Nevertheless, in the midst of "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword," he is bold to assert, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." 2. Who of us can join in this language in the face of the world's sin and woe? Some there may be who are able contentedly to meet the dark mysteries of Providence with "whatever is best"—a conviction, perhaps, that grew up out of the reverent trust and experience of their childhood. But this is seldom left undisturbed; and, once disturbed, we may regain confidence; but it will be as different from our early confidence as Joseph's, when he stood before his brethren in Egypt, was different from that he enjoyed when he wore his coat of many colours. 3. This certitude of the apostle was the rational conviction, confirmed by an ample experience, established by a faith in the Christian verities, and made immovable by the visions of a heart disciplined by trial, and purified by affliction? And this is a certitude open

to us all, if we seek it. Let us contemplate the source of its light, that our reason be not confounded at the confidence of our heart. I. ALL THINGS ARE AT WORK, AND SUBJECT TO CONSTANT CHANGE. Our hedges and fields retain not their beauty, and our summer's light and heat decline. The very earth grows old, and the heavens are not what they were. And among the sons of men there is no one abiding. And what are the records of history but the chronicle of the successive ages of the world's experience. And within the little sphere of our own existence, incessant change allows no rest to either thought, affection, or will. And what an air of sadness all this gives to our life! It begets our earliest sorrows. And, as years wear on, a feeling of insecurity steals over us which denies us peace. But the heart refuses life without hope, and this ceaseless change arouses the mind to the discovery of some other ground of confidence. And our text speaks of this restless action, not only as a constant working, but as a working together. Let us see what difference this makes. II. ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER. The addition of this one word alters everything. It introduces design where all seemed aimless; order where all seemed chaos. For instance, winter is seen to have a necessary place and work in relation to summer; night to day; deserts to fruitful fields; the mountains to the valleys. In short, the earth is one, and made up of contradictory elements. The year is one, and requires all the seasons. The day is one, and composed of morning, noon, and evening. In like manner, the course of history is made up of all the forms of human life and every variety of experience, so that conflicting events, and the most incongruous elements, are made to work together in subordination to the one purpose. And so with the little circle of our personal experience. And these three—nature, history, and individual experience—are one. They are but spheres of co-operative agencies carrying out the one purpose which runs through all ages. III. TO WHAT PURPOSE, TO WHAT END DO ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER? "For good." This is a necessary deduction. If all things "work together," then good must be the result. Evil elements cannot be combined; they are antagonistic to each other. When wicked men combine, it is found necessary to set up the principles of goodness. There must be "honesty among thieves," truth among liars, or their devices have no chance. The principles recognised among them as necessary for their co-operation are antagonistic to the ends for which they combine. The light by which they go astray is light from heaven. And it is the power of this admitted but opposed light which explodes every plot and makes it simply impossible for a course of combined wickedness to perpetuate itself. But the working together of all things implies nothing less than the presence of infinite goodness, in the very elements of things as well as in their embodied purpose; wisdom, which, as the eye of goodness, sees the end from the beginning and knows how to reach it; and power, the moral energy of both goodness and wisdom, which subordinates everything to the one purpose. This preordained purpose will only be fully revealed in the end; in the way there will be much of human arbitrariness, which will tend to hide it. The way, however, of goodness carries its security, for the attainment of its end, in its own moral power. This co-operation of all things for God's purpose is a Divine chemistry. For as in a mixture of chemical elements, while the process of combination is going on, you may be utterly at a loss to know what the result will be, until, the last element being added, it is made manifest; so is it with the providence of God. Let us habituate ourselves, however, to regard providence as carried on by the personal power of God's presence, a power, therefore, of quickening as well as of combining elements; of intensifying as well as of moderating their action; a power of new beginnings as well as of terminating forces and agencies long in exercise. It is what, and more than what, the will of man is to his whole body as well as to every separate part. God is not an exhausted Deity, neither is He under bondage to the forces which He has conferred upon His creatures. With Him there ever remains an infinite reserve of ways and means by which to "do according to His will." IV. BUT, IF ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD, THEN ALSO FOR THE BEST. God's mind can only purpose the best in relation to the creature concerned. And to reach His end, He has but one way, and that is the best. That one absolutely perfect, highest, and best end is seen in His only-begotten Son, who is at once Son of man and Son of God; "of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things," and for whose central glory man's redemption was purposed from eternity, but reserved for accomplishment till, "the fulness of time," that He might "gather up all things in One," and in that One for ever unite His glory and our salvation. V. BUT FOR WHOM WILL THIS CO-OPERATION OF ALL THINGS WORK OUT ITS HIGHEST GOOD? "For those who love God." The highest

good can only be received by rightly directed affections. As it proceeds from the love of the Creator, it can only be received by the love of the creature. For, just as a piece of mechanism, cunningly devised to weave a pattern of marvellous beauty, may require a thread of a given quality and texture to receive its design, so the highest purpose of the Divine love, to be wrought out by the co-operation of all things, can only be taken up by, and embodied in, the affections of His children. For, as His purpose is spiritual, it requires spiritual embodiment; as it is holy, it requires holiness; as it is free, it requires to be chosen; as it is merciful, it requires vessels of mercy; as it is personal, it requires personality; as it is social, it requires a society of individuals; as it is not only from, but of God, it requires godliness; and, as it is an all-embracing unity—a rich, full, and lasting oneness of Being—to which God freely gives Himself, it requires in those who partake of it the exercise of the love. (*W. Pulsford, D.D.*) *All things working together for good*:—I. "ALL THINGS." For there is a sense in which a human being is related to everything. He is related supremely to God, and by that relationship he touches the whole universe. But, probably, the "all things" here meant are those which more nearly and constantly affect men. Now there is a very great difference in the number, variety, and importance of these things in different individual cases. "All things" that can enter into an infant's little life are few and simple compared with those of a man. The affairs of a savage are few compared with those of a civilised man. II. "All things WORK." "All things are full of labour." The ceaseless movement of all things, from stars to atoms, would, if we could really see it all, be perfectly appalling. On the stillest day, and in the most sequestered scene, streams of life are rushing on through their courses. Not only the earth, the waters, the air, but the very rocks are alive. What is thus true in nature is just as true in human life; not only when man's thought is busy about them, and his own hand upon them, but often almost as much when the man rests and sleeps. We speak of busy time. It is not time that is busy. 'Tis men who live, and move, and have being. 'Tis "things" that "work." Thought, and impulse, and act, and habit, and plan, and purpose—these are the great working powers. They all work: and always. We divide life into active and passive, into busy and quiet. But things are working as rapidly, and to effects as certain in the one time as the other. Things are troubled and perplexed at night: you can make nothing of them. You go to sleep, and in the morning they are clearer. It is just the same as if you had been thinking of them, and unravelling them all the night. They have been "working" while you have been sleeping. The same kind of process takes place through a series of days sometimes. Gradually a dark prospect clears, or a bright one darkens. The crooked becomes straight, or the straight becomes crooked. Nor can you tell any sufficient reason for the change. III. "All things work TOGETHER." That explains the changes that take place, and the progress that is sometimes made very quickly. You have seen horses pulling a heavy load up a hill, and suddenly brought to a stand, and then moving on again, simply by the addition of an animal to the team. So a man is overmatched sometimes by the weight and pressure of the things he has to do, when—a new circumstance, a new "thing" is born, and as it were instantly yokes itself into harness with the rest, and the object is attained. But the working together of things is yet more than this. In some chemical experiments it happens that each separate substance becomes something else, and all a compound—a new thing, which has mysteriously composed itself out of the whole. The bosom of Providence is the great moral crucible in which things work together. The innumerable things that mingle in that crucible, if taken separately, would be seen working to diverse results; but the one master-influence now rules the whole process, and so combines the specific elements as to perpetuate and increase its own sway. "All things work together," not in an aimless and capricious manner, as though a stream should one day flow seawards, and the next back towards its fountain, but in one volume, along one channel, in one direction, towards one end. This gives life an awful character. The sum of the influences tend to good, or to evil. Life in some instances may seem an equipoise, but it is not. Only a practised eye can tell which way a sluggish stream in a meadow is flowing, yet no one who has seen the stream enter the meadow, or leave it, can doubt that it is in motion there. Not for long does any human life flow as through meadow land. IV. Now, the greatest question is this, "Of what character is the supreme influence of all the things that work together in my life?" The question is not difficult to answer, if only the right method be taken. Must, then, a man analyse, weigh, and describe

all the "things" which make for him the one grand life-influence! Must he search the bosom of Providence? How utterly vain were the effort! But, happily, there is no need to make it. The true test is far simpler and easier. It is this, Is there love to God? All things work together for good TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD. The question is not, "Am I strong enough to vanquish the forces of life?" because no man will ever be. To all there is at last the grand defeat. Nor is it, "Am I wise and politic enough to foresee and prepare?" because every man is overmatched, at one time or other. Nor, of course, "Am I good enough to change everything into good?"—for, still, alas! when He who alone is good looks down, there is but the old sad case, that "none doeth good." But the question is this and none other, "Do I love God, whose whole delight is to overcome evil with good?" What, or rather whom we love, and how much, will tell far more regarding our real character than anything else; will, therefore, also tell what moral position we occupy in relation to all outward things. If we love God, "all things work together for our good." Quite clearly, then, the one grand solicitude with us should be the cultivation of this Divine affection of love to God. If this be in perpetual action, how need we give place and time and thought to other cares? All is well. Those working "things," the strength and pressure of which we never could resist, the mystery of which we never could fathom—let them work together and enter into all possible combinations, they can produce nothing but good to us. Does the storm blow? Love Him who "maketh the storm a calm," and who, in storm and calm alike, will keep you safely within the sure haven of His care. Is it night? Love Him to whom "the darkness and the light are both alike," but who, knowing well that they are not alike to us, has promised that weeping and night shall pass away together, and that joy shall come in the morning. Are you in pain? Love Him who, although He is "the ever-blessed God," suffered once for us, and still has the touch of all our pain on the nerve of His own infinite sympathy, and who writes over the portals of the happy gates, "There shall be no more pain." Are you poor? Love Him who, to sanctify poverty, was born among the beasts, lived with the poor. Can you go up and stand beside Him, and complain that He has left you poor? (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *All things working for good*:—I. THE BELIEVER'S CHARACTER. 1. Love to God is his grand distinctive feature. The creeds of Christians may differ in minor shades, their ecclesiastical relations may vary—yet in this one particular there is an essential unity. They love one God and Father; and this truth—like those sundered rays of light returning to the sun, approximate to each other—forms the great assimilating principle by which all harmonise. The regeneration through which they have passed has effected this great change. Once they were at enmity with God. But now they love Him. (1) As revealed in Christ. Who, as he has realised the preciousness of the Saviour, has not felt the kindling of a fervent love to Him who, when He had no greater gift, commended His love to us by the gift of His dear Son? (2) In His paternal character. The Spirit of adoption takes captive their hearts, and they love God with a child's fervent, adoring, confiding affection. (3) For all His conduct, for the wisdom, faithfulness, holiness of His procedure—for what He withholds as for what He grants. Of the source of this feeling let us not lose sight, "We love Him because He first loved us." 2. "Who are the called according to His purpose" (chap. i. 6, 7). What a glorious vocation is this! To have heard the Holy Spirit's voice, to have felt the Saviour's love, to have listened to a Father's persuasive assurance, called to be God's holy ones—sons; this were a vocation worthy indeed of God, and demanding in return our supremest, deepest affection! The principle upon which this call proceeds is said to be, "according to His purpose." It excludes all idea of merit on the part of the called (2 Tim. i. 9). Has this call reached you? Ministers, the gospel, providences, conscience have called you, but has the Spirit called you with an inward and effectual vocation from death to life, from sin to holiness, from the world to Christ, from self to God? II. THE PRIVILEGE WHICH APPERTAINS TO THIS CHARACTER. 1. "All things" under the righteous government of God must necessarily be a working out of good. "Thou art good, and doest good." In Him there is no evil, and consequently nothing can proceed from Him that tendeth to evil. The passage supposes something antagonistic to the well-being of the believer in God's conduct at times. And yet, to no single truth does the Church bear a stronger testimony than to this, that the darkest epochs of her history have ever been those from which her brightest lustre has arisen. But let us pass to individuals. Shall we take the most painful circumstances in the history of the child of God? The Word declares that these circumstances are all conspiring, and

all working together, for his good. Take tribulation as the starting-point (chap. v. 3-5). The Bible is rich in illustrations of this. Take, *e.g.* the cases of Jacob (Gen. xlii. 36), and Joseph (Gen. l. 20). 2. Observe the unity of operation. They "work together." Seldom does affliction come alone. Storm rises upon storm, cloud on cloud. Trace the wisdom and love of God in ordaining your path to heaven through "much tribulation." Single, the good they are charged to convey were but partially accomplished. It is the compounding of the ingredients in the recipe that constitutes its sanative power. Extract any one ingredient, and you impair the others and destroy the whole. It is the combination of sound, the harmony of many, and often discordant notes, that constitute music. Oh, how imperfectly are we aware of a plurality of trial, to wake from our lips the sweetest anthem of thanksgiving to God! Thus it is that the most deeply tried believers are the most skilful and the most melodious choristers in God's Church. They sing the sweetest on earth, and they sing the loudest in heaven, who are passing through, and who have come out of "great tribulation." 3. It is a present working. It says not that all things have worked or shall work, though this is certain. But it says that all things do now work together for good. The operation may be as invisible and noiseless as the leaven fomenting in the meal, and yet not less certain and effectual. And whether the good be immediate or remote, it matters little; sooner or later it will accomplish its benign and heaven-sent mission. 4. Its certainty. We know it, because God has said it, because others have testified to it, best of all, because we have experienced it ourselves. The shape it may assume, the end to which it may be subservient, we cannot tell. God's glory is secured by it, and that end accomplished, we are sure it must be good. Will it not be a good, if your present adversity results in the dethronement of some worshipped idol—in the endearing of Christ to your soul—in the closer conformity of your mind to God's image—in the purification of your heart—in your more thorough meetness for heaven? (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *All things working for good*:—All things, whether in nature, providence, or grace, work together for good to God's people. I. THE PERSONS. 1. Those who love God. By those who hate God, even blessings are turned into a curse. 2. "Who are the called according to His purpose." II. THE OBJECT. 1. To purify from sin (Mal. iii. 3). 2. To promote growth in grace. 3. To prepare for heaven. III. THE MEANS. 1. Afflictions. 2. Chastisements (Heb. xii. 6). Job was chastised in love and elevated in character to a height he had never otherwise attained. 3. Persecutions. These drive the soul nearer to God. They show who are the genuine professors. Joseph was persecuted, but great good was accomplished thereby (Gen. l. 20). 4. Special providences. These are the turning-points in our lives. How wonderful that I am here rather than elsewhere! There is all the world to choose from; and yet Peoria is my home both by invitation and selection. Paul, on his journey from Iconium to Troas, was minded to labour in the regions of Bithynia, but "the Spirit suffered" him not, for He had other work for him to do in the greater centres of the world's civilisation (Acts xvi. 7). IV. THE TIME. 1. This is present. God's children do not have to wait for the blessing. Loving God, all things are received from His hand as means to an end; and enjoying His love, afflictions are tempered, and blessings are not misapplied. Many misquote this text and read it in the future, as if it were only "will work together." 2. The future (2 Cor. iv. 17). V. ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. To courage (Heb. xii. 13). 2. To faith (2 Cor. iv. 18). 3. To hope (Heb. vi. 18–20). 4. To love (Rom. viii. 35–39). It is the love of God (both His love to us and our love to Him) that changes all things, whether good or untoward, into blessings. Oh, the bountiful alchemy of love! (*Homiletic Review.*) *All things working together for good*:—I. THE FACT, "We know," &c. Note—1. The good determined: being "conformed to the image of God's Son." Each believing man is as a block of marble, hewn out of the great quarry of unregenerated humanity, and appointed to be dressed and formed according to the Divine ideal. The image of the living Christ, as portrayed in the holy Gospels, supplies the model. And the work to be accomplished is that of breaking off unshapely angles, polishing down all rough projections, chiselling out the life-like features, and cleansing away all obscuring dust, till the human subject, "changed into the same image, from glory to glory," stands out at last, a living likeness of the living Lord. No doubt the final result will be blessedness, lordship, and glory. But the work which has now to be effected is that of securing in us a likeness to the Lord. In the external manifestations of our life we must be brought to be like Jesus, who went about doing good; and therefore are we said to be the "workmanship" of

God (Eph. ii. 10). But the work of new creation penetrates below the surface, and enters into the very spirit and life of the man (Eph. iv. 22–24). 2. The workers employed by the Divine Artist. "All things," *i.e.*, all the influences of present lot; all the influences of—(1) The objective creation. (2) The perpetually changing events of Providence, both prosperous and adverse, whether as specially affecting only the individual, or also the family, the Church, the nation, or the world. (3) Which proceed from good and from wicked men. (4) The invisible world, which come streaming down from glorified saints, angelic hosts, and from the ever-blessed God. (5) The world beneath. There is nothing neutral in the mighty process; and nothing but whose influence, blended with all others, is made to contribute something towards the accomplishment of the predestinated result. 3. On whose behalf the "good" is being wrought. Those only who "love God, who are the called according to His purpose"; namely, to justify, sanctify, and glorify all them who believe in Christ. For the called ones are those who have adopted the Christian vocation as their own, and have therefore become not only called, but also chosen and faithful. For them the call has become effectual. They have fallen into the line of the Divine purpose, and are therefore being helped along that line by all these harmonised converging forces. The action of the external forces themselves would never produce the desired result. Their influence upon others does but serve to make moral scars and deformity. Just as the deadly nightshade concocts its poison from the very same soil and atmosphere from which the wheat-plant provides us bread, and other plants our honey. 4. The ultimately resulting good is the consequent, not of any single influence, but of all the influences together. This does not, indeed, denote that they work either simultaneously or in perfect and understood agreement amongst themselves. They are oftentimes all unconscious of the service which they render. First one and then another comes near and does the work for which he is specially adapted. Or perchance a whole host of the workers are busily engaged at once, so as to become simultaneous helpers. So, too, it is in other departments of God's works. How many and complicated the forces and influences which must contribute to the growth and perfection of the plant or animal! And how innumerable and varied those by which the infant is developed to manhood! And yet every one produces some lasting impression, and supplies its contribution, with all the others, towards the final product. And thus it is in the formation of Christian character. II. THE GROUND OF THE FACT, AND OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF IT. "For (*i.e.*, because that) whom He did foreknow," &c. Observe—1. That God Himself predestinated this result; namely, that those who were foreknown as believing the gospel, and as becoming obedient to its call, should be conformed to the image of His Son. 2. That He who predetermined this result has also provided the means for its accomplishment. 3. That which He can He will do to bring the pre-ordained result to its consummation. It is not only that the "purpose" is "His own," formed "according to His own good pleasure," and "given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (Eph. i. 9, 10, iii. 8–12; 2 Tim. i. 9); and therefore a thing never to be abandoned; but one, in respect to the working out of which He has given the strongest assurance. For its accomplishment "He spared not His own Son," &c. Nay; in and with Christ, those "all things" have been already given (1 Cor. iii. 21–23). And, therefore, the apostle, projecting himself forward to the time when the great work of redeeming love shall have been completed, and giving that which is its history in every individual case, affirms that "whom He did predestinate, them He also . . . glorified." Conclusion: Learn a lesson of—1. Earnest diligence in the cultivation of the inner spiritual life. This is the true philosopher's stone, by whose alchemic power everything may be transmuted into gold. Power over our own outward worldly condition we have but very little (Jer. x. 23). Evil may come, and, if our hearts are not right with God, all things will but serve to intensify our selfishness, impatience, &c., making us to become more than ever vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. But, if we love God, we shall find a helping hand in everything. 2. Patient submission to God's arrangements. Let us remember ever that His providence has to do with all things. Did He choose to do so, He could make our course of life, in all respects, prosperous and pleasant. But if trials, perplexities, and sufferings come, it must be because that these things are needed and good (James i. 2–4). 3. Joyful and triumphant confidence in God. This is that which is specially indicated by the apostle (vers. 31–39). (*W. Tyson.*) *All things working for good*:—You have probably seen a large and complicated piece of machinery in full play. The parts, as you noticed, were very various—various in

size and shape, various in the material of which they were made. There were wood and leather, and iron and brass; there were cranks and levers, and pistons and pulleys, and wheels great and small, with other instruments of which both the construction and the use were strange to you. And besides the difference of material, you observed a difference of movement among the parts. There was contrariety and opposition. The wheels whirled round in opposite directions; the chains seemed placed on purpose to resist each other. Checking and counter-checking, strain and counter-strain, were to be seen everywhere. And you felt confused as you stood contemplating the ceaseless and unintelligible whirl that was going on around you; yet you perceived that all the parts of the machinery, however diverse in themselves or in their mode of operation, were working together to produce a certain result—somehow or other their combined action led up to a certain definite point, and amidst all the apparent confusion, this point was invariably reached. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *All things working for good*:—Storrs was a student at Andover Theological Seminary with young Gordon Hall. On a certain Saturday, towards the end of their course, Hall was preparing to go to Braintree to preach upon the following Sabbath, having some expectation that the invitation so to do would grow into a call. In the act of splitting some wood, however, his hat fell from his head beneath the axe, and was cut in twain and ruined. The circumstances were such that to replace it was impossible just then; and Hall, compelled to vacate his engagement at Braintree, arranged with Storrs to go in his place. Storrs went. His preaching pleased. He was invited to come again. And the result was that Hall was quite forgotten, a call was presently extended to Storrs, it was accepted, and he was in due time settled, remaining the minister of that parish until his dying day, a period of more than half a century. Hall, disappointed, one might naturally suppose at this thwarting of his hopes, had his mind turned to the foreign mission field, and became Gordon Hall, the first missionary of the American Board, whose name is for ever linked with the early enterprise of that eminent organisation. No one who has any belief in Divine providence will for a moment doubt that God stationed Storrs at Braintree and sent Hall to India; but does it not also seem as if He effected that arrangement by means of the accident to the hat? And this is the obvious lesson of the incident: that there is really no such thing as accident in this world; that "all things work together" in the execution of God's purposes, and "for good to them that love Him"; that the most trivial occurrence should be contemplated in the light of the possibilities which may flow from it; and that our least concerns, as well as our greatest, are under the supervision and control of the heavenly Father. *Good to the good, the rule of God's procedure with man*:—I. WHO ARE THE GOOD? "Them that love God." What love? 1. That type which God has predestined. "His purpose." 2. That type to which God has called His creatures. How has He "called" them? By the revelation of His moral loveliness as revealed in nature, in conscience, in Christ. This love is—(1) Paramount. Love as a passing subsidiary emotion is not religious love. (2) Practical. Love that goes off in words or occasional acts is not religious love. It must be a ruling, practical force. (3) Permanent. It must be in everything and for ever. II. WHAT IS THE GOOD FOR THEM? It is good from all things. What good? 1. There is nothing good that does not promote moral goodness in the soul. Wealth, social position, power, health itself, are not only worthless but pernicious if they accomplish not this. 2. Whatever promotes moral goodness in the soul is good. Personal suffering, personal bereavement, social losses, &c., when they do this, are good. "Tribulation worketh patience," &c. "Our light afflictions." There is a glorious optimism in the history of the good. Conclusion: This subject—1. Corrects a popular error: that religion is to a man's disadvantage in this world. No such thing. Pauperism with piety is infinitely better than a princedom with ungodliness. 2. This subject affords comfort to afflicted saints. The good can turn all to good. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Trials good to the good*:—The afflictions of life are variously contemplated. Stoicism says, "Submit to fate." Some are icy negatives in life. They stand amidst the problems and woes of humanity, calm and passive and scornful. Epicureanism says, "Make thyself insensible by indulgence in pleasure." Many mean to take life cosily and sweetly. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain; but its groans shall not disturb the music of their life, nor its travail cloud the brightness of their little day. In contrast to this Pagan temper the Christian method is to look elements in the face, and see in them the promise of blessing. Christianity does not simply declare the inevitableness of

sorrow, or merely lay down rules for lessening its bitterness. It discovers a wise and loving God directing all the mixed processes of life to a beneficient issue. And thus it soothes the heart into patience, lifts it into hope, and floods it with courage. I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH BRING SUFFERING INTO LIFE. 1. Inherited moral defection. The passions, habits, weaknesses of one generation are transmitted. In consequence of this law, multitudes are born with the religious side of their nature so cramped and feeble that it is difficult to win them to goodness; and even when won, how slow is their growth in grace, how dwarfed their spiritual stature. 2. The universal condition of toil. Idleness is misery; congenial labour is gladness; but how much is congenial? How often the fierce competition harasses like a fever. 3. Contact with our fellow-men. You meet them in municipal councils, in business, &c.; and very often, the closer the intimacy the greater the recoil from the unlovely traits which are disclosed. There are men like the fox, like the tiger, like the serpent. 4. The sorrows that spring from our friendship. In having another united to you by the sacred chain of love, your liability to suffering is increased, according to the degree of your affection. If their hearts ache, so do ours. 5. Disappointment, in relation to the Divine and sacred ideals of the soul. 6. The triumph of policy over right; weakness crushed by strength; worth left to perish in obscurity; vice climbing into power; wrong slow to die; right slow to prevail. II. NOW HE WHO LOVES GOD POSSESSES, AS IT WERE, A GRAND SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY BY WHICH THESE DARK THINGS OF LIFE ARE MADE SACRAMENTAL. Sickness, disappointment, calumny, the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, &c., are transformed into means of grace. Good comes to him from every source. The whole universe works in his behalf. As yet our knowledge of the way in which trial is promotive of good is necessarily imperfect. We can only see as through a glass darkly. Still, we have that degree of vision. 1. One form of good that is realised is the closer union of the soul with God. The natural instinct of the human heart in troubles is to betake itself to one able to sympathise and help. And to those who love Him, God is known as the God of comfort. 2. Trial also serves to develop the qualities which constitute true manhood. The right regulation of the character and conduct is inseparable from love to God. Now, as a man under irritation strives to be calm, he will grow in the mastery of his feelings; if under losses and perplexities he strives to be patient, he will grow in patience; if while smarting under a sense of injustice he steadily sets himself to preserve a heart of charity, he will grow in love; if, as pleasure calls, he resolutely endeavours to be faithful, he will grow in fidelity. And herein lies the contrast between the godly and the godless man: under the afflictive discipline of life, the one is soured, the other is sweetened; the one is cursed, the other is blessed. Put a piece of clay to the lapidary's wheel: it is ground to a heap of dust. But put a diamond on the wheel: the friction brings out its beauty. 3. And now, taking a more general view, what is to be the outcome of all the clash and discord and imperfection that has been going on since time began? This: the triumph of God. The prayer "Thy kingdom come" will be exchanged for "The Lord reigneth." That final triumph in some measure belongs to the destiny of the godly man. It is the victory of those principles for which he lived and prayed and worked. (*T. Hammond.*) *The chief good:*—About 50 B.C. a cultivated Roman represents himself as discoursing pleasantly with his friends about the supreme good. He explains the views of the rival philosophers; but after surveying the whole field, he concludes without a word to indicate in which direction his own preference lay. In this, perhaps, he represented the majority of the thoughtful men of his time. To them life was a problem without any sure key to its solution. About 50 A.D. there were living in Rome a community of men who had arrived at the most astonishing conclusions on this very point. Though they were few and insignificant, they were persuaded that all the varied experiences of life worked out the highest blessedness. The explanation of the phenomenon was not to be found in any revolution, for things had perhaps changed for the worse. But something had happened in the interval which had set them in a new relation to all these things: and this was that the love of God, revealed in Christ, had been shed abroad in their hearts. I. THE GOOD TOWARDS WHICH EVERYTHING IS HERE DECLARED TO CO-OPERATE. The supreme good for man can never consist in anything external, for all such things are in their very nature inferior to Him, and are intended to serve as stepping-stones to something higher. Happiness consists in what we are and not in what we have. But what we are is precisely that which hinders our happiness. And the question is, How are we to

compose our inward evils? To answer this we must find some one who has succeeded in being what it will be our blessedness to become, and who can help us to become like himself. Now Christ is God's conception of manhood realised. In Him was reached that complete equilibrium and repose of all our frailties in which true blessedness consists. In Him there was no inward contradiction, no want which filled His heart with a continual ache. To be truly blessed, therefore, is to be like Him (ver. 29). II. ALL THINGS COMBINE TO PRODUCE IN CHRISTIANS CONFORMITY TO CHRIST. Life with Christians, so far as its outward framework is concerned, remains exactly as before. It develops anxiety, sorrow, disappointment. But Christianity shows all these things subjected to a Divine will and purpose. The order in which they come, their duration, the weight and the angle of their incidence, are wisely and unerringly adjusted. Each contributes in its own imperceptible, it may be, but effectual way to the desired result. And it is just because we lose sight of this result we often find the text so hard to believe. When some sudden catastrophe swallows up a man's fortune we are apt to ask with incredulous lips how that can be for good. When sickness comes or death plucks our sweetest flowers, is it possible to accept the stroke as a blessing in disguise? Without a struggle certainly not, and not even thus always at first. "No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous," &c. Men are not made of cast-iron, and when they become Christians they do not cease to be men. Christ Himself once, at all events, submitted with strong cryings and tears. But if we only embrace the end of God's discipline we shall see that these very things which we think work nothing but evil and woe, bring about precisely the opposite effects. Had Christ no trials? And did they work anything but good? Is He less glorious because His brow was crowned with thorns? And so as there was nothing in the life of our Lord but ultimately ministered to His glory, and that life embraced all the experience of humanity, so there will be nothing in your life that will not make you liker to Him, if only you receive it in His spirit. Listen to that flood of music that at the touch of a single hand rolls from a hundred pipes. It may at first confuse, overwhelm, astonish you. But amid all the apparently conflicting sounds, a practised ear can detect the expression of one tumultuous emotion, or it may be the melody of a simple air, that, divested of its manifold accompaniments, might be played upon an oaten stop. And in like manner if you suffer your life to be controlled by God, there will run through it the harmony of a Divine purpose, conforming you to the image of His Son. III. THE CONDITION ON WHICH THIS WORKING TOGETHER OF ALL THINGS FOR GOOD IS BASED. That we love God. 1. It is plain that all things do not work together for good because of any peculiar virtue in the things themselves, nor simply because of the time and manner of their occurrence. Heat and moisture, light and air, are all necessary for the maturing of the crops; but if the soil be poor and insufficient, or foul with weeds, the harvest will be thin and disappointing, if it does not utterly fail. So the discipline of life may be all administered with the most beneficent design; but if there be no corresponding receptivity in us, it will do us no good. The skill, patience, and methods of the teacher may be unimpeachable; but if the pupil is lazy and disobedient these will not in themselves make him a scholar. He must to some extent make the aim of his teacher his own, and co-operate with him, in order to receive the full benefit of his tuition. Hence, St. Paul says we must love God if God's providence is to conform us to Christ, that is, we must be at one with Him in seeking the fulfilment of His purpose. 4. But loving God also describes that clinging to God as a child clings to his father, especially at the approach of peril, and which, even at the time of chastisement, never dreams of questioning His love. And there is much need of this. For though we may know the fact we often cannot understand the fashion, in which all things are to work together for our good. We cannot discern the perspective of life or see clearly the relation in which each part stands to the whole. And hence we must take much on trust. We must cling to God in the dark, remembering that He "leads the blind by a way that they know not," and yet that this way is sure to be the right one. 3. And lest at any time you should be shaken in your conviction of the blessed end of God's dealing, by the fear that you do not satisfy the condition of loving Him, then remember that this love is not so much a feeling as a posture or habit of the soul. 4. Then remember that the essence of love is obedience: "This is love, that we walk after His commandments." And be assured that if you are willing to be fashioned after the image of Christ, He will make good His word to you, and perfect that which concerneth you. (*C. Moinet.*)

The good in relation:—1. TO THE SPIRIT OF THEIR LIFE. "They love God." This

is not a passing sentiment such as exists in the hearts of most, but a permanently predominating force. It is—1. The love of gratitude, awakened by the contemplation of God's wonderful favours. 2. The love of esteem, awakened by the view of His moral excellencies. 3. The love of benevolence, awakened by a belief in the universal goodness of His purposes. In relation to man these may exist separately. We may feel gratitude where we cannot esteem, &c. But in relation to God it takes these three forms. His favours are infinite, His character perfect, His purposes only good, therefore these forms are supreme. Love thanks Him for what He has done, adores Him for what He is, wishes Him well for what He is pursuing. II. To THE CONDUCT OF GOD. 1. He has called them to love—not by force. Love cannot come by commands and penalties. He calls men to love by exhibiting the lovable in Himself—His mercies, perfection, benevolence; to awaken gratitude, esteem and goodwill. This He does—(1) In the phenomena of nature. How lovable God appears in the forms and operations of the universe. (2) In the dispensations of life. In all temporal events from the cradle to the grave God commands our affections. (3) In the life of Christ. Here we have His kindness, perfections, benevolent designs. 2. He has called them to love according to His purpose. God does not act fitfully, or by caprice. From the beginning He purposed that His intelligent creatures should love Him. All the arrangements of nature, the machinery of His government, the revelations of Himself show this. The gospel is his especial call to man as a sinner to love Him: and how exquisitely adapted it is to generate affection in depraved souls. III. To THE WORKINGS OF PROVIDENCE. 1. All things—(1) Work. (2) Harmoniously. (3) For good. (4) For the good of the good. 2. This "we know"—(1) From *à priori* reasoning. On the assumption that the Creator is benevolent, we are bound to conclude that He will direct all to the happiness of them that love Him. It is ever the instinct of His creatures to seek the happiness of those that love them. (2) From the arrangement of the universe. Does not the exquisite adaptation of outward nature to minister to our animal senses, physical wants, desire for knowledge, and love of the beautiful show that the Creator intended to make His moral creatures happy? (3) From the special provisions of the gospel. Here is pardon, purity, knowledge, consolation, holy fellowship, and a blessed paradise. (4) From the operation of the affections. Love to God—(*a*) Put the soul into harmony with the universe. The soul destitute of love to God is in antagonism to the whole system of nature. (*b*) Enables the soul happily to appropriate the universe. (5) From the biography of the good. Joseph, David, Daniel, Paul. (6) From the assurances of God's Word. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The beneficial operation of all things for the good of the Christian:*—I. WHAT A DIFFERENT THING THIS WORLD IS TO THOSE "THAT LOVE GOD," AND THOSE WHO DO NOT. 1. The circumstances of the world, the general order of nature and providence, the mingled distribution of health, sickness, and accidents, are the same to both. They both share in great public benefits and calamities, and in this more favoured part of the world the Divine revelation shines on both classes alike. This fact would be a most mysterious thing without a light cast upon it from heaven, as was painfully felt by thoughtful men, even under the light of the earlier revelation. 2. To us is granted a light that pierces deeper through this sameness on the surface of things. And then, what an immense difference! The good things in man's condition—what do they do for the enemies of God? What to them is the effect of all nature, with its beauties, its vicissitudes, its productions? What to them the bounties of providence? Or what to them the share of general calamities? What are all these in effect to men who continue still irreligious, thoughtless, unthankful? The other class, however, is so disposed that all things operate towards it beneficially. And that one state of the soul should thus repel the essential, spiritual good of all things, and that an opposite one should attract it is not strange, if we consider the principle that is present or absent—the love of God. That being wanting, how should the soul derive the good of things? The perception, the discriminating faculty, the transmuting power, the principle to repel the evil is wanting; nay, the very will to obtain the good is wanting. The happy adaptation belongs only to "them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose." 3. The latter part of the sentence explains how they come to love God—"not that they first loved Him, but that He loved them." They were the objects of His gracious "purpose." No one that knows anything of the alienated state of our nature can believe that a condition of the soul in which the love of God should prevail, can be created by any less cause than the sovereign operation of the Divine Spirit; *i.e.*, by an effectual "calling." But, then, neither

can he imagine that this operation should be as if from a sudden and incidental thought of the Almighty. This, then, is the sacred process; the ancient "purpose," fulfilled at length in "the calling according to that purpose"; and this "calling" being an inspiration of "the love of God" into the renewed soul. And this places the soul in a new system of relations with the world and its events, and that the most advantageous one that is possible. The indwelling of the love of God constitutes a radical change, so that "the working together" of things upon the mind shall be, mainly and predominantly, "for good"; and progressively more so, in proportion as that sacred principle more fully prevails. For the love of God makes the soul quick to perceive, to dislike, and to repel all that is evil; makes it solicitous, vigilant, and active to apprehend and obtain all the most essential good. II. BUT, THEN, BEYOND ALL THIS THE SUPREME SECURITY IS THAT GOD WILL HAVE IT SO. He will make "all things work," &c. They are the most valued objects He has in the world; and it may well be believed that they shall not be left to chances for their welfare. For their sake He has given something incomparably more valuable than all things here, even His beloved Son, who is constituted "to the Church, head over all things." And this cannot be less than a security that "all things" shall be made to minister to them. Strangers and enemies to God are very little aware of all this. They look on the good in the system, in its mere natural, material character of good, but little aware that this is made to impart a far higher, nobler kind of good to "them that love God." And they regard the evil as simply evil; hardly sensible that even this is turned to infinite advantage to the children of God. The proud and mighty ones of the earth are exerting their utmost power and devices to make "all things" serve their interests, never dreaming that the Almighty Potentate is making "all things," and them among the rest, co-operate for the advantage of His friends. And when they are working with all their might against one another, little do they suspect that they are all the while co-operating for the benefit of another class! Would not that, if it could suddenly come on their perception, pacify them at once? "What! working with all this strife and cost for the advantage of those people they call saints!" The very pride that raised the contest would still it! III. UNDER THIS DIVINE SUPERINTENDENCE ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD. A large assertion! but where is the impossibility of its being true? A man whose soul is animated and sanctified by the love of God, what can he see, or hear, or encounter, from which, under the aid of the Divine Spirit, he absolutely cannot extract any good? 1. With this holy affection glowing in his soul, suppose him placed in the very centre of a scene of excessive iniquity—might he not draw from every point of the circuit something salutary? Might he not be struck with a religious horror lest himself should fall into sin? Or, inspired with fervent thankfulness for having been saved or redeemed from it, might he not feel an emotion to implore the interference of Almighty Power? Thus he might, in the very worst field, reap invaluable spiritual advantage. 2. There are the temporal good things. Now it is a mighty thing to say of any mortal that these shall absolutely work for his good. But the prevalent love of God will make them do so; will excite thankful admiration of the Divine bounty, stimulate a zeal to serve God, more benevolent compassion for those who are suffering the contrary of this temporal good, and excite to active charity. 3. But the most animating light of this truth falls on the darker side of human life. But temporal misfortunes may be made the means far more effectually to convince them that "this is not their rest"; that this world will not do for them; to promote their submissive adoration of an all-governing, wise, though mysterious Providence, and to inspire an energy of desire and effort toward a better country. 4. And even the evils of a spiritual kind; the pains of conscience, fears of the Divine wrath, temptation, perplexities concerning religious truth; through these, as a severe discipline, many minds have been drawn and exercised to the attainment of a happy elevation of Christian sanctity and peace. (*John Foster.*) *The purpose, calling, and love of God*:—1. The law of motion is impressed on everything. 2. What is the "good." In general the union of ourselves with God, the studying, loving, enjoying Him, and furthering His purpose for ever. 3. The apostle connects man here with three things—I. THE PURPOSE OF GOD. His purpose is—1. Essentially one. He has a series of purposes harmonised into one, but one all-embracing idea. We call this idea providence when governing the world, and decree when saving the world. 2. Good. The purpose of God must be like God. He is good, and so is His purpose. Whatever form the good may assume, whether we call it instinct, rationality, volition, moral excellency, grace, perfection, if we

trace the stream back into its origin, we shall look into the depth of the Divine decree. 3. Progressive. God is better known now than He ever was before, and will for ever and ever spread Himself before the faith, and love, and intelligence of His creation. Look at all the dispensations of time till now, and how many are continually unfolded. What is the administration of time but the unfolding of God's one everlasting purpose? II. THE CALLING OF GOD. God in Scripture is represented as calling men by His providence, His truth, conscience; and those who answer are "the called." God decreed—1. That you should have an intelligent, responsible, undying nature. 2. That the offer of salvation should be made to fallen man. 3. That the refusal of His offer should be punished. 4. That those who trust in His mercy shall be saved. III. THE LOVE OF GOD. 1. God's dispensations towards man reveal His love. The apostle mentions five things in reference to this love—(1) Foreknowledge. (2) Predestination—a beautiful word, giving a destiny beforehand. He brought out the sun, and said, "Your destiny is to illumine and warm these worlds." He said, "Move on," and the sun has done it. Is it natural to suppose that God gave no destiny to man? God did not throw out souls for no purpose. (3) Calling. There is the man, and God knows what he is for, and says, Man, keep up to thy destiny; leave earth, selfishness, sin, hell down beneath thy feet, and come up. (4) Justification. When the man hears the call, and obeys it according to the great fixed plan, of which Jesus and His death is the great centre, he is justified, made right. (5) Glorification—that is, reaching the destiny. "All things work together." Do not attempt to take one link from the chain. 2. The work of Christ also reveals His love. Look to Bethlehem, to Calvary, to the grave of Joseph, the Mount of Olives, and the right hand of God. What is He doing? "Making intercession for us." Do you see anything that is not encouraging? "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" (*Caleb Morris.*) *The secret of the Divine ways*:—1. How many among you have felt, at the reading of my text, an involuntary doubt cross their mind! And, beyond the circle of believers, with what a smile of pity or of indignation is it greeted! 2. Moreover, the manner in which this truth is often presented revolts generous hearts. When I see a Christian overwhelmed by trials, yet not doubting the Divine goodness, blessing the hand which afflicts, I recognise both the tone of Paul and the spirit which animated him. But when, in the midst of a tame and easy existence of selfish happiness, I see a Christian delight in the thought that his lot is privileged above others, I can understand the sceptic's smile and indignation. Under this narrow aspect the great thought of God's intervention is often presented. Here is an epidemic; a believer who is spared pretends to see in this fact the mark of the special preference of God. Another is the only one who escapes from a shipwreck; he lets it be understood that God had cares and tenderness only for him. The atheist Diagoras, disembarking at Samothracia, went to the temple, where they showed him the offerings of voyagers rescued from shipwreck. "Canst thou deny the providence of the gods," they said to him, "when thou seest all those testimonies of their intervention?" "Ah!" replied Diagoras, "we should also hear the testimony of those who rest buried beneath the waves!" If we must recognise with pleasure that God acts in preserving us from danger or suffering, we must also repel the theory of a special preference. God loves those unfortunate victims of epidemic or shipwreck as much as He loves us, and more perhaps. I cannot tell what I experience when I see Christians interpreting God's dispensations in the sense which corresponds to their narrow hearts. In vain has the Book of Job condemned that error; in vain the Master has declared that the Galileans upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were not guiltier than others. We hear such explaining the ways of the Lord with a cold and axiomatic tone. A child is taken away; they ask if it was not made an idol of. A humiliating misfortune overtakes one of their neighbours; they conclude that it was undoubtedly necessary—an idea directly opposed to that of St. Paul, who affirms that all things work together for good to them that love God. 3. Now this error manifests itself under forms which are singularly hurtful to Christian beliefs. There are men who can see Divine intervention only in what is extraordinary. There are Christians who do not perceive God acting in the uniform laws by which He governs the world. A cure, for example, in which human science has taken no part, seems to them, should be attributed directly to God; if the physician had interfered, in their eyes he would have relegated God to the background. Thence proceeds a consequence which unbelief does not fail to draw. "Ignorance is the mother of faith. In a dark century such an event is attributed to God; but to-morrow a more enlightened

generation will know the law thereof." Now that is what we ought to fight against. God does not manifest Himself to us in that alone which astonishes and disconcerts us. All things work together for His plans. Let us now penetrate to the real centre of the apostle's thought. I. ALL THINGS TEND TOWARDS ONE END. That thought was born the day when Jesus taught His disciples to say, "Thy kingdom come." Reason alone would conclude in an opposite sense. How can we recognise a Divine plan in that bloody play which is called history, in those ancient civilisations which have so thoroughly disappeared, in those insolent triumphs of force or cunning, in those miscarriages of the best causes? A deep thinker sums up his science on this point by saying that "humanity, like a wheel, describes a fatal circle." And yet one would not dare to repeat this to-day. Progress is believed in; men have taken from Christianity their belief in the final triumph of justice and truth. Well! that belief belongs to us; we have given it to the world; do not let the world turn it against us. I see Christians confounded at the sight of this world, despairing of the future. Let that cowardly attitude be far from us! All serves to erect that eternal temple where God shall be adored by all His creatures; each generation which passes lays its stone there, and the building rises. II. To believe in that general plan by which all things work together for the glory of God is not enough. I want to know what HIS PLAN IS WITH REGARD TO ME. But how shall we show this without dashing against objections? 1. Our belief is taxed with pride. "What presumption to believe ourselves objects of the vigilant care of God!" So then, when you see your little child relating his faults to God, and asking Him to make him better, is that a teaching of pride? But you will answer, Have all Christians the admirable simplicity of that child? No. But that proves that they are men and sinners—nothing more. The ideal for them (the gospel declares it) would be to become children again. You insist on our insignificance. But if we are great enough to believe in God, to love Him, what pride is there in believing that God responds to that desire which He has Himself inspired? Would you charge with pride the feeble plant which, each day at sunrise, holds up its head and half opens to inhale its vivifying heat? God, you say, is too great to make all things work together for our good. What!—that God who has poured forth on the meanest of His creatures treasures of wisdom, of foresight; that God who decks the birds of the air and the flowers of the field would be too great to count our sorrows and our prayers! You accuse us of pride? But suffer me, in turn, to distrust your humility. A thousand times I have seen the rebel creature escape from God under pretext of his insignificance, and shelter his revolt under the veil of humility. Where is pride if not in that attitude of a feeble and sinful being who says, "Let others call upon Thee; I can do without Thee"? 2. Our modern stoics accuse us of obeying an interested sentiment. To hear them, man ought never to seek his own good. He ought to obey duty—that is all. But we may well remark that the gospel has said all that with an incomparable power. Never has the mercenary spirit been more mercilessly condemned than by Jesus Christ. But because I ought to serve God without calculation, does it follow that I ought to reject, in the name of my dignity, that Providence which makes all things work together for my good? No, certainly, for that would be to lie to my nature. 3. "Why pretend that God occupies Himself with each of His creatures, since He governs the world by invariable laws?" So then, in a well-ordered state, because the sovereign has made and observes the laws, he cannot testify his benevolence to any of his subjects, and the order which he has made to prevail will hinder him from ever manifesting his love. To be logical, we must go further, and say that God is chained by the laws He has made, that there is no other God than those laws, and return to the inexorable fatality of the heathen. 4. Appeal is made to experience. "Are you spared more than others, you who pray? And when you would escape from the evils which threaten you, are you not, like us, obliged to resort to the human means which experience points out?" But have the objectors reflected that they confound the good of believers with their visible happiness, a confusion which the Bible never makes? Distinguish those two things, and light already begins to come. What God calls our good is not what we call our happiness. Happiness for us is success, health, glory, fortune, the affection of mankind, pleasure; in the sight of God the good for us is holiness, is salvation. God does not to-day attach happiness to faith, and success to piety; if He did so, we should obey Him in order to be happy, and God would be served only by mercenaries. But it is true only in appearance that all men suffer alike. Question believers, and they will tell you that in the severest trials they have discovered signs of the Divine goodness. Now, even when outwardly

all seems to be identical in the life of him who loves God and of him who does not, we must admit that events will work upon men according to the mind with which they are accepted. Behold in nature those forces which frighten us by their power of destructiveness. In the plant, beneath a lovely flower, is a subtle poison; in the atmosphere is the hurricane and the electricity. Put the savage in presence of those forces, he will find only suffering and death. But the scientist extracts that poison, and finds in it a remedy for his ills; to the breath of the wind he spreads the sails of his mills or of his ships; he lays hold of the lightning, and upon an imperceptible thread cast into the depths of the ocean he commands it to carry his thoughts to the ends of the world. Well, this is a faithful picture of the manner in which the believing soul can turn to his good all the events of life, all the evils which overwhelm it. Here is failure, mourning, suffering alighting on a Christian soul. Well, you will see that soul seizing those terrible forces which might crush it under their strokes, humbling itself, praying, blessing, and drawing from what might be its death the secret of true greatness, of spiritual triumph and of holiness. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The Christian conception of the universe*:—I. THE UNIVERSAL LAW—"all things work." Work is not blind and aimless labour, but power directed by knowledge to the attainment of some definite end. There is a prodigious amount of energy in operation which has the appearance of agitation only, without plan or project. But there is an unseen and beneficent Hand that wields and fashions the issues of all. 1. The inanimate creation is not exempted from the law of work. The viewless gases are never idle; the particles of dust beneath our feet have run successive careers of varied labour; the world itself is a colossal work, and its motion is a ceaseless flight. The sun never halts, every star is crowned for illustrious toil, and every atom as certainly shares the common lot. 2. In the lowest levels of animated existence there are the tokens of work. Life reveals itself in activity. The springing grass, the rising corn, the budding forest, are models of industry. 3. Work pervades the human and animal economy. A single drop of water is an ocean capable of holding millions of inhabitants; a vegetable crevice of like dimensions is a populous world. Vast masses of rock are the tombs of microscopic animalcules in countless myriads that toiled in bygone time. What millionfold animation gleams and murmurs in the summer air! What vital energies centre in man! Every particle in his body is a separate worker. Work is demanded of every one who approaches the path of progress. Even "sin" is evil "work," and "death" is "the wages" of its ill desert. 4. Angels and demons work. Little is said of angels, but names are applied to them taken from our highest ideas of might and dignity (Col. i. 16). For what are they raised to this height? "Are they not all ministering spirits?" Angels which have forfeited celestial splendour retain all their native might, and exert it to the full (Eph. vi. 12; 1 Pet. v. 8). 5. The Godhead works (John v. 17; 2 Cor. iii. 8). The whole scheme of nature is the "works" of God. God never leaves off working (Isa. xl. 28). "Virtue" never ceases to "go out" of Him. II. THE UNIVERSAL METHOD—"all things work together." What unlike things subsist in the realm of creation! How difficult to imagine their concordant activity! Each wheel in the subtle and complicated mechanism revolves on its separate axle, yet all are cogged in some transcendent unity, and move towards one common and sublime destination. 1. The inferior objects of nature "work together." Gases are rarely found alone. Their native affinities present them in combination. Matter does not exist in ultimate granules, but in cohering masses. World balances world. The star shining far away is working with every grain of sand upon our shores. The fragile insect, a mere speck of animated light, pipes its feeble song in harmony with "the music of the spheres," and poises its wings of gauze for flight in consonance with the universal law and order of the great creation. 2. Men "work together." All that we mean by civilisation is due to this. Multitudes, without knowing it, think the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle, Bacon and Newton. It is the same in the moral sphere. Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, and John operate upon us every moment. Why are we here to-day? Because Jesus died eighteen hundred years ago! How the remote ages work together! So is it in evil. Notwithstanding the lapse of all the centuries the hand of Adam is on us still. 3. Men "work together" with nature. The two were made for each other. There is nothing that does not co-operate with our intelligence and taste. A star that shone millions of years ago, and many millions of miles away, blends with my reason, and nourishes my sensibility. The venerable geological records are among the most influential facts of our life. 4. Men and angels "work together." They are our "fellow-servants," and are "sent forth to

minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." We pray daily to be lifted nearer to their ministry (Matt. vi. 10). With the fallen hosts men labour and combine. Whoever is disloyal to the Great King belongs to the ranks of the wicked one. 5. Men "work together" with God. That the righteous do so needs no proof. But what of the wicked? In all their evil He interworks and counterworks, and causes their "wrath" to "praise" Him (Psa. lxxvi. 10). Pharaoh refused to work with God, but his wilful hardness of heart exhibited the Divine power and glory. Balaam would not work with God, but his very sins became the executors of the Divine righteousness. Herod, Pilate, &c., resolved not to work with God, yet they did "whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done." 6. All things, principles, and beings "work together," and God moves amidst and works through them all. III. THE UNIVERSAL DESTINATION—"to them that love God." 1. Why to them that love God? Not to love God, who is the centre and source of all Divine moral loveliness, is to be incapable of good. 2. "All for good." The whole material system is a ministry "for good" to you. A Father's tenderness shines down from every star, and smiles from every common flower. All the ages are linked together, and men of all time take hands to bless thee. "For good" to you Egypt reared its pyramids and Nineveh its palaces, Phœnicia traded, Greece speculated, and Rome conquered. "For good" to you Adam fell, Abraham believed, David sung, Isaiah soared, Jesus wept, agonised, and died. Are you not constrained to read all your own life with the same clue to its meaning? How all the course of your past life, without your design, has conspired to fit you to bear the burden and fulfil the vocation of this present hour! At an early stage of your course, it may be, you encountered a bitter disappointment. But you have long since seen that the discipline was necessary. You remember a time when you lay low. But you have many a time confessed, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." You have sad and sorrowful bereavements in your recollection. But you have not a sensibility at the present hour that death has not softened, and the clouds, so black at noon, now your sun is setting, are bathed in rosy light on the calm horizon of the better land. Are you crushed by some recent grief? Be patient, and "good" shall not fail to be worked. And what shall we say of your mistakes, follies, and sins? Peter arrived at courage through cowardice, and attained to fortitude through failure. While the world, the flesh, and the devil tempt, the Father sympathises, the Lord Jesus intercedes, the Holy Spirit waits to "guide into all the truth," angels minister, and "all things work together for good." Conclusion: 1. If this be so, what should be our great concern? Manifestly, to "love God." 2. The love of God in the heart is the secret of all spiritual rest and peace. 3. "All things work together for" ill "to them that love" not "God. That "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" is the symbol of a universe in league against the sinner. (*H. Batchelor.*)

All things working together for good:—I. THE CHARACTER. It consists of two particulars. 1. The person loves God. And, that we may arrive satisfactorily at this conclusion, let us go by several successive steps. (1) First, am I sure that I do not hate Him? "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (2) Do I think of God? Have I satisfaction in thinking of Him? (3) Have you received Christ and the reconciliation and peace which are by Him? No man cometh to the Father but by Christ. Are you a suppliant for mercy, peace, and eternal life, through Christ Jesus? If so, you are a lover of God. I suppose the love of God to consist in these simple elements—(*a*) First, delight in His excellence, complacency in His perfections, mental apprehension of His surpassing and uncreated loveliness. (*b*) The second element is goodwill to God, and to His plans and purposes; consciousness of an interest in them, and admiration of their wisdom, holiness, and power. (*c*) There will be gratitude for the benefits we have received. (*d*) Love to God supposes resignation to His will, and acquiescence in its decisions, without resentment or murmuring. 2. The next point is, the calling according to God's purpose. Let us not forget that the purpose is not by reason of the love in us, but that the love is in us by reason of the purpose. It is this antecedent purpose which is the cause of our love. Therefore give diligence to make your calling and election sure. II. THE PRIVILEGE. To these persons all things shall work together for good. 1. We take first, all Divine perfections; all the attributes and prerogatives of God's nature. For who, I pray you, is the greatest worker in this universe? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." 2. There is, secondly, the course and constitution of natural things, as they subsist around us in their harmony and concurrence of operation. Seedtime and harvest, day and night, summer and winter, do not fail. Surely this is not mainly and chiefly that lions may roar, horses be fed, insects creep, and

eagles soar. All these things are subordinate; the higher purpose is the preservation and happiness of man. And we further inquire, what man or what men? The primary and the higher purpose is, that the just may live; that their excellencies may be revealed, and their character consummated; that the love of God may shine in them; and that they may accomplish the great end of their being, which is, to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. 3. All the means of grace work for their good. 4. Fourthly and mainly; all the dispensations of providence are intended to work for good. It is for good. Did you ever read the maxim, "I had perished if I had not perished"? That is, I had been lost as to my soul, if I had not lost my estate. The affliction may be nearer. It may touch the bone and the flesh. There may be strong pain, or fever, or need of surgical operation. Must we say, It is for good? If we love God, it is for good. All the countless strokes of the chisel on the block of marble contribute to form the statue which almost breathes. The printing-press is filled with all its types; and forth comes the paper without a word deficient. All the medicines are mixed by the science of the physician; and from the mixture the healing result is realised. All the reapers in the field assist to bring the harvest home. And after the same manner as these emblems and illustrations represent, all things in Providence concur for the final salvation of those who love God, and are the called according to His purpose. III. THE CERTAINTY OF ALL THIS. "We know." St. Paul knew it by inspiration. The rabbins tell us concerning a certain Jew, that, whenever a calamity occurred, he was accustomed to say, "This also is good"; and they changed the man's name from Nahum to "Gamzu," which means in Hebrew, "This also." Blessed is that man in whose mind this principle is fixed, in all its light, and power, and consolation: come what will, it is good, for I am a lover of God, and called according to His purpose. (*J. Stratten.*)

Divine providence:—I. GOD DEALS WITH HIS CHILDREN AFTER A FIXED AND DEFINITE PLAN. Were a person altogether unacquainted with architecture to visit some splendid temple in the process of erection, and observe the huge, rough stones, and boards, and timbers, iron-castings, bricks, lime, mortar, lying scattered in confusion all around: were he to see one group of workmen cutting up material here, another digging trenches there, he might truly say that he could see no plan or system in the business. But let the observer set himself to watch from day to day the busy work as it goes on; let him patiently examine, not only the minutest details, but also try to obtain a view of the general scope of the whole, and he will not be long in finding out that some superior mind regulates all, and that every stroke of every workman is conducive to the same ultimate effect. God is building up the Christian in accordance with a perfect plan into a majestic temple for the decoration of the eternal city. II. God not only carries on His great designs by a pre-established plan; but THE VERY MINUTEST CONCERNS OF HUMAN LIFE ARE ALSO COMPREHENDED IN IT. The piercing eye of God strikes through the deepest shades of night and sees with keenest sense each individual atom which makes up this grand, material universe. He perceives and clearly understands the constitution, use and properties, the bearing and the end of every organ, system, instrument, which forms this wide, mysterious world of animated nature that surrounds us. A single spark of fire may sink a city into ruins and seal the destiny of an empire; and so in God's moral government the greatest and remotest ends are often brought about by the minutest means conceivable; a "word," a "silent thought," has saved a soul; and through that soul, ten thousand other souls, from ruin. The combination of the elements is as perfect in a particle of water as in a diamond. Is not the plan of God as visible in the one as in the other? III. But God HAS A PLAN; that plan extends to the minutest circumstances in the Christian's life; and BY THAT PLAN GOD MAKES EVERYTHING WORK TOGETHER FOR HIS GOOD! Do you tell me God never bends the laws of nature to save or favour those that love Him? I admit it. But He brings those that love Him into such relation to the laws that they turn, as ten thousand rays of light from objects round you to the pupil of your eye, unto his benefit. A ray of light is bent by the same angle for the Christian as the sinner; but the difference is this: the one sees God in it, the other sees himself, or nothing in it. The Christian's heart is a "golden bowl" turned up towards heaven, and into it God is ever pouring benefactions. The Christian does not always think them so; but in they come, pure "benefactions." 1. Then let me say, if God be working so for us, we ought not to be too solicitous about results. God is working over us; let us leave the consequence to Him. 2. Let us also suppress our murmurings at the allotments of Providence. If God is guided by a plan; if that plan reaches down to the minutest details of daily life, what need have we to murmur. 3. And if all

things are working together for our good, what reason have we to envy the wicked in their riches and prosperity? If a man be standing firmly on a river's bank and sees another gliding gaily but inevitably down to a tremendous precipice below, shall he be envious of the pleasant sail that intervenes before the dread catastrophe? 4. And if all things be working together for good, let us cast away our fears and press onward. 5. But while all things work together for good to those that love the Lord, we are told upon the same authority, "the way of the ungodly shall perish!" (*Elias Nason.*) *The Christian's delivery from the tyranny of circumstance:*—I. THERE IS A SIDE ON WHICH THIS STATEMENT IS UNLIMITED. *All* things work for our good. The apostle, in this tremendously sweeping statement, is speaking about things external to us, and not what transpires within a man's own breast. Augustine, commenting on this passage, included under it even sin itself. His own experience helped him to see that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. What Paul does say, however, is that everything external to us is working for our good. The stars in their courses fight for the Israel of God. A Pagan view of life would tell us that we are placed in a world where law and necessity reign. Stern, hard-and-fast laws, like a huge machine, are grinding out their unalterable decrees. They may work out ill, but all we can do is to resign ourselves to the inevitable. That is not the Christian view of God's creation. One of the laws of God, one of the things that on this earth very nearly constitute a necessity, is—"If man does not work, neither shall he eat." Men have often fretted at such a law. The Christian accepts this law, and acknowledges that God's law of work is part of the great discipline of life. He would not have it otherwise, even though he could. It may need an exercise of faith to see that all these laws, which we call laws of nature, are working for our good; that the universe, with its great forces; the earth, with its lightnings; the sea, with its storms and shipwrecks, can do us no harm. Yet, when once we get a Christian view of the world, that is a certainty. These laws constitute the will of our heavenly Father. Let us now take a step further. Christ has helped us to see even in adversity a power working for good. Lastly, we may say that that which has been reckoned the great enemy of man—Death itself—is among the things that work together for good to them that love God. It is death that does for us the great service of perfecting our life. This Christian reading of life has been the death of death. Are we not now in a position to answer the question—"Do all things work for our good?" If our life is set upon mere physical happiness, then all things do not work for what we think our good. That is not the good for which things are working. But if we go deeper, and interpret by the good, the larger life, the maturer spirit, the holier existence, then there is a conspiracy in all things without to help us. II. THERE IS AN ASPECT IN WHICH THIS STATEMENT IS LIMITED. It is limited as regards persons—"to them that love God." Is there any need why this broad and general statement of Paul's should have any limitations whatsoever? Could we not say in the fullest sense that all things are working for good to all the children of men. There is nothing vindictive in God. "He maketh His sun," &c. God is no respecter of persons. "Are not My ways equal," saith the Lord. May not the explanation of the mighty difference in God's providence to those who love Him lie within the heart and not without? The laws of the Infinite are abiding and eternal. The manner in which they fall upon different men lies with the individual soul. The laws of God's universe are such that if a man is out of sympathy with God, all things seem to work against him. The further he is away from God, the more he is made to suffer. The selfish man who has been all his life long absorbed in schemes of self-aggrandisement; who has trampled on the rights of others, and been careless of their feelings, is at last met by such a body of adverse opinion that he is crushed. He set himself against God's law of true usefulness, and so in trying to save his life he loses it. A good sailor, with his hand on the helm, can pilot his little boat amid rough waters, and never ship a sea. The man who has no skill or knowledge has his boat struck by every wave, and ships sea after sea, until at last he suffers shipwreck. So do men by unwisdom, amid favourable enough conditions, make shipwreck of their souls. On the other hand, if we hearken to God, all God's creation will hearken to us. If we love God, we are in harmony with the whole working of God's universe. "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." It is a hopeless struggle to fight against God, and the man who is on the side of the Almighty is not engaged in it. (*D. Woodside, B.D.*) *In what respects afflictions are for our advantage:*—I. THE SUFFERINGS OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD HAVE OF THEMSELVES A PROPER TENDENCY TO PROMOTE THEIR SPIRITUAL AND SUPREME GOOD. I shall consider the tendency which

the sufferings of those that love God have to promote their true interest, in the following respects. 1. As they are proper to make us reflect on our past conduct. 2. To humble our pride and vanity. 3. To make us more sensible of our dependence on God. 4. To discover to us the sincerity of our love to God, and—5. To raise our thoughts to the contemplation of a future and more perfect state of happiness. II. GOD IS PLEASED TO FURTHER THIS NATURAL TENDENCY OF THEM BY SPECIAL ACTS OF HIS PROVIDENCE AND GRACE. 1. Our afflictions not springing out of the dust, but coming from the hand of God, and being wisely designed by Him for some good end to us, we may comfortably assure ourselves that He will wisely dispose all events in such manner as may most effectually conduce to that end. 2. When He appoints us to the combat, He proportions His assistance to the nature and difficulties of the service: He does not leave us to fight it out with our own forces. God, therefore, who knows the frailty of our nature, is always pleased to send His staff with His rod, and to grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all adversities. Conclusion: 1. If afflictions have both in their own nature a tendency to promote our good, and be designed by God to this end, then we have great reason to be patient and resigned under them. As in other cases, the prospect of any great and certain advantage will make us cheerfully undergo many difficulties, and even expose ourselves to many visible and imminent dangers. 2. If God design afflictions for our good, then if we would not oppress or frustrate His design in them, we must endeavour to profit by them; for, like all other means of piety, they do not operate of themselves to our advantage without our own concurrence. 3. If afflictions have so proper a tendency to promote our spiritual good, it will concern us by reasonable acts of mortification and self-denial frequently to afflict ourselves. 4. If God means afflictions to us for good, under which I all along comprehend disappointments, then there is no forming any certain judgment of the wisdom or folly, of the virtuous or vicious state of men, from all that goes before them. I do not say that the weak reasons of a man's conduct never appear to us in his disappointments, for they often do; but we must see at the same time very particularly what way he took, what circumstances he was in, and upon what motives he acted. For it sometimes happens that a man is obliged in reason and justice to do those things which appear to others the most unreasonable. If there be any true judgment to be made of men, with respect to their spiritual condition, from their circumstances of life, we ought rather to judge in favour of the afflicted and unhappy, for there are several things spoken very much to their advantage in Scripture. (*R. Fiddes, D.D.*) *The operations of Divine Providence* are—I. UNLIMITED IN THEIR SWEEP. "All things." This is a bold assertion. We can understand how many things work together for good. Critical epochs in the world's history, important reforms in national life, occasional afflictions in the domestic circle, but are there not innumerable petty details in life that are beneath God's notice? No; "all things," near and remote, great and small; all substances necessary for the growth of the body, all forces necessary for the development of the mind, all influences necessary for the perfection of our spiritual nature. 1. All the provisions of nature are destined for the good of God's children. God made the world for our abode, and furnished it for our accommodation. For us the sun shines, the wind blows, the birds carol. 2. All the provisions of grace. The Sabbath, the sanctuary, the Scriptures. God the Father, who created us, watches over our steps; God the Son, who redeemed us, lives to intercede for us; God the Holy Ghost, who dwells with us, enlightens and sanctifies us. II. HARMONIOUS IN THEIR DESIGN. "Work together." 1. Changes in the history of nations work together for good. The devout student has no difficulty in recognising the hand of God in the past. He regards the bondage of Israel, the crucifixion of Christ, the fall of the Roman Empire, and the dark periods of the world's history as necessary links in the chain of God's providential dealings. The future is as surely in God's hand as the past. Light shall triumph over darkness, and good over evil. God's hand is upon the wheel of providence; and when His work is complete, we shall say, "He hath done all things well." 2. Changes in the history of individuals. There is a special as well as a general supervision of human affairs. Look at the life of Moses, and Joseph, and David. Little events are the hinges upon which great events turn. The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. III. BENEVOLENT IN THEIR AIM. "For good," not for our prosperity. Prosperity may, or may not, be a good thing. Not for our happiness. Happiness is not the highest attainment in the Christian life. God's aim is the perfection of our spiritual nature. The discipline through which God leads us may be dark and

inexplicable, but it is always for the best. As winter prepares the way for spring, and spring opens the door for summer, and summer ripens the golden harvest, so the darkest and most trying dispensations of God's providence are working together for good to them that love God. 1. Sickness is often designed for our good. The mind may become dark, and need enlightening; the heart hard, and need softening; the life barren, and need pruning. 2. Bereavement. It is good for those who are taken to be "present with the Lord." It is good for those who remain if it solemnises their thoughts and sanctifies their soul. God will be a friend to the friendless, and a husband to the widow. IV. DISCRIMINATING IN THEIR APPLICATION. The promise is not to the wise, or the strong, or the courageous, but to "them that love God." Providence is for the righteous; it is against the wicked. Love manifests itself—1. In practical service. The loving heart makes the diligent hand. 2. In a submissive spirit. When adversity comes, a man who loves God says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," &c. When affliction overtakes him, he says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." When persecution arises, he says, "Not my will, but Thine be done." The more perfectly we know God, the more implicitly we shall trust Him. God is wise, and cannot err; He is good, and will not. V. MANIFEST IN THEIR RESULTS. The apostle does not say, "I hope," or "I think," but "we know." This assurance is in perfect harmony—1. With the promises of God's Word. David says, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Moses says, "And as thy day, so shall thy strength be." Christ says, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end." God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2. With the experiences of God's children. It was a dark day in the experience of Moses when his mother could no longer hide him; but God watched over him, and preserved him from harm. It was a dark day in the experience of Joseph when his brethren cast him into a pit; but God was "with Joseph," and led him from prison to a throne. It was a dark day in the experience of the disciples when Christ was crucified; but His sufferings were the purchase of their salvation. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Christian security*:—In this world of doubt and conjecture it is refreshing to find a man who declares that he knows what he says is true. Still more refreshing to find that what he says he knows is just that about which we have been much in doubt. From the text I learn that "all things" act—I. ENERGETICALLY. They "work." From this our word "energy" is derived. Used here to denote the most intense, tireless activity. The universe is all alive under the Divine hand. II. HARMONIOUSLY. They "work together." In the mechanism of Divine providence there are no loose pullies on which idle belts career. "All thinks work," not frictionally, or at random, but "together." We see that "things work," but we cannot see how they "work together." How could we see so much? III. BENEFICENTLY. "For good." They all play into one grand purpose—"for good," literally "into good." In the light of this text the Christian loses his insignificance, and looms up before us in an attitude of importance and grandeur. God, not man, is to decide what this "good" is to be. Spiritually considered, when we talk about profit and loss, success or failure, very often we know not what we say. We are like children prattling about the affairs of nations. We may spell a word "defeat," but God may pronounce it "victory." We may pronounce a word "gain," but God may call it "loss." Men are sometimes congratulated when they ought to be pitied, and the reverse. IV. SPECIFICALLY—to "them that love God." Those who do not love God have no right to its blessed comfort. To remain in sin is to antagonise the arrangements of infinite beneficence, and means danger, and folly, and suicide, and damnation. The great question that shall shape your eternity and mine is, Do we love God? We must not forget that the Holy Ghost gives us the tense of this verb, "work." The text does not say all things will, or may, work for good; but "all things" are now working "for good." To honour God and be strong, our love also must be in the present tense. (*T. Kelly.*) *The purpose of God's afflictive providences*:—I once went with my brother to extract a crystal from the rock. With a mighty sledge-hammer he vigorously dealt blow after blow upon the rock, and chipped off piece after piece. At last the top of the crystal appeared. Then one might see what he was after, for it had not shown upon the outer surface of the rock. When the crystal appeared, then the whole strife became how so to break the rock away from it, and how so to strike the rock as to extract the crystal. The rock was good for nothing; the crystal was everything. The soul is man's crystal, and the body is but the incasing rock that holds it. God's providences are smiting upon the rock, and breaking and cutting it away, and extracting the pre-

cious crystal, which is worth incomparably more than its setting in the rock. I stood once in Paris, where the stone is soft, and where the building blocks are cut, not on the ground, but in their places on the tops of the doors, and about the windows; and I saw the chiselling done. I saw the work going forward on some of the public buildings, where lions, and eagles, and wreaths of flowers were being carved. Men stood with little chisels and mallets, cutting, and cutting, and cutting the stone, here and there. Suppose one of these blocks of stone, when it first mounts into its place, is told that it is to be a royal lion, and it is to decorate a magnificent structure. The workman commences, and after working one day the head is rudely shaped, but you can barely tell what it is. The next day he brings out one ear. The third day he opens one eye. And so, day after day, some new part is added. The stone complains, and asks if the operation is to be an everlasting one; but the work goes on. And you cannot get anything out of stone except by myriads of blows continued until the work is done. I hear people say, "Why am I afflicted?" For your good. "How long shall I be afflicted?" Until you cease to ask how long. Until God's work is done in you. God will go on chiselling as long as it is necessary, in order to elaborate first one feature and then another, and then another. The work ought to go on until it is completed. And every true heart ought to say, "Lord, do not stay Thy hand; cut away until I am brought out into the fair lines and lineaments of the image of God." Troubles and afflictions and blows that are sent are useless unless they make you patient to your fellows and submissive to your lot. But rest assured that if you love God all things will work together for your good. And now join and work with them. Help God to work for you. *The security of believers:*—The argument for this is fivefold. I. THE DIVINE SUPREMACY. 1. This co-operation among all things for the believer's good is not the result of the conscious aim of the things themselves, but by virtue of an extrinsic force. 2. This force, which makes "all things work together," must be a supreme force. 3. This supreme force is God. (1) Because He alone is supreme. (2) Because the controlling power is exercised in behalf of the objects of His love, who also are His "called" ones. (*a*) To love God is the only true evidence of being His "called" ones. (*b*) To be His "called" ones is to secure the co-operation of all things for our good. II. THE DIVINE PURPOSE (vers. 29–31). 1. This foreknowledge is more than prescience; it implies personal, loving approval. (1) Otherwise there could be no discrimination, for God is prescient, knows, intellectually, all. (2) Otherwise Universalism has in these words the strongest possible foundation. (3) The conditions of this Divine approval must be conceived of in harmony with the nature of Him who does the approving. (4) Being the moral approval of One who is holy and just, as well as loving, and who has predestined salvation only through the death and resurrection of His Son, it is easy to understand the plan of electing grace. 2. Far-reaching and all-loving purpose for the highest good of believers. (1) The ineffable good of conformity to the image of God's Son. (2) Of contributing by Divine grace to the glory of Christ. (3) Of being called by the Holy Spirit, justified by the Father, and glorified with Christ for ever. 3. The good of a righteousness unchallengeable to all eternity (ver. 31). III. THE DIVINE SACRIFICE an argument for the believer's security (ver. 32). 1. This form of statement undeniably implies a real sacrifice on the part of the Father in giving up His Son. 2. Such a sacrifice as this implies the withholding of no good from those who accept Christ. (1) This argument is as self-evident as it is wonderful. (2) The reality of the substitutionary character of Christ's work is unavoidable, according to these words. IV. DIVINE ELECTION (vers. 33, 34). 1. The elect of God are His justified ones (ver. 33). (1) The condition of justification and prerogatives of the justified are laid down in many parts of Scripture. (*a*) Condition of justification (chap. v. 1; Gal. ii. 16). (*b*) Prerogatives of the justified—peace, blessedness, pardon, salvation (chap. v. 1; iv. 6–8). 2. Divine justification rests on a solid foundation. (1) Death, resurrection, session at God's right hand, and intercession of Christ (ver. 34). 3. The security of the justified believer is as safe as the foundation on which it rests (vers. 33, 34). V. THE ENDURING NATURE OF THE DIVINE LOVE. 1. The love here mentioned is the Divine love (vers. 35–39). 2. Consider the list of forces which seek to wrest the believer from its gracious grasp (vers. 35–39). 3. The sublime assurance of the apostle (vers. 38, 39). (1) The foundation of the assurance—the Lord Jesus. (2) Its far-reaching character—"Nor things to come." Conclusion: Let us never forget—1. The glorious assurance of the Holy Spirit of promise (ver. 28). 2. The glorious purpose for which believers are called —"To be conformed to the image of His Son." Everything contrary to

holiness in the life of the believer is a frustration of the Divine purpose. 3. Let us never forget the unchangeableness of God's love. (*D. C. Hughes, A.M.*) *The true Christian's blessedness:*—We have here—I. THE DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN, AND A DECLARATION OF HIS BLESSEDNESS. 1. "Them that love God." Now, there are many things in which the worldly and the godly do agree; but on this point there is a vital difference. No ungodly man loves God in the Bible sense of the term. An unconverted man may love a God, as, for instance, the God of nature, and the God of the imagination; but the God of revelation no man can love, unless grace turn him from his natural enmity towards God. And there may be many differences between godly men; they may belong to different sects, hold very opposite opinions, but all agree in this, that they love God. (1) As their Father; they have "the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father." (2) As their King; they are willing to obey Him. (3) As their Portion, for God is their all. (4) As their future inheritance. 2. "The called according to His purpose," by which He means, that all who love God love Him—(1) Because He called them to love Him. All men are called by the ministry, by the Word, by daily providence, to love God; the great bell of the gospel rings a universal welcome to every living soul, yet there was never an instance of any man having been brought to God simply by that sound. (2) Because they have had a supernatural call. II. TAKE THE WORDS ONE BY ONE. 1. "Work." Look around, above, beneath, and all things work—(1) In opposition to idleness. The idle man is an exception to God's rule. There is not a star which doth not travel its myriads of miles and work. There is not a silent nook within the deepest forest glade where work is not going on. Nothing is idle. The world is a great machine, but it is never standing still. (2) In opposition to play. They are ceaselessly active for a purpose. The world hath an object in its wildest movement. Avalanche, hurricane, earthquake, are but order in an unusual form; destruction and death are but progress in veiled attire. The great machine is not only in motion, but there is something weaving in it, viz., good for God's people. (3) In opposition to Sabbath. Since the day when Adam fell all things have had to labour. Let us not wonder if we have to work too. If all things are working, let us "work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work." 2. "Together." (1) In opposition to their apparent confliction. Looking with the mere eye of sense, we say, "Yes, all things work, but they work contrary to one another. The world is always active, but it is with the activity of the battle-field." Be not deceived. There is no opposition in God's providence; the raven-wing of war is co-worker with the dove of peace. The tempest strives not with the peaceful calm—they work together. Look at our history. The strifes of barons and kings might have been thought to be likely to tread out the last spark of British liberty; but they did rather kindle the pile. The heavings of society, the strife of anarchy, the tumults of war—all these things, overruled by God, have but made the chariot of the Church progress more mightily. The charioteers of the Roman circus might with much cleverness and art, with glowing wheels, avoid each other; but God guides the fiery coursers of man's passion, yokes the storm, bits the tempest, and keeping each clear of the other from seeming evil still enduceth good, and better still; and better still in infinite progression. (2) None of them work separately. The physician prescribes medicine; you go to the chemist, and he makes it up; there is something taken from this drawer, something from that phial, something from that shelf: any one of those ingredients, it is very possible, would be a deadly poison if you should take it separately; but he puts them into the mortar, and when he has worked them all up, and has made a compound, he gives them all to you as a whole, and together they work for your good. Too much joy would intoxicate us, too much misery would drive us to despair: but the joy and the misery, the battle and the victory, the storm and the calm, all these compounded make that sacred elixir whereby God maketh all His people perfect. 3. For good. (1) There is the worldling's good, the good of the moment. Now God has never promised that "all things shall work together" for such good as that to His people. Expect not that all things will work together to make thee rich; it is just possible they may all work to make thee poor. (2) The Christian understands by the word spiritual good. "Ah!" saith he, "I do not call gold good, but faith! I do not think it always for my good to increase in treasure, but I know it is good to grow in grace." (3) Good eternal. All work to bring the Christian to Paradise. (4) Sometimes all things work together for the Christian's temporal good, as in the case of Jacob. 4. I return to the word "work"—to notice the tense of it. It does not say that they *shall* work, or that they *have* worked; both of these are implied,

but that they do work now. I find it easy to believe that all things *have* worked together for my good. I can look back at the past, and wonder at all the way whereby the Lord hath led me. And I have an equal faith for the future, that all things will in the end work for good. The pinch of faith always lies in the present tense. However troubled, downcast, depressed, and despairing the Christian may be, all things are working now for his good. 5. Paul does not say, "I am persuaded"; "I believe"; but "We (I have many witnesses) "know." The apostle lifts his hand to where the white-robed hosts are praising God for ever. "These," says he, "passed through great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: ask them!" And with united breath they reply, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." He puts his hand upon his poor distressed brethren—he looks at his companions and he says, "We!" "We know it. Not only does faith believe it, but our own history convinces us of the truth of it." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The blessedness of believers*:—This text is a tonic. It is clear mountain air. Protracted conflicts with self, Satan, the world, adversities and sorrows, often leave us discouraged. Then we need this invigorating truth. It changes the aspect of every conflict of life. We shall not be injured, but benefited; shall not lose, but gain; shall not be defeated, but conquer. This conviction inspires courage, kindles enthusiasm, and girds with strength. I. THE PROMISE IS ONLY TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD. 1. Obedience is the infallible test of this love. To belong to the Church; to be baptized; to be confirmed; to say prayers, is no proof that we love God, unless we keep His commandments; and those who do keep the commandments are known by their fruits. It is not doubtful what the trees are when they are in blossom. That pure white blossom is the cherry; that pink and white one is the apple. But when we eat the fruit we know the tree. That peach never grew on a crab-apple. But, granting that we may be mistaken, God infallibly knows them that love Him. 2. This special graciousness to them that love Him is open to all, but a righteous ruler must limit moral benefits to moral obedience. If God made "all things work together for good" to bad and good alike, there would be no moral principle in His government. Nay! such Divine co-operation would sanction the wickedness of men. His moral government must be consistent with His holiness. 3. As He loves His own eternal purposes of truth and righteousness, He must especially love and honour them who are fulfilling those holy purposes. God simply assures His obedient children that their obedience shall have its reward. Providence is in league with holiness. II. MARK THE WEALTH OF THE PROMISE: "All things." 1. Light is beautiful, but light alone cannot form the picture. Shadows must lie there—a dark background on which the light can pencil its beauty. God cannot form the beautiful rainbow until He has unbraided a beam of white light into the sevenfold colours of the prism, which borrow from and lend to each other enhancing loveliness. Thus also He knows how to blend the bright and dark things in human life to produce the most holy characters. Be patient and trustful, for He is making you after a beautiful pattern, even the image of the Only Begotten. The cutting and polishing of diamonds is done by friction. God puts His jewels on the friction-wheels only to polish them. He knows how to bring out the beauty of holiness. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." The darkness that comes across our sky is often but the shadow of a great blessing coming from heaven and passing between us and the sun. The thunderbolt that prostrates some sheltering tree lets heaven shine on a spot of earth where it never shone before. The banishment of John to Patmos seemed cruelty; but when there God revealed to him the visions of the Book of Revelation. 2. There is great force in the original verb, "work together." I once visited a great carpet factory. I saw the wool seized by iron teeth, combed and carded, pressed under huge iron rollers and condensed into rolls, spun into yarn, dipped here in blue, there in black, yonder in crimson, there in orange, till vast piles of bobbins of every colour of yarn met my eye. But I could not see how these piles of coloured yarns could be woven into a carpet of such exquisite pattern. All seemed confusion and without intelligent design. Then the superintendent took me to the next floor, where he showed me a diagram of perforated cardboards, the exact pattern of the carpet designed—a plan unseen by the weavers below, but a plan connected with the looms and controlling all the shuttles of varied hues, thus guiding the weaving of all the threads into a web of beauty. This world is a vast factory; the events and experiences of life are crude materials seized by the iron teeth of trial, combed and carded, pressed under heavy rollers of sorrow, spun into warp and woof by the whirling spindles of duty, dipped here in the bright dyes of joy and prosperity, there

in the dark hues of suffering and affliction. Confusion and mystery seemed everywhere. Then the Master took me up into the sanctuary and showed me the beautiful plan of the text, by which, unseen by the weavers below, the apparently random shuttles of life were weaving all the threads into a glorious robe of righteousness for "them that love God." III. THE DOCTRINE IS NOT A PLEASING FANCY, a beautiful dream, BUT A GLORIOUS CERTAINTY; "For we know." How? 1. We know the fact (not the philosophy) because it is the declared purpose and promise of God. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but not one syllable of His Word shall fail. 2. By the experience of them that love God. The breaking up of the family circle on earth has often been the means of re-uniting all the loved ones in heaven. The treachery of earthly friends has often driven us to closer communion with the faithful and true Friend in heaven. The wreck of mortal hopes has often enriched our immortal hopes. The vanity of this world has led us to seek more earnestly the solid realities of the world to come. 3. By the recorded testimony of good men. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word." Take the experience of Paul in this chapter. (*J. O. Peck, D.D.*) *The great dome of God's providence*:—In the baptistery of the cathedral at Pisa is a wonderful dome. Spacious, symmetrical, composed of the choicest marble, it is a delight to stand beneath and gaze upon its beauties. Thus I stood one sunny April day, when suddenly the air became instinct with melody. The great dome seemed full of harmony. The waves of music vibrated to and fro, loudly beating against the walls, swelling into full chords like the roll of a grand organ, and then dying away into soft, long-drawn, far-receding echoes, melting in the distance into silence. It was only my guide, who, lingering behind me a moment, had softly murmured a triple chord. But beneath that magic roof every sound resolved into a symphony. No discord can reach the summit of that dome and live. Every noise made in the building, the slamming of the seats, the tramping of feet, all the murmur and bustle of the crowd, are caught up, softened, harmonised, blended and echoed back in music. So it seems to me that over our life hangs the great dome of God's providence. Standing as we do, beneath it, no act in the Divine administration towards us, no affliction, no grief, no loss which our heavenly Father sends, however hard to bear it may be, but will come back at last softened and blended into harmony, with the overarching dome of His wisdom, mercy, and power, till to our corrected sense it shall be the sweetest music of heaven. (*J. D. Steele.*) *The seasons of our education*:—We cannot skip the seasons of our education. We cannot hasten the ripeness and the sweetness of a single day, nor dispense with one night's nipping frost, nor one week's blighting east wind. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *The guidance of our Pilot*:—A landsman at sea understands little how a vessel is worked; he sees her often heading almost back from her course, making strange and contrary traverses—sometimes stripped of her canvas when to him all seems fair; sometimes strong sails set upon her when the storm is driving fiercely; yet he trusts in the presiding skill, nor would he dare to give, much less countermand, an order; for in the extremity of his own ignorance he has the comfort of knowing that the pilot knows. So, in the hour of gloom, let us trust in God, for to Him the night shineth as the day; and what to us appears adverse, to Him is the guidance of our prosperity. *All things for good*:—Only a few years afterwards, Jeremiah was reduced to comparative poverty. The bulk of his property had been invested in the stock of the bank, which failed, unable to pay a shilling in the pound. Thus compelled to dispose of his expensive establishment, change his style of living altogether, and, with his wife and four children, take to "short commons," his spirits did not desert him. Said Jerry, "Never mind!"—two words which he never failed to throw at the teeth of every mishap he encountered. "Never mind! I like variety. I am tired of riding in a carriage; I once broke my leg in one. Walking is an exercise that I need very much. Come, come, this is not so bad an affair after all. It will test the value of my friends. Besides, now I can earn the bread we eat. Ah! it will be a labour of love, and that enriches the soul! I can almost say I am glad this accident has happened; I can indeed!" (*E. Paxton Hood.*) *Man's mistakes rectified by God*:—I sometimes think of it as of a child sitting in a boat. The child does not know the coast, and it very little understands how to row. If the child were left to itself, pulling upon the oars, its right hand being a little stronger than the other, it would be all the time veering the boat to the right, and the boat would be constantly turning round and round. The child would, perhaps, make its way out of the harbour and into the ocean, and be carried away and lost, if there were no guiding power in the boat but its own. But there in the stern sits the father. The uneven strokes of the child would carry the boat this way or that out

of its course; but the steady hand of the father overcomes those uneven strokes; and all the mistakes with the oars are rectified by the rudder, and the boat keeps its right course. So that the force exerted by the child, though misdirected, all works for good when the father guides. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 29. **For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.**—*Foreknowledge and predestination*:—The "for" bears on the previous verse. All things must turn to the good of them that are called according to God's eternal plan, because, once foreknown, He has determined to bring them to the glorious consummation of perfect likeness to His Son. The decree of predestination is founded on the act of foreknowledge. In what respect did God foreknow them? Obviously not as being one day to exist. For the foreknowledge in that case would apply to all men, and the apostle would not have said "*whom* He foreknew." Neither is it as future saved and glorified ones that He foreknew them; for this is the object of the decree of predestination of which Paul goes on to speak; and this object cannot at the same time be that of the foreknowledge. There is but one answer: foreknown as sure to fulfil the condition of salvation, viz., faith; so: foreknown as His by faith. The act of knowing, like that of seeing, supposes an object perceived. It is not the act that creates the object, but the object which determines the act. And the same is the case with Divine prevision or foreknowledge: for in the case of God who lives above time foreseeing is seeing; knowing what shall be is knowing what to Him already is. And therefore it is the believer's faith which, as a future act, but in His sight already existing, which determines His foreknowledge. This faith does not exist because God sees it; He sees it because it will come into being at a given moment, in time. We thus get at the thought of the apostle: whom God knew beforehand as certain to believe, whose faith He beheld eternally, He designated, predestinated, as the objects of a grand decree, to wit, that He will not abandon them till He has brought them to the perfect likeness of His own Son. Will in God is neither arbitrary nor blind; it is based on a principle of light, on knowledge. In relation to the man whose faith God foresees, He decrees salvation and glory. The predestination of which Paul speaks is not a predestination *to* faith, but a predestination to glory, founded *on* the prevision of faith. Faith is in a sense the work of God; but it contains a factor, in virtue of which it reacts on God, as an object reacts on the mind which takes cognizance of it; this is the free adherence of man to the solicitation of God. Here is the element which distinguishes the act of foreknowledge from that of predestination, and because of which the former logically precedes the latter. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The believer's conformity to Christ*:—There is a threefold conformity which a believer is said to have to Christ—of holiness, of suffering, of glory. First, of holiness and sanctification. Every true child of God he is predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, that is, to be holy as He was holy. And this again to a double purpose. First, in affection and disposition, to be carried by the same spirit. "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5; Rom. viii. 9). Again, secondly, in life and conversation; we must be like to Him in this also (1 John ii. 6). When we say that we are to be like Christ, and to do that which He did, this is rightly to be understood by us, and in that sense wherein it is spoken; namely, as to those kind of actions alone which are imitable by us, and which it lies in our way to follow, and to conform unto, and to take Him for our ensample. There are three sorts of actions of Christ's which are mentioned in Scripture. First, His work of mediation. Secondly, His working of miracles. And thirdly, His works of obedience, and conformity to the law of God in all those moral actions which came from Him. The two former of these they are wholly beyond our imitation. God will Himself one day make a serious search and inquiry hereinto. He will ask concerning every man whose image and superscription he hath upon him, whether the image of Christ, or the image of Satan. And according as it is in this respect with him, so shall be also his future condition. Men may possibly sometimes herein deceive others, and oftentimes do so. While it is said here, that we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ; and that this in one sense is meant of holiness; then we see here what I formerly hinted, that our sanctification is a special fruit and effect of our election, and that which the Lord does mainly and chiefly intend to us in His choosing of us. The second conformity, in which believers stand to Christ, is a conformity of suffering and of affliction. This was another image of His whereby He was made known to the world. And this in all the particular explications of it; as, first, in the cause

of suffering, we are conformable in this, for as Christ suffered for righteousness sake (1 Pet. ii. 21, 22). Secondly, as in the cause of suffering, so also in the kind of suffering, there is a conformity to Christ's image in this also. Kind for kind, reproach, disgrace, hatred, outward violence, and death itself in the worst circumstances of it. Thirdly, in the manner of suffering. There is in Christians, and so ought to be likewise a conformity to Christ in this also. To suffer with the same spirit as we find Him to have done. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us. First, as it may serve to inform us of the state and condition of a Christian what it is. Therefore secondly, this teaches us all to prepare and to provide for suffering. Thirdly, we have hence also a ground of patience and comfort in afflictions, which do at any time fall upon us, that they are not such things as do come to us by chance, but by special order and dispensation from God. The third and last, is a conformity in glory. This is another kind of correspondency which the Scripture does sometimes intimate and declare unto us, that we shall be changed into the same image with Christ from glory to glory (2 Cor. iii. 18). "And as we have born the image of the earthly, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49). It is said in John xvii. 22, "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them." This is grounded, first of all upon the forementioned union which believers have with Christ; as from thence they conform to Him in His sufferings, so also in His glory. Secondly, we have the praise of Christ to this purpose, "Ye which have been with Me in My temptations, ye shall be with Me in My kingdom" (Luke xxii. 30). Thirdly, we have for this also the prayer of Christ (John xvii. 24). As the promise of Christ is most infallible, so the prayer of Christ is most effectual; and as Christ is sure to perform whatever He hath made tender of to us, so He is sure also to obtain whatever He hath requested for us. God the Father will hear His Son in all His petitions; "I know," says He, "that Thou hearest Me always" (John xi. 42). And so in this petition especially, amongst and above all the rest. The use of this point to ourselves comes to this—First, as matter of comfort and satisfaction to us in all those troubles and afflictions which do at any time befall us, and our conformity to Christ in suffering. Secondly, this may serve also to put a lustre and splendour upon the saints and servants of God in the midst of all those disparagements and contempts which are cast upon them. Thirdly, we should also hence labour to be fitted for this glorious condition of conformity to Christ in glory. The third and last is the limitation of this conformity here mentioned, and that is in these words, "That He might be the first-born among many brethren." First, to take notice of their relation; the saints, and such as are true Christians, they are all of them brethren. First, brethren to Christ; they are His brethren, thus in Heb. ii. 11, 12. First, as partaking of the same nature. Secondly, as partaking of the same Father. Thirdly, as partaking of the same Spirit, &c. Secondly, they are brethren also, as being so one to another (1 Thess. v. 26, 27; 1 John iii. 16). This they are said to be upon a various account. First, as of the same profession and of the same heavenly calling. Secondly, of the same family and household; the family of heaven, the household of faith. Thirdly, having the same inheritance allotted unto them. The third and last particular is their order; to wit, in reference to Christ, and that is, they are younger brethren, that He might be the first-born amongst them; and herein especially does consist the limitation of the saints for their conformity to Christ's image. It is still with this reservation, that He is the chief and principal. Christ He is the first-born amongst many brethren, take notice of that. Christ is the first-born; that is, the Chief. First, in point of holiness; He is the first-born in this explication, and that in a twofold respect. First, in regard of capacity, as He hath a greater measure of holiness in Himself than any of His bretbren. Secondly, in regard of conveyance, as He is the spring and fountain, and deriver of holiness unto them. Secondly, in point of suffering. It holds there also that Christ hath the precedency and priority afore any other besides. This seems in a special manner to be here intended. That the sufferings of Christ, they were greater than all the sufferings of any of the saints. First, they were greater subjective, in regard of the eminency of the person that did undergo them, as being no other than the Son of God Himself, the Lord of glory. Secondly, those sufferings of Christ, they were greater, also extensive, in regard of things which He suffered in, as to all kinds and particulars; not only in His body, in all the parts and members thereof, but also in His soul, as to all the powers and faculties thereof. Thirdly, greater intensive in regard of the exquisiteness of the pains and torments themselves which He suffered; it is said, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isa. liii. 10). The third and last is

in point of glory; Christ has the pre-eminence here likewise. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God in this particular amongst the rest; but yet still so as we must give Him leave to go before us, and to have the precedency of us; upon which account He is called not only the Author, but also the Captain of their salvation (Heb. ii. 10). First, Christ as the Head of the Church hath the pre-eminence of dignity and power, and of all here in this life. The first-born in ancient time had the precedency in this particular. The excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power, as it is in Gen. xlix. 3. They were princes and priests in their families. Secondly, for the life to come; Christ He hath the pre-eminence of the saints here also, being the great Heir of eternal glory. It is true they are made conformable to His image in glory; but it is to the truth of His image, not to the transcendency; they are partakers with Him of the same glory in kind, but not of the same glory in degree. Therefore accordingly it should teach us to give all honour and glory unto Him, as standing in this relation to us, and we to Him, as members under this Head, as subjects under this Lord, as younger brethren under this First-born. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The object of predestination—conformity to Christ*:—It is a sad circumstance that a large number of professing Christians completely overlook that in which our salvation chiefly consists. Those of whom we speak say, "To be forgiven is to be saved—to be justified is to be saved." But to be forgiven is only a part of salvation, to be justified is only a part of salvation. God teaches us that redemption consists, not merely in being accounted righteous, but in being made righteous. We are told by the Apostle Paul that Christians are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. God's provision for renewing man contemplates likeness to Christ. This provision consists of the atonement and the ministrations of the Holy Ghost. Christian truth has its centre and substance in Christ; and the Holy Ghost in His revelations to us, reveal chiefly Christ. Such contact must produce correspondence and likeness. No nobler pattern could be present to God. Look, for a moment, simply at the human nature of Christ. There, in that human nature, all is goodness. We will carry these remarks a little further, and say that conformity to a less perfect pattern would not exhaust those capacities of the human soul which God gave to that soul when He created it, or satisfy the thirsts awakened in the human spirit, when that spirit is reconciled to God. The heart of man is capable of being made a complete likeness of God. Oh, how you sin against yourselves when you degrade yourselves—when you act as though you were sent into this world simply to eat, and drink, and put on raiment! We remark, further, that all under the Christian dispensation, who seek renewal into God's image, make Christ their Example. Now, in this real human life Christ sets us an example. He hereby shows what humanity in close connection with God can be. The end and tendency of all Divine dispensations, since the Fall, have been to fix the attention of mankind on Christ. Now, while the thoughts of renewed men are frequently occupied with their Saviour, their hearts are warm towards Him. Cold metal will not take the mould; you may try to drive it into the mould, but you cannot; or, if you get it into the mould by powerful hammers, it will not take the form of the mould even then; it will come out as an unshapen lump; but metal liquified will run into any shape. Just so the soul of man in contact with Christ. When that soul is fused by the power of love, it immediately takes the likeness of the Saviour. If we could only raise our eyes above the level of the Church, and fix them upon the Saviour, there would be an improvement in our character, and in our style of life immediately. The image becomes an essential part of the individual. It is in the core of his nature. It is a substantial likeness wrought into the material of the inner self. Now let us, for a moment, dwell on the fact that this likeness is visible. God, of course, sees it. The angels see it—renewed men see it, the ungodly sometimes see it. All may see it. Not if you take your microscope and magnify a mote until it seem a beam, and a beam so large that nought beside is visible!—you will not see it then. If you apply your microscope to some one of your faults, you will not then see the likeness of Christ. You must look at yourselves as a whole, if you would judge of that which is being done for you. Or, to use another illustration, you will not see the likeness of Christ, if you take your dissecting knife, and, cutting out some plague spot of the flesh, examine it as though that dull, foul lump were the whole body—of course, you will not see the Divine workmanship in your character then. Nor will you be able to see it if you look for the stature and strength of manhood, where you can expect to find only the form and the feebleness of infancy? But if you know what to look for, where

to look for it, and when, then the image of God, in the regenerated man, may be seen by you; seen, if you be regenerated, in your own heart, and seen in others, if they too be born again. Let me remind you that the delineation of God's image is progressive. "We all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." They are born again to possess this image, and as they grow up into it, it expands and becomes perfected. (*S. Martin.*) *Predestination*:—The apostle is not here describing a chain of causes and effects, but simply showing the method in which God works; the order in which the several branches of salvation constantly follow each other. This will be clear if we survey the work of God in the salvation of men—I. FORWARD. 1. God foreknew all who would believe—*i.e.*, speaking after the manner of men, for properly there is neither fore or after knowledge in God. All time, or rather all eternity, is present to Him at once. But we must not think that things are because He knows them, any more than the sun shines because I see it. Men are as free in believing or not believing as if God did not know it at all. 2. Whom God foreknew He "predestinated," &c. —*i.e.*, God decrees from everlasting that all who believe in the Son of His love shall be conformed to His image. Accordingly all who believe in Christ receive "the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls," and this in virtue of the unchangeable decree, "He that believeth shall be saved," &c. 3. Whom He predestinated He also called—outwardly by His Word, inwardly by His Spirit. 4. Whom He called He justified—*i.e.*, here, made just. He executed the decree, "conforming them to the image of His Son," or sanctified them. 5. Whom He justified He glorified. "Having made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints," He "gives them the kingdom prepared for them." II. BACKWARD. 1. Take your stand with "the multitude which no man can number," and you will find none who was not sanctified before he was glorified. 2. Take a view of the sanctified on earth and you will find all were first called. 3. Who are they that are thus called but those whom God had predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, "for God calls none, but according to the counsel of His will." 4. All God predestinated He foreknew. He saw them as believers, and as such predestinated them to salvation according to the eternal decree. "He that believeth shall be saved." Conclusion: God sees and knows from everlasting to everlasting through one eternal *now*. Yet in condescension to our weakness He speaks after the manner of men of His purpose, counsel, plan, foreknowledge. (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *Predestination*:—I. IN RELATION TO MAN. What is the design of God in predestination? "Conformity to the image of His Son." To make a little Jesus Christ of a man—that is what God does. What God predestines to do for man is what man, left to himself, does not and never will wish for. No unconverted man, no lost soul, no devil wishes to be like Christ. To wish to be good is itself a kind of goodness, and to wish to be like Jesus Christ is in some degree to resemble Him. Observe—1. There is nothing here about a predestination of men to eternal misery. Our text speaks of nothing but good for man. 2. Predestination has reference to character rather than condition. It is not a plan by which men are to be made happy hereafter irrespectively of their inward nature and disposition. 3. The predestination of God includes all the laws, processes, means, and instruments by which the result is secured, as adapted to the constitution of the mind, the will, and the affections, to be renewed and sanctified. In His providential dealings the plan of God includes not only the end, but the means. The man who only takes a part of God's plan might sit down in the corner of the field, and there reason, "If a crop of corn is to grow here, it will grow; therefore I will lie down and leave the matter to God." But the man who has a firmer faith in predestination will say, "If a crop of corn is to grow here, I must labour because labour is comprehended in God's scheme." Therefore the man who contents himself with saying, "If I am to be saved I shall be saved," is only half a believer in predestination. The thorough believer in it will "give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, and work out his own salvation, because it is God that worketh in him." 4. The only evidence of personal predestination is in the attainment of the end proclaimed—Conformity to Christ. You may hold the doctrine of election and yet be none of the elect. You may be a drunkard, &c., and that is no part of God's purpose. You may even reject the doctrine, and yet be yourself an exemplification of it—God's workmanship. II. IN RELATION TO GOD. 1. It is God who works salvation in those who are saved. It is not that we have nothing to do and are to abandon ourselves to the current of events, but that the first and efficient Author

of our salvation is God. 2. What God works in time is the effect of His eternal purpose. As the act of election is the act of God, so it is not done without forethought and design. The whole universe is formed, and all its parts organised after the purpose of God, planned by infinite wisdom and regulated by infinite power. Now, if this be so in regard to the fall of a sparrow, the numbering of the hairs of our head, &c., how much more in the building of the spiritual kingdom and temple of God! If the framework of the scaffold has been so wisely formed, how much more the palace to which it is subordinate! What it was right for Him to do, it was right for Him to purpose to do. Conclusion: The Divine predestination—1. Wears towards men only an aspect of love. Its sole object is to make men like Christ. 2. Respects the accomplishment of a work of grace, which without would never be accomplished at all. 3. The only satisfactory mark of our interest in it is our conformity to Christ. 4. In the experience of salvation let this doctrine have its proper place. There is predestination in the entire process. But the use of means comes before attainment of the end. The first appeal of God to us is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us begin with that. Leave out for the present the perplexing question, "Am I one of the elect?" Our election must manifest itself by our growing conformity to Christ. The purpose of God is to be read in the work of God. And if this evidence appear, let it humble and awaken gratitude in you. (*P. Strutt.*) *Predestination* is to mark out beforehand especially in one's mind. Only in Eph. i. 5, 11; Acts iv. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 7. It is more definite than "purpose." A parent who before his child is old enough for a trade, chooses a trade for him, predestines the boy. He marks out beforehand a path in which he designs him to go. So God from eternity resolved that believers should be made like His Son. Foreordination is simply a purpose, and by no means implies the inevitable accomplishment of the purpose. The boy marked out for one trade may enter another. But it might be thought that what God foreordained must in every case be realised. But God has thought fit that the accomplishment of His own purposes shall depend upon man's faith. Hence Paul solemnly warns his readers that, unless they continue in faith, they will, although foreordained to glory, be cut off (chap. xi. 21, 22). So in Jer. xviii. 7–12, God expressly declares that the accomplishment of His purpose of blessing to Israel depends upon Israel's conduct. The doctrine of predestination is thus consistent with the teaching that salvation depends upon each man's own faith (chaps. ix. 32, xi. 22*f*); with the teaching that God is using means to lead all men to repentance (chap. ii. 4); and with the universality of the purpose of redemption (chap. v. 18). (*Prof. Beet.*) *Glorious predestination*:— I. OUR CONFORMITY TO CHRIST IS THE SACRED OBJECT OF PREDESTINATION. We are to be conformed to Him—1. As to nature. It is not possible for us to be Divine, yet we are made "partakers of the Divine nature." We cannot be precisely as God is, yet as we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The new birth as surely stamps us with the image of Christ as our first birth impressed us with a resemblance to the fathers of our flesh. 2. As to relationship. Our Lord is the Son of God; and truly now are we the sons of God. As Christ's Sonship was attested at His baptism by the voice from heaven and the Holy Ghost, so the voice of God in the Word has testified to us our Heavenly Father's love; and the Holy Spirit has borne witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. 3. In our actions. As a Son Christ served His Father, and you could see the nature of God in His sympathy with and exact imitation of God; and so we are to speak the truth, for God is true; love, for God is love. Moreover, Christ wrought miracles of mercy towards men, which proved Him to be the Son of God. And our Lord has told us that greater works than His own shall we do. 4. In our experience. (1) Of suffering. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." And if we "be without chastisement then are we bastards, and not sons." (2) In relation to men. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," and so we have to "go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (3) With regard to Satan. You know how thrice he assailed Him with those temptations which are most likely to be attractive to poor humanity, but Jesus overcame them all. We are predestinated to be conformed to Christ in that respect. (4) As to all evil, our Lord's entire life was one perpetual battle. And we are to be holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. 5. As to character. He was consecrated to God; so are we to be. He went about His Father's business; so should we ever be occupied. Towards man He was all love; it becomes us to be the same. 6. As to our inheritance, for

He is heir of all things, and what less are we heirs of, since all things are ours? II. PREDESTINATION IS THE IMPELLING FORCE TOWARDS THIS CONFORMITY. 1. It is the will of God that conforms us to Christ's image rather than our own will. It is our will now, but it was God's will when it was not our will, and it only became according to our will when God made us willing in the day of its power. 2. It is rather God's work than our work. We are to work with God in the matter of our becoming like to Christ. We are not to be passive like wood or marble; we are to be prayerful, watchful, fervent, &c., but still the work is God's. 3. Therefore all the glory must be unto God and not to us. It is a great honour to any man to be like Christ; and we must lay all our honours at His dear feet, who hath, according to His abundant mercy, predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. III. THE ULTIMATE END OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST. "That He might be the first-born." 1. God predestinates us to be like Jesus that He might be the first of a new order of beings, nearer to God than any other. There is no kinship between Jesus and angels. 2. The object of grace is that there may be some in heaven with whom Christ can hold brotherly converse. "Many brethren"—not that He might be the firstborn among many, but among "many brethren," who should be like Himself. No doubt, however, the text means that these will for ever love and honour Christ Himself. We love Jesus now, and how will we, when we get to heaven, love and adore Him as our dear Elder Brother with whom we shall be on terms of the closest familiarity and most reverent obedience. 3. God was so well pleased with His Son, and saw such beauties in Him, that He determined to multiply His image. The face of Jesus is more lovely to God than all the worlds; therefore doth the Father will to have His Son's beauty reflected in ten thousand mirrors in saints made like to Him. Conclusion: Keep your model before you. You see what you are predestinated to be; aim at it every day. Above all, commune much with Christ. Communion is the fountain of conformity. They said of Achilles, that when he was a child they fed him upon lion's marrow, and so made him brave; and of Nero, that he was suckled by a woman of a ferocious nature. If we take our nutriment from the world, we shall be worldly; but, if we live upon Christ and dwell in Him, our conformity with Him shall be accomplished, and we shall be recognised as brethren of that blessed family of which Jesus Christ is the firstborn. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Conformity to Christ predestinated*:—I. THE NATURE OF THIS CONFORMITY with respect to—1. His sonship. 2. His moral character. 3. His offices. 4. His suffering and humiliation. 5. His glory. II. THE ACT OF GOD IN PURSUANCE OF THAT END. Predestination is an act agreeable—1. To God's nature. 2. To the analogy of nature. 3. To the conduct of His providence in Christ. Conclusion: Predestination—1. Affords no comfort to those who are not conformed to Christ. 2. Does not destroy the voluntary character of human actions, nor involve force or compulsion. (*Biblical Museum.*) *Conformity to Christ*:—I. WHEREIN THIS CONFORMITY CONSISTS. 1. In afflictions (Isa. liii. 5). This must be expected by us (John xv. 20). He calls us to no harder lot than He Himself endured. 2. In righteousness and holiness (Phil. ii. 5; Matt. xi. 29). (1) This is the end of conformity to Him in our afflictions (Heb. xii. 10). (2) This is the way to conformity to Him in glory (2 Cor. iii. 18). (3) This is a sign of our communion with Christ (1 John ii. 6). (4) This will give us boldness in the judgment (1 John iv. 17). 3. In felicity and glory. Conformity to Christ showeth us not only what we should do, but what we may expect. As to—(1) The body (Phil. iii. 21). (2) The soul (1 Cor. xv. 4; 1 John iii. 2; Psa. xvii. 15). II. WHY THIS IS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ELECT AND OTHERS. 1. This suiteth with God's design of recovering man out of his lapsed estate, by setting up a pattern of holiness and happiness in our nature. (1) Our primitive glory was God's image (Gen. i. 26). (2) When this glory was lost none was fit to restore it but the Son of God made man; for thereby the glory of the Father was again visible in Him in our nature (Col. i. 18; Heb. i. 3). Therefore all the heirs of promise are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, or to God appearing in their nature. 2. Because they are all called after Christ's name—Christians. Now all that are called after Christ's name should be framed after His image, otherwise they will be called Christians to the disgrace of Christ. Surely, then, we ought to live as if another Christ were come into the world (2 Tim. ii. 19). 3. Because all that are elected by God and redeemed by Christ are sealed by the Spirit (Eph. i. 15, iv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 22). What is this but the image of Christ impressed upon the soul by His Spirit? 4. Because Christ was an example. It is a great advantage not only to have a rule, but a pattern, because man is so prone to imitate. (1) By this example our

pattern is the more complete. There are some graces wherein we cannot be said to resemble God, as in humility, patience, obedience. But in these we have pattern from Christ (Matt. xi. 29; Heb. v. 8; 1 Pet. i. 21). (2) It shows that a holy life is possible to those who are renewed by grace. (3) It shows what will be the issue and success of a life spent in patience and holiness (1 Pet. i. 21). Conclusion: The use is—1. For information. (1) What little hopes they have to get to heaven who are not like Christ. (*a*) In holiness. (*b*) In patience and courage under sufferings. (2) How we should know whether we have the true holiness, viz., when we are such as Christ was in the world. Some content themselves that they are not as other men (Luke xviii. 11). It is a sorry plea, when we have nothing to bear up our confidence but the badness of others. Others look no higher than the people who are in reputation for goodness among whom they live; whereas we are to be "holy as He is holy" (1 Pet. i. 15; 1 John iii. 3). 2. For direction. Now for directions. (1) The foundation is laid in the new birth. The Son of God was conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost; so are we born of water and the Spirit. (2) When we are dedicated to God, the Holy Ghost is the same to Christians that He was to Christ, a guide and comforter. (3) There is a conformity of life necessary, that we be such as Christ was—(*a*) To God, seeking His glory (John viii. 50); pleasing God (ver. 29); obeying His will (John vi. 38); delighting in converse with Him. (*b*) To man, subject to His natural parents (Luke ii. 51); to rulers (Matt. xvii. 27); good to all (Acts x. 38); humble to inferiors (John xiii. 3, 4). (4) Eye your pattern much (Heb. xii. 2). Examine what proportion there is between the copy and the transcript. (5) Shame yourselves for coming short (Heb. iii. 12–14). (6) Use the means of communion with Him, especially the Lord's Supper. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Conformity to Christ*:—I. WHAT IS THAT IMAGE OF HIS SON TO WHICH GOD DESIGNS HIS PEOPLE SHALL BE CONFORMED? His moral image; it being impossible that any creature, however exalted, can ever possess His natural perfections. "God created man in His own image." But, alas! by his fall he lost the image of his Maker. But it is the purpose of God to restore His people to their original rectitude; and in the character of the man Christ Jesus we behold the perfect pattern after which they shall be formed—viz., love to God, benevolence toward man, holiness, &c. Perfect conformity, of course, is not attainable in this world. It is the object of every good man's pursuit, but none reach it till they see the Saviour as He is. There are two things especially which the Holy Spirit does in those who are conformed to the likeness of Christ. 1. He enlightens the understanding to discern the beauties and excellences of the Saviour. Ancient philosophers used to say that if virtue was embodied every one would be in love with her. But every excellence adorned the character of our Lord, yet He was despised and rejected of men. But under the Spirit's illumination we shall readily admit that "He is fairer than the children of men," "chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely." 2. He produces love to those excellences in Christ, which He discovers to the mind. And "beholding the glory of Christ, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." II. BY WHAT MEANS IS CONFORMITY TO CHRIST PROMOTED? 1. The Scriptures, which portray Christ's image. 2. Gospel ordinances, such as preaching and the Lord's Supper, and private duties, such as self-examination, prayer, &c. 3. The constant influences of the Holy Spirit. 4. Sanctified afflictions. III. WHAT ENDS HAS GOD IN VIEW IN EFFECTING THIS TRANSFORMATION? 1. To manifest the power and riches of His grace. 2. The honour of Christ. The purchase of His blood shall be presented before the throne, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." 3. The happiness of the saved. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *True conformity*:—By the "Image of Christ," is here meant the moral character of Christ. And what a character was that! Goethe says, "I esteem the four Gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity proceeding from the person of Christ, and of as Divine a kind as was ever manifest upon earth!" Rousseau confesses, "If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." And, to quote only the words of J. S. Mill, "Whatever else may be taken from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers: a Divine person, a standard of excellence and a model for imitation; available even to the absolute unbeliever, and can never be lost to humanity." In the entire conformity to the character of Christ, there is—I. THE COMPLETE SATISFACTION OF THE HUMAN SOUL. In all moral existences there is an ideal character. The cause of moral misery is discordance with this ideal. The

character of Christ is this ideal. Souls can conceive and desire nothing higher. Only as men approximate to it they grow in power, rise in dignity, and abound in satisfaction. II. HARMONY WITH THE HUMAN RACE. The human race is sadly divided; it is severed into numerous contending sections. The human house is divided against itself and cannot stand. The human body has not only its limbs amputated, but they are rattling one against the other, and all against itself. It writhes with anguish. A re-union is essential to its health, and peace, and vigour. But what can unite men together? Universal conformity to rituals or doctrines? Such conformity would be no union. Universal conformity to the image of Christ would unite the race. Let all men be Christ-like, and all men will love one another. When all men become Christ-like, and not before then, will all contentions cease, all men embrace each other as brethren and be "gathered together" in Christ as members to one body directed by one will. If you would divide men, preach doctrines, and policies, and ceremonies. If you would unite them, preach Christ. III. THE GRAND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL. What is this? To give men theological knowledge and material civilisation? It does this, but does something infinitely grander: it gives men the character of Christ. It is to create us anew in Christ Jesus in good works, and to inspire us with the spirit of Christ, without which we are none of His. Where Christ's gospel does not do this, it does nothing. The testing question is—Are we like Christ? IV. THE SUPREME DUTY OF LIFE. This, the grandest, is also the most practical. 1. We are made by imitation. 2. Christ is the most imitable of all examples—the most—(1) Admirable; (2) Transparent; (3) Unchanging; (4) Intimate. He is always with us. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Portraits of Christ*:—There is no surer sign of littleness than slavish imitation; yet this is not the case when the models are perfect. No artist is accused of a want of originality because he studies Greek sculpture or the works of Michael Angelo or of Raphael. It is even so with the imitation of Christ. To imitate other men is weakness; to copy Christ is strength. He who should imitate Him the most nearly, would be the most original man upon earth. If I should exhort you to imitate any one else, I should have a difficult task with sensible men. There is not a single biography about which you could say, "I will re-live this man's life precisely as he lived." There is but one model which a man can accept as his copy in every jot and tittle. I. IN WHAT SENSE IS A BELIEVER TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST? 1. Negatively. (1) Not as a penny bears the superscription of the Queen. There is something more required of us than having in some dark corner the name of Jesus tattooed into the skin of our profession. (2) Nor is a cold morality conformity to the image of Christ. A statue may present the very image of a statesman or warrior, but it is dumb, and blind, and motionless. We are not to be mere dead pictures of Christ; we are to be like Him as living men. (3) Nor is it enough to act publicly as Christ would have acted. Some are ever asking, "Would Christ have done this" or "that?" And then they answer it according to their own fancies. They see some Christian man who is not bound by the "touch not, taste not, handle not," of the old Mosaic spirit, and they cry over him, "Would Christ have done such a thing?" If he laughs or keeps a carriage, "Ah," they say, "did Christ ever do so?" And so they think that by putting on a face that is more marred than that of any man, they shall become the very image of Christ Jesus. You might put on a garment without seam, put sandals on your feet, and you might even ride through the streets of Jerusalem upon "a colt the foal of an ass"; but this imitation is not to be in mere externals. 2. Positively. We are to be conformed to the image of Christ. (1) In character. (*a*) In humility: "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." (*b*) In diligence: in the Father's business. (*c*) In love. (*d*) In devotion and prayerfulness. But who can describe the whole? We can but say that whereas one man is admirable for his faith, another for his patience, another for his courage, and another for his affection, He is altogether lovely! (2) In suffering. If we are ever conformed to Christ, we must bear His cross. (3) In glory. If we be cross bearers we shall be crown wearers. II. WHY SHOULD WE BE TRANSFORMED AS UNTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST? Well may we desire to bear the image of Christ, because—1. It is that which we lost in Eden. If Eden were a sorrowful loss, and if it be desirable to obtain its paradise again, surely the image of God must be desirable first and foremost of all. 2. It is the ultimate end of God's decree. I do not read that the saints are predestinated to paradise, but to be conformed to the image of His dear Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. 3. It is the Spirit's great work in us. When we are regenerated, the new man is put into us; and the new man is renewed in the image of Christ Jesus. The

moment that a sinner believes, there is put into him the first germ of a perfect Christ; it needs but that it should be nourished by the Spirit, and it will grow into the perfect stature of a man in Christ. 4. It is our highest glory on earth, and our crowning privilege above. What more glorious for a man than to be like Christ? III. IS IT POSSIBLE? "I have tried," says one, "to make myself like Christ, and I cannot." Indeed, thou canst not. This is art which excels all art. Why, the most wondrous painters, who have never failed before, always fail in the portrait of Christ. They cannot paint the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely. Orators, before whose eloquence men have been swayed as the waves are tossed by the wind, have confessed their inability to reach the excellences of Christ. Divinest poets have been compelled to lay down their harps, and relinquish all hope ever to sing the song of songs concerning this fairest Solomon. And must it not be a vastly harder task for a man to be made like Christ? Indeed, if this were our work, it were impracticable, and we might dissuade you from the task. But it is not *your* work, it is *God's* work. It was God who predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son; and God who made the decree will fulfil it Himself. But wherein lies the hardness of our being made like Christ? It lies—1. In the material to be worked upon. "Oh," saith one, "there is never a possibility of making an image of Christ out of me. I am but a rough hewn stone of the quarry; friable, unworkable; the chisel will only blunt its edge upon me." But what matters the material when you know the great artificer? To Him all things are possible. 2. In the world we live in. "How can I be like Christ?" saith another. "If you would build a monastery, and let us all live as Christian brethren together, it might be possible; but I have to mix with men that blaspheme; and my business is so trying to the temper. And then our trade has so many temptations in it. We get one touch, as it were, put into the picture on a Sunday, and we think we shall be like Christ one day; but the devil puts six black touches in during the week, and spoils the whole; it is not possible we should ever be like Christ." But God says it *shall* be done. Of course Satan will do his best to stay God's decrees; but what shall become of anything that stands in the way of God's decree? 3. In the perfection of the image. "If it were to be like David, Josiah, or some of the ancient saints, I might think it possible; but to be like Christ, who is without spot or blemish, I cannot hope it. It were presumption for such a fallen worm as I, to hope to be like Christ." And did you know it, that while you were thus speaking, you were really getting the thing you thought to be impossible? When you bowed before that image overawed, do you know it was because you began to be made like it? When I come to love the image of Christ, it is because I have some measure of likeness to it. And if you as believers will look much at Christ, you will grow like Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Conformity to Christ*:—The Christian life is the only life that will ever be completed. Apart from Christ the life of man is a broken pillar, the race of men an unfinished pyramid. One by one in sight of eternity all human ideals fall short, one by one before the open grave all human hopes dissolve. The Laureate sees a moment's light in Nature's jealousy for the Type; but that, too, vanishes.

> "So careful of the type," but no
> From scarified cliff and quarried stone
> She cries, "A thousand types are gone;
> I care for nothing, all shall go."

All shall go? No; one Type remains. "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." And "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (*H. Drummond.*) *The glorious exemplar*:—A celebrated philosopher of antiquity, who was nearly contemporary with Christ, but who could have known nothing of what was going on in Judæa, and who, alas! did not always "reck his own rede"—wrote thus to a younger friend, as a precept for a worthy life: "Some good man must be singled out and kept ever before our eyes, that we may live as if he were looking on, and do everything as if he could see it." Let us borrow the spirit, if not the exact letter, of that precept, and address it to our young men. Keep ever in your mind and before your mind's eye the loftiest standard of character. You have it, we need not say, supremely and unapproachably, in Him who spake as never young man spake, and lived as never man lived, and who died for the sins of the world. That character stands apart and alone. *The image of Christ*:—It has been

said by some one, suppose the sun in the heavens, which enlightens, warms, and fructifies everything, were a rational being that could see everything within the reach of its beams, it would then behold its own image in every sea, in every river, in every lake, and in every brook—nay, it would even see itself reflected on the loftiest mountains of ice; and would it not, in the abundance of its joy at such glorious radiance, forgetting itself, embrace all these oceans, seas, and rivers, nay, the very glaciers, in its arms, and delight over them? Thus Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, beholds His image and Divine work in every renewed soul as in a polished mirror. (*J. Krummacher.*) *Likeness to Christ*:—Upon the occasion of Voltaire's visit to England in the last century he became acquainted with the saintly life and devoted labours of Fletcher of Madeley, of whom he remarked, "This is the true likeness and character of Jesus Christ." *God's means of conforming us to Christ*:—A Christian friend calling upon a poor old woman in Scotland expressed sorrow at seeing her suffer so much pain. "Oh," said Jeanie, "its just an answer to prayer. Ye see, I've long prayed to be conformed to the image of Christ; and, since this is the means, I've naething to do wi' the choosin' o' them. That's the end I seek. It is ours to aim at meetness for His presence, and to leave it to His wisdom to take His ain way wi' us. I would rather suffer than sin any day." *"Developing" the image*:—I was in the photographer's dark little closet. He had in his hand the little plate of glass that in the camera had been exposed to the light and had caught upon its sensitive surface an image. But there was no appearance of an image. There was nothing but a cloudy surface. "If there's an image there?" said the photographer, half inquiringly. But it must be "developed," he told me. He poured upon a glass the chemical solution, and in a moment what a weird change! Out of the cloud I saw the outlines of a face stealing, breaking its way through all obscuring shadows, growing clearer and clearer, till in a moment the artist took the plate to a window, and there it was most plainly, the picture of a face. Developing the image! I have often thought of it in its spiritual significance. God's work in human souls will vary. In all His children there is the same positive fact of the receiving of Christ's image upon the sensitive surface of their hearts. In some that likeness comes at once to the front of a man's life. You see it in the very look. You hear it in the voice. You almost feel it in the grasp of the hand, so warm, true, and sympathising. Best of all you see it in his life, a life flaming in its consecration from the very start. There is Christ, you say. To-day I plead for the souls where a work of grace has begun, and yet it may be very imperfect. You believe something is there, and yet faith may be perplexed at times when it would affirm that work. There are inconsistencies in the life, and you sometimes doubt if the Lord's mark is upon the soul. Still you can but feel that the person has come in contact with Christ, has caught His image, and, though that image is under a cloud, it only needs to be developed. I plead for these souls. I ask for patience in their behalf. Let us be willing to wait, just as God waits for the first faint tint of dawn to kindle into the flaming glory of sunrise, for a seed to expand into a shoot, for your soul and mine, so wayward and capricious, to slowly, slowly come round to a place at His feet. Thomas Erskine said, "If we are faithful and patient, we shall have the life God taught to us and nourished in us. But we are in such a hurry; we think something must be done immediately." We may apply these wise words to our dealings with others, and so have patience with their imperfections. (*E. A. Rand.*) *The model and the facsimile*:—I. THE TRANSCENDENT MODEL. The Word of God declares that all His reconciled children are to be conformed to the image of His Son. The life of Jesus was a plan of God. A sculpture once, on being asked why he smiled on a rough block of marble which was taken into his studio, replied, "Because I see an angel in it and I am going to liberate her." Well, when God looked upon us, though we were ugly with sin, yet in the fulness of His love He saw in us the image of His Son. Men sometimes despair of human nature, but our Heavenly Father keeps on working, and in due time His reconciled children shall be conformed to the transcendent Model. The strokes of the spiritual chisel may cut deep at times, but it is a part of the plan to make you perfect. We are not told the features of God's Son, but of this we may feel assured, that the face of Jesus was lovely. Attracted by the love which shone in His face, little children climbed His knee, and fallen men and erring women gave up their sins and became His disciples. We are not, however, to be conformed to the image of His face; but to be transformed to the spirit of His life. The same rudder that directed the spirit which made His life Divine is also to directs ours. Consider—1. His perfect life. We

cannot suggest the least improvement in it, and there are no flaws or stains to wish to be taken away. 2. His submission to the will of God. 3. His true worship of God. His life was one psalm of the love of God. 4. His consecration to God. 5. His unselfishness. Though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor. 6. His cross. We have never heard of any but Jesus who was willing not only to bear the penalty of others, but the guilt of their sins? II. THE INESTIMABLE PRIVILEGE OF BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST. When He was transfigured, He was so surpassingly beautiful that the disciples cried, "Master, *it is* good for us to be here!" When the sun goes down on a dark and dull evening, it sometimes lights up the clouds just above your head, and makes them golden with beauty. It is like the time when Stephen the martyr was being stoned to death. While he knelt on the ground, he looked up into the heavens and cried, "I see Jesus standing on the right hand of God." And the light from heaven shone with such splendour upon his face that it was like that of an angel. And when we see Jesus, we shall be like Him. We shall not be made into His image like—1. A picture, which a painter desires above all things be placed in a right light. Some people can only exhibit holy charity in the house of prayer; but the reconciled children of God are to be conformed to the image of Jesus on the Exchange, in the factory, and the street. We do not need to be put into a particular light. 2. A statue. When we look at the figure of Wellington, who can imagine that grim statue ever crying, "Up Guards, and at 'em"? We are to have life and vigour. 3. An actor, when he is on the stage, feels for the moment that he is really the man he is representing; but eventually goes home a common man. But the true Christian does not wear a seamless robe and sandals; he is a living embodiment of Christ. (*W. Birch.*) *The true ideal of manhood:*—I. CHRIST IS THE GRAND IDEAL OF MANHOOD. "The image of His Son." Not the corporeal nor the mental image, but the moral character. This is—1. A perfect ideal. (1) He was without blemish. "He did no sin." His judge could find no fault in Him; and He challenged His enemies to convince Him of sin. (2) He possessed every virtue, grace, lofty aspiration. There have been men who have had many virtues, but they have been associated with many salient imperfections. Socrates, a model in some respects, was so inconsistent that, having spent his life in exposing popular superstitions, his last request was that a bird might be sacrificed to Esculapius. Cicero and Seneca had many virtues; but the one was infected with vanity, and the other was mean-spirited and greedy to a fault. So with the best of the old Hebrew men; and even apostles had their faults. But you cannot put your hand on a single flaw in Christ's character, nor point to an excellence that did not dwell in Him. (3) Not only had He all virtues, but all His virtues were harmonious. There is in Him an exquisite balancing of the passive and the active, the masculine and the feminine virtues. He is indignant, but never boisterous; tender, but never weak; resolute, but never obstinate; condescending, but never familiar. 2. It is a soul-approving Ideal. By the laws of man's moral constitution he is bound to approve of this Ideal. A man wants a mansion; the architect gives him a plan so accordant with his own taste that he is bound to accept it. Another man wants something cut in marble; the sculptor presents an object that comes up to his loftiest ideas, and he is bound to accept it. So man wants a model character; and God gives him an Ideal that meets his highest conceptions of the morally beautiful, and he is bound to accept Him. And all men alike. There are ideals in architecture, painting, poetry, costume, which some may admire, but others loathe. But here is an Ideal that commends itself to the deepest soul of every man. It fits every soul—no soul too small for it, no one too large. It is literally "the Desire of all nations," that for which humanity has been hungering through all ages and lands. 3. It is a universally attainable Ideal. A man may give an ideal of painting, and to practical men, and they may say it is too difficult to work out; but not so with this Ideal of character. The most imitable character is that which is—(1) The most admirable. We imitate only what we admire. (2) The most transparent. There are characters so misty that you cannot discern the principles that rule them; these you cannot imitate. (3) The most unchangeable. A fickle character would be beyond your imitation. Christ answers in the highest degree all these conditions. II. MAN'S CONFORMITY TO THIS IDEAL IS GOD'S PREDESTINATION. Whom did He foreknow? Not some men, but all men; not some things, but all things. The idea is, that all the men He foreknew He ordained to have one grand Ideal of character to aim at and to conform to. God has predestinated that all men, to have health, must attend to certain conditions; that all men shall commence their

existence in infancy, shall go on through the various stages, and in the end go back to dust. And likewise God has foreordained that all men shall form their character after the Ideal of excellence embodied in Christ. This is the grand purpose of God in relation to humanity. Conclusion: Learn from this—1. The transcendent value of the four Gospels. In other parts of the Bible you are brought into the presence of legislators, historians, prophets, apostles. But here you are brought into the presence of Christ Himself. Elsewhere you have scattered star-beams; but here you have the Sun Himself. 2. The grand work of the Christian preacher. To exhibit Christ, who is the Chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely, and to urge men to love Him. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God, in the moral restoration of man*:—This passage has been the battleground of Calvinism and Arminianism. The best way to get a clear idea of such controverted passages, is to ignore the conflicting opinions that they have started, and study them in the light of common sense, the light of their context, the light of the general scope of biblical teaching, and in humble dependence upon the Spirit for help. If we look at these verses in this way we shall see nothing that is not found in connection with every other Divine operation. Any work which an intelligent being has accomplished—whether it be in husbandry, architecture, legislation, or science—always implies an executive agency, a presiding plan, and a previous knowledge on which the plan is based. These three things we have in the text concerning God, in the work of man's restoration. The result comes out of the agency; the agency comes out of the plan; the plan comes out of a previous knowledge. We infer—I. THAT MAN'S RESTORATION IS THE RESULT OF GOD'S AGENCY. God—1. Calls—(1) By the admonitions of conscience; (2) By the events of history; (3) By the ministry of His word; (4) By the strivings of His Spirit. He calls sometimes through the thundering voice of law, and sometimes through the melting accents of love. 2. Justifies. Justification is a forensic term, but it does not convey forensic ideas. An accused person in the court of human judicature is justified when the verdict of "Not guilty" is returned; and he may be pronounced "Not guilty" on three different grounds—(1) Actual innocence. (2) Regretted accident. He might have committed the act, but contrary to wish. (3) Judicial ignorance, or failure on the part of the judge and jury to get at all the evidence. But no man, before God, could be pronounced "Not guilty" on any of these grounds. All that evangelical justification means is, that God treats the guilty as if they had never sinned—overlooking the past. 3. Glorifies. Man's body, intellect, character, and condition, are now inglorious. God will glorify the whole. "We shall be like Him." II. THAT GOD'S AGENCY IS GOVERNED BY A PLAN. Some beings act from instinct, impulse, habit; but God acts from plan. 1. What is this plan? It is to save men. (1) By assimilating them to the image of Christ. "He also did predestinate," &c.; that they should be governed by the same principles that govern Him; animated by His Spirit; consecrated to the same great cause for which He gave His life. (2) By subjugating them to the authority of Christ. "That He might be the first-born among many brethren!" 2. Now, Paul would have referred God's agency in any other department to an eternal plan. As a pious man, he would refer everything that was good to God; and as an intelligent man, he would refer everything to the plan of God. Had he been writing on agriculture, he would have traced every blade and flower and plant that grew to the predestination of God. But he was writing of man's salvation, and it was only to his purpose to refer it to predestination in connection with that. Predestination is not a dream of the schoolmen, or a dogma of Calvin, but an eternal law of the universe. III. THAT GOD'S PLAN IS FOUNDED ON A THOROUGH FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE SAVED. "Whom He did foreknow" does not refer to all creatures, although God does foreknow all creatures. Nor does it refer to mankind in general, although God does foreknow all that shall happen to all men. But it refers to those spoken of in the preceding verse, and the whole chapter, as loving Him, as being His sons, &c. Note, in relation to this foreknowledge—(1) That it does not interfere with the free agency of the good. A. might have such a thorough knowledge of B.'s temperament and tendencies, that he might predict with certainty that B. would, under certain circumstances, adopt a certain line of action; yet if B. knew not the knowledge of A., he could not by any possibility have any influence upon his conduct. The fact, in like manner, that God knows all about me, all that I shall ever do, has no necessary influence upon my line of action. The conduct of the Jews at the crucifixion of Christ is an illustration. (2) That it is a ground of security for the good. We often form plans from partial knowledge, and no sooner endeavour to carry them out than circumstances, never foreseen,

baffle us; so that we are obliged to abandon our projects. But not so with God. His plan is based upon a thorough knowledge of all future contingencies. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 30. **Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called.**—*The golden chain*:—This consists of several links. The middle portion of it hangs down to earth, and comes into the view of men; but the ends of it are fastened to the two eternities and are both hidden. Note:—I. THE UNBROKEN SUCCESSION OF STEPS IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF GOD. Calling and justification are the principal links, but not all the links; they are sufficient, however, to show that between the eternity of purpose and the eternity of glorification there is no flaw or fracture. We gather from this view of the subject that to get possession of any one link is to get all the links—the unseen as well as the seen—and consequently the whole chain. "Calling" carries with it "justification" and glorification on the one hand, and predestination on the other. II. THE CO-EXTENSIVE UNIFORMITY OF ITS SUCCESSIVE REALISATIONS. Every link of the chain is equally comprehensive in the space it covers. The same subjects are handed over at every stage of the progress to the stage that follows. There is no reduction of the number as the process goes on; and if we leave out all intermediate steps, we may say, "Whom He did foreknow, them He also glorified." Any two terms of the series may be brought into an equation, and if we wish to satisfy ourselves of our predestination, or of our salvation hereafter, then we have only to be clear about our interest in the calling, or in the justification. The unknown quantity may thus be determined by the known, because they are equivalents. Observe that "glorified," like all the other expressions, is in the past tense. And this is used to express the certain and inseparable connection between the different progressive steps in the enumeration, or because what God has determined to do may be said to be done already. There is no tense to express the activity of God, with whom past, present, and future are an eternal now. But besides this, in Christ our salvation is always complete (Eph. ii. 5, 6). III. HOW ENTIRELY FROM BEGINNING TO END THE WHOLE WORK IS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD! Man acts no part. He is merely the subject. If we turn, however, to chap. x. 14, we have another chain which also begins with God and ends in glory; but there the aspect is human. Both are important. God works by instruments, but the success of the instruments are in His hands. Both these passages require to be taken together, in order to furnish a complete account of the process of salvation. Conclusion: Do not permit yourselves to be bewildered by the deep things of God's eternal purpose and decrees. Rather seek to strike into the line of salvation at the calling of God. God calls you to believe on Christ, and if "you call upon the name of the Lord you shall be saved," and only as you make your calling sure do you make your election sure. (*P. Strutt*). *Predestination and calling*:—The book of God's decrees is closed against the curiosity of man. "The lion of the tribe of Judah 'only' hath prevailed to open the book and break the seven seals thereof." How then am I to know whether I am predestinated or no? Until this question be answered my heart cannot rest. The answer is that God has published that page of the sacred decree whereon the character of the predestinated is recorded in His Word: "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called." And if thou be called, it follows as a natural inference thou art predestinated. There are two kinds of callings. The first is the general call, which is given to every one that heareth the Word (Matt.; Isa. lv. 1; Prov. viii. 4); but the call of the text is personal. It is one that is heard and obeyed. Note:—I. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CALL. 1. It is precisely similar to the case of Lazarus. The sinner is dead in sin. Sovereign mercy comes and cries, "Come forth!" and that man lives. "Well," cries one, "but what are the words which Christ uses when He calls a sinner from death?" Why, any words. There came unto this hall a man to whom the simple reading of the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," was the means of his quickening. He said within himself, "Does Jesus love me? then I must love Him." 2. While the sinner is dead in sin, he is alive enough to oppose God, as we see in the case of Saul of Tarsus. Let Peter say, "Saul, why dost thou oppose Christ? The time shall come when thou shalt yet be His disciple," and Saul would laugh him to scorn. But when Christ dealt with him, he fell to the ground, and in a few days the persecutor becomes the preacher. 3. The effectual call may be illustrated in its sovereignty by the case of Zaccheus. There were many better men in the city than he. Why call him? Simply because the call of God comes to unworthy sinners. 4. To illustrate this call in its effects, take the case of Abraham. What a trial to Abraham's faith when he had to leave

all that was so dear to him, and go he knew not whither! And yet God had a goodly land for him, and intended greatly to bless him. 5. When effectual calling comes to a man, at first he may not know it. You remember the case of Samuel, who mistook God's voice for Eli's. II. And now as a matter of EXAMINATION let each man judge himself by certain characteristics of the calling. It is—1. A holy calling (2 Tim. i. 9). If you are living in sin, you are not called. 2. A high calling (Phil. iii. 13, 14). Has then your calling lifted up your heart and set it upon things above? 3. A heavenly calling (Heb. iii. 1). Is thy calling a call to heaven as well as from heaven? 4. A call, not to the righteous, but to sinners. 5. A call out of darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Pet. ii. 9). 6. A call to liberty (Gal. v. 13). 7. A call to the fellowship of Christ (1 Cor. i. 9). III. CONSOLATION. 1. If I am called, then I am predestinated, there is no doubt about it. The scheme of salvation is like the chain which we see at horse-ferries, fixed into one staple on this side of the river, and into another at the other side, but the greater part of the chain is under water. You only see it as the boat moves on, and as the chain is drawn out of the water by the force that propels the boat. I can see that part of the chain, which is named "calling," but blessed be God, that is joined to the side that is called "election," and to the side called "glorification." 2. If a man be called, he will certainly be saved at last (chap. xi. 29). (*C. H. Spurgeon*). *Called of God*:—I. THE NATURE OF THIS CALLING. There are two calls of God. 1. The outward call of the gospel. "Many are called, but few are chosen." To know how ineffectual this often is, I need only look around me. How many sat here ten, twenty, forty years ago, and here they still sit, quite unaffected (Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32). 2. An inward and effectual call. By this call the sinner's heart becomes softened, his mind enlightened, his will subdued. While others play about the net of the gospel, he enters into it, and is saved thereby. The outward call often brings men into the profession of Christ; the inward call always brings men into the possession of Christ. It is a call—(1) From sin to holiness. (2) From the world to Christ. (3) From danger to glory. II. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS IS EFFECTED. 1. The operations of God's providence. (1) Everything in nature God makes to speak; the heavens declare His glory, the firmament showeth forth His handiwork. (2) Then there is the voice of conscience, and God makes this a means of effectual calling, by making it speak so loud that the man cannot resist. (3) Sometimes He employs the voice of affliction. "Hear ye the rod, and Him that hath appointed it." 2. The preaching of the gospel. 3. The influences of the Holy Spirit. Ministers knock at the door of men's hearts, but the Spirit keeps the key; and He unlocks the door and enters in. III. THE PROPERTIES OF THIS CALLING. 1. It is a powerful call. The Turkish ambassador wished to see Mahomet the second's scimitar, by which it was said he had accomplished such wonderful exploits; when he showed it to him, he said, "I don't see anything different in it from others." And he immediately replied, "The virtue of the weapon depends upon the strength of my arm, and the wisdom and the power with which I have used it." It is precisely so with the gospel. In this call nothing less than "the arm of the Lord" will do. Must not that be mighty which conquers the proud heart, subdues the stubborn will, and enlightens the dark understanding? 2. A heavenly call (Heb. iii. 1). 3. "A high calling" (Phil. iii. 14). 4. An immutable calling (chap. xi. 29). Conclusion: Admire and magnify—1. The exceeding grace of God towards you in—(1) The freeness of this call. (2) The honour of this call. 2. Take pains clearly to ascertain your calling. Two things certify it. He who is called of God—(1) Responds to God's call. (2) Is deaf to other calls. And further, shall I not say, pity such as are uncalled? 3. Those who feel you are still uncalled, see the misery of your condition. It is said that the cure is half effected when the physician or the patient knows what causes the disease. (1) Put yourselves in the way to be called. The same feet that carry you to the theatre, and to places of wretchedness, can bring you to the house of God. (2) Beg of God to call you effectually. ((*J. Sherman.*) *The folly of exclusively regarding predestination*:—Did you ever hear of a certain Ludovic, an Italian philosopher, who had imbibed the idea of predestination to the exclusion of every other truth? He could see nothing but fate, and thought religious activity useless. A physician who attended him during his sickness, a godly man, desiring to convince him of his error, said to him as he stood by his bedside, "I shall not send you any medicine, I shall not attend to you; in fact, I shall not call any more, because if you are to live you will live, and if you are to die you will die; and therefore it is of no use my attending to you." He went his way, but in the watches of the night, Ludovic, who had been

the slave of a notion, turned it over and saw the folly of it: he saw that there were other truths besides predestination, and he acted like a sane man. As God accomplishes the healing of the sick by the use of medicines, He usually accomplishes also the saving of souls by the means of grace; and as I, not knowing whether I am elected to be healed or not, yet go to the physician, so I, not knowing whether I am elect to be saved or not, yet will go to Jesus as He bids me go, and put my trust in Him, and I hope I shall be accepted in Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Seeking and election go together*:—There was wit and wisdom, and a whole volume of thought in the old negro's reply to Governor Vance, who asked him, "Well, now, Joe, do you really believe in this election of God that you speak of?" "Indeed I do, Massa Vance," was the serious reply. "Well, do you think I am elected to be saved?" "Scasly know, Massa; but I never heard of any one being 'lected who wasn't a candidate." And there is the point—humble seeking and election to grace go together. **Whom He called, them He also justified.**—*Of the benefits of effectual calling*:—I. IN THIS LIFE. 1. There are three leading benefits which Christians partake of here. (1) They are all justified (chap. viii. 1). (2) They are all adopted children of God (Eph. i. 5). They are brought out of the devil's family, and made members of the blood-royal of heaven (Eph. iii. 15). (3) They are all sanctified (1 Cor. i. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 7). 2. There are other benefits which accompany or flow from these. For these come not alone, but each of them is the opening of a treasure to the called, the striking up of a fountain, that runs out in many streams (Eph. i. 3). (1) Reconciliation with God (Rom. v. 1). (2) Access to God, as children to a Father (Eph. iii. 12). The war being ended, and peace concluded, the communication betwixt heaven and earth is opened. (3) Freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan (John viii. 32). (4) A right to eternal life (Rom. viii. 17; Acts xx. 32; 2 Cor. v. 1). II. IN THE LIFE TO COME. These are comprehended in one word, "glorification." At death the converted soul is received into heaven; at the last day his body will be gloriously raised, and both soul and body made perfectly happy for ever (2 Thess. ii. 14). III. USES. 1. Of information. This doctrine lets us see—(1) That the gospel is the best news that ever was heard in the world, and the most excellent offer that ever was made to poor sinners (Eph. iii. 8). (2) That God deals very liberally and kindly with His people that answer His call. They get much in hand, and yet far more in hope (Psa. lxxxiv. 11), and they can never be shaken out of their privileges (Rom. xi. 29; Heb. xii. 28). (3) Whatever men lose by complying with and following the gospel-call, they are gainers (Phil. iii. 8). He was a wise merchant that sold all to buy the pearl of great price. 2. Of exhortation. (1) To unconverted sinners. Comply with the gospel-call. (*a*) While ye do not, ye have no part or lot in these benefits. Ye are not justified; the sentence of condemnation is standing in force against you (Gal. iii. 10; John iii.). Ye are none of God's children, but of the devil's (John viii. 44). Ye are not sanctified. A form of godliness ye may have, but the power of it ye are strangers to. (*b*) If ye will come to Christ on His call, ye shall partake of all these benefits. If your sins were never so great and many, they shall be pardoned (Isa. lv. 7). Ye shall be the children of God through Jesus Christ (John i. 12). Ye shall be made holy (1 Cor. vi. 11). (2) To converted sinners that have answered the call. Labour to know your great privileges for time and eternity (2 Pet. i. 10). 2. Be thankful for these privileges (1 John iii. 1). 3. Walk worthy of the vocation, that is, humbly, holily, heavenly, contentedly, patiently, and cheerfully, in hopes of the glory that is to be revealed. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) **Whom He justified, them He also glorified.**—*Justification and glory*:—I. JUSTIFICATION is—1. An act of God passed upon a person needing it, consequently upon a person who could not justify himself. The guiltless need no justification; they have it already. "He justifies." 2. The result of sovereign grace. "By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified." I cannot earn justification. 3. Has for its matter and means the righteousness of Jesus Christ, set forth in His vicarious obedience, both in life and death. Obedience alone can justify, and where can we have it but in Jesus our substitute? 4. The practical way of its application is by faith. It is not by repenting that we are justified, but by believing. 5. An instantaneous act. Sanctification needs a whole life, justification needs no appreciable time. The sinner looks to Christ, his sin is gone fn a moment. Sanctification, moreover, progresses or declines; but justification is complete. 6. An infallible act. "It is God that justifieth"; where, then, can there be a mistake? 7. An irreversible act. Once justified you shall never be condemned. 8. It is generally attended with such a flood of joy, that I think you must know it. Bunyan's pilgrim did not lose the burden off his back and not know

it; but as soon as it was gone, he gave three great leaps for joy, and went on his way singing. II. GLORY. How that golden word has been debased in the coinage of human speech. It has come to mean the glitter of war's helmet, and the noise of the crowd's hurrahs. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." They follow close together. A little stream divides them, but the apostle says nothing about it, so we will not say anything. Death is not worth thinking of, it is swallowed up in victory. There is—1. The glory which disembodied spirits are enjoying now. The moment that the soul leaves the body, the justified soul is in glory. Romanism holds that some of the best saints go to heaven when they die; but that the great mass of inferior saints must undergo purgation. But the dying thief was no eminent saint. The only good deed that we ever read of his doing was when he claimed Christ as Lord, and rebuked his fellow-thief for slandering the Saviour. Yet, hear the words, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Nor is this the only instance. We find, when Lazarus died, that he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Stephen expected the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit, and the apostle Paul was in a strait betwixt two, being willing "to depart and to be with Christ." In Eph. iii. 15, the apostle mentions the whole family as being in heaven and earth, but he speaks of none of the Lord's people being in limbo. Those whom we are bidden to follow, in Heb. vi. 12, are now inheriting the promises. Let the voice of God decide the case for ever (Rev. xiv. 13). The glory of paradise was that God walked there in the cool of the evening with His creatures; and the glory of heaven is, that "they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light," and the days of their mourning shall be ended. 2. The resurrection glory which they will enjoy when soul and body shall be reunited. This will be a joyful meeting. Soul and body often quarrel here; but they are always loath to part, which proves how true is the wedlock between them; but what a happy meeting it will be when there will be no more jars between this husband and wife, when the soul and body shall be merged together in the perfection of union. Then, whatever may be the splendour of Christ will be the splendour of His people. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY. 1. A justified person has in him the bud of glory. What is glory? (1) It is a state of perfect peace. "Therefore, being justified, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (2) It is a state of rest. "We, which have believed, do enter into rest." (3) It is a state of safety. When sin is pardoned, I am secure. (4) It is a state of nearness to God; He hath made us nigh by the blood of His Son. (5) It is communion with Christ. But we have already boldness and access through Jesus. Inside the acorn there is the whole oak, and within justification there is heaven, with all its light, life, love, joy, and security. Glory is begun below. 2. Justification is a claim to glorification. He that is right in the eye of the law, has a claim to the protection and smile of the law. 3. Justification would be but a very sorry gift of God, if it did not involve glory. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 31. **What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**—*If God be for us none can be effectually against us*:—First, here's the supposition "If God be for us." This "if" is not an if of doubting or ambiguity, but rather of certainty and assurance. That God is, indeed, for all true believers, cannot be denied (Psa. xlvi. 7, cxxiv. 1, cxviii. 6, 7). There are two manner of ways especially wherein God may be said to be for His servants: First, by way of allowance, God is so far said to be with His people, as He does own them and approve of them. And this again extends itself to three particulars more, wherein it is considerable: First, the persons of His servants, God is for them (Psa. cxlvii. 10, 11; Mal. iii. 16). Secondly, He is for them in their principles; the doctrines, and truths, and graces which are eminent in them, and whereby they are acted and moved. These God does own them in and approve them for; whatever is of God's planting, it is of God's owning; He will maintain His own work. Thirdly, He is for them also in their practices and actions. The ways of good men as good, and as living in the power of religion, are so far forth allowed of by God. He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men, as the apostle speaks in chap. xiv. 18. Secondly, God is for all true believers, not only by way of allowance, but also by way of assistance; not only to own them, but to help them, and to be useful to them for their greatest advantage. The ground hereof is laid in two particulars: First, in regard of His interest which He has in them, as they do belong unto Him; interest it does engage affection, and so consequently endeavour and assistance. Secondly, there is

not only his relation, but also His covenant; persons who are confederates, they are assistant one to another. For answer hereunto we must say thus much, that God is indeed with His servants, but with these qualifications:—First, in His own time. Secondly, in His own manner. Thirdly, upon His own terms and conditions we must take in that also. And that is of faith, and repentance, and new obedience, and close walking with Him, as we may see (2 Chron. xv. 2). It holds also as to engagement; if God be with us it concerns us to be with Him, and to carry ourselves answerably towards Him we should own Him, and all that is His; it is that which He both requires and expects from us. There are two things in the world which God is especially interested in, and whatever is done for them He counts as done to Himself, His truth, and His children; goodness itself, and those who are good. Now, therefore, when we own these, and are for them, we own Him, and shall have the reward of it bestowed upon us. The second is the inference, or that which is deduced from it, in these words, "Who can be against us?" Who can be against us? What a strange question is this? Who rather cannot be against? There's none who are so likely or ready to have any against them than those who are most for God, or God for them. Let any men look after religion, and they shall be sure to have enough against them. First, who can be against us? That is, who can be rationally against us? It is not so much what any are *de facto*, but what they are *de jure*, not what they are in the thing itself, but what they ought to be, and what is fitting for them. Secondly, who can be against us? That is, who can be against us effectually. All the enmity of men, it is a limited and confined enmity, because their hearts, and hands, and affections, and endeavours, are all at God's disposing. First, Satan, the great and grand enemy of all, he shall not prevail against us. Secondly, evil men who are subservient and instrumental to Satan, they shall not prevail neither in all their attempts and endeavours in the Church. Now there is a threefold ground whereupon this truth does proceed and may be made good to us: First, from God's omnipotency. Secondly, from God's immutability; therefore those whom God is for can have none to prevail against them, because those whom He is truly for He is for them for ever. Thirdly, from God's eternity; He is one who ever continues, therefore those whom He is for, they are sure to have none against them. The third and last may be this, Who can be against us? That is, who can be safely against us? who can be against us with any convenience, or peace, or comfort, or contentment to themselves. (*Thos. Horton, D.D.*) *God for us*:—"These things." The only question as to the meaning of this expression is, whether it covers the whole Epistle, or is to be confined to this chapter or to the immediately preceding verses. In any case the emphasis of the appeal must be chiefly on the last—things which are so much above the reach of the carnal mind, and so likely to produce a feeling of wonder or revolt. There the things are; they cannot be reasoned away. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. I. THE FACT. The world will have much to say against the doctrines of grace. "But if God be for us," then we can afford to have the world against us. The plan of mercy which determines the way of salvation may surpass all human wisdom and experience, but if it be God's plan it will take effect. The method of grace by which the sinner's heart is renewed may surpass the carnal judgment. Yet if it be God's method it will work His purpose in spite of man's ridicule and unbelief. The subserviency of Providence to the purposes of redemption will work itself out, though men may be blind to the issue. Now let us apply this to our—1. Doctrinal opinions. God is for us when our views are in accordance with the Scripture. Reason, experience, received opinions, learning and wisdom, may seem to be against us, but God is more than all. "Let God be true and every man a liar." 2. The interest and safety of attainments and privileges of the believer's state. The world has much to say upon the subject of the work of grace. There are some who resolve the facts of Christian experience into disease or deception. According to our view this work of grace is God's most beautiful and costly work. Now, if we are indeed God's workmanship, if what we call the work of grace be indeed the work of the Holy Spirit, then we may say in the view of the world's contumely and scorn, "If God be for us, who then can be against us?" 3. The believer's safety. The text does not imply the absence of danger and opposition. Both Scripture and experience teach us the contrary. The meaning is that nothing shall prevail against us (2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8). 4. The interest which believers have in the plan of Providence. According to the teaching of the apostle, the entire administration of this present world is determined in the interest of Christ and His Church. Yet

how strangely does it appear to be contradicted by the facts around us. How often is the cause of slavery and tyranny seen to triumph over the cause of freedom or piety! But faith, when asked, What shall we say to these things? is still ready with its reply, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" II. ITS INFLUENCE. It will produce—1. An independence, in matters of conscience and religion, of human authority. Independence of man is necessary to a thorough dependence on God (Acts iv. 19). Thus Luther, "Here I stand, I cannot recant; I rest on the Word of God. Let God see to it." 2. A spirit of patience under the pressure of trial. If God is with us, on our side, why should we faint in our minds? 3. Confidence of the final triumph of the Christian's interest, and the clearing up of all the dark clouds that rest upon the ways of God. Iniquity shall not always prevail. (*P. Strutt.*) *God is for us*:—I. THE QUESTION SUPPOSES THE EXISTENCE OF A COMBINED AND POWERFUL HOSTILITY TO THE CHRISTIAN. The Bible declares this, observation confirms it, and experience demonstrates it. The believer may be compared to an individual who has thrown off allegiance to his king, has disowned his country, and refuses obedience to its laws, yet continues to dwell in the land he had renounced, and hard by the sovereign he has foresworn. 1. Satan is against us. All his force, malice, subtlety, and skill, and all his myrmidons are marshalled in opposition to the interests of the child of God. 2. The world, too, is against us. It will never forgive the act by which we broke from it. Nor can it forget that the life of the Christian is a constant and solemn rebuke of it (John xv. 18, 19). 3. Our own heart is against us. II. BUT GOD IS FOR US. It was this assurance that calmed the fears and strengthened the faith of Abraham (Gen. xv. 1); Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 24); Elisha's servant (2 Kings vi. 15, 16); David (Psa. xxvii. 1); Jeremiah (Jer. i. 17–19); and Paul (Acts xviii. 9, 10). And Christ's last words were, "Lo, I am with you alway; even unto the end." 1. God must be on the side of His people since He has, in an everlasting covenant, made Himself over to be their God. There is nothing in God, in His dealings, or in His providences, but what is on the side of His people. 2. Not the Father only, but the Son of God is also on our side. Has He not amply proved it? Who, when there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, undertook our cause, and embarked all His grace and glory in our salvation? 3. And so of the Holy Spirit. Who quickened us when we were dead; taught us when we were ignorant, comforted us when we were distressed? III. It may then well be asked, "WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?" The law cannot, for the Law-fulfiller has magnified and made it honourable. Justice cannot, for Jesus has met its demands, and His resurrection is a full discharge of all its claims; nor sin, nor Satan, nor men, nor suffering, nor death, since the condemnation of sin is removed, and Satan is vanquished, and the ungodly are restrained, and suffering works for good, and the sting of death is taken away. We will fear nothing, therefore, but the disobedience that grieves and the sin that offends God. Fearing this, we need fear nothing else (Isa. xli. 10). Conclusion: 1. The subject, if most consolatory to the Christian, is, in its converse, a solemn one to the unregenerate. It is an awful thing not to have God for us. And if God is not for us there is no neutral course—He must be against us. 2. Would we always have God for us? then let us aim to be for God. God deals with us His creatures by an equitable rule (Lev. xxvi. 27, 28). (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *God for us*:—I. HOW GOD IS FOR US. 1. Because He hath predestinated His people to be conformed to the image of His own dear Son. "No weapon which is formed against thee shall prosper," &c. 2. He has called us. When Abraham left the land of his forefathers and went forth, not knowing whither he went, he was quite safe, because God had called him. 3. He has justified us. All the people of God are wrapped about with the righteousness of Christ, and God regards them with the same affection as that wherewith He loves His only-begotten Son. 4. He hath also glorified us, "for He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He will also glorify us, for He hath prepared a kingdom for us from the foundation of the world. But though this brings in the context, I cannot bring out the depth of the meaning of how God is for us. He was for us before the worlds; He was for us, or else He would never have given His Son. He has been for us in many struggles—how could we have held on until now had it not been so? He is for us with all the omnipotence of His love and with all His boundless wisdom. II. WHO ARE AGAINST US? 1. Man. How man has struggled against man! We do not in this age feel the cruelty of man to the same extent as the Reformers did, but in many cases we are misrepresented, slandered, abused, ridiculed for truth's sake. Well did Jesus say, "Beware of men." "Behold I send

you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." But what are they all? Suppose every man were against you, you might say, as Athanasius did, "I have truth on my side, and therefore against the world I stand." Of what use was the malice of men against Martin Luther? Men are only puppets moved by God's hand; therefore be not afraid of them. Latimer greatly displeased Henry VIII. by his boldness in a sermon, and was ordered to make an apology on the following Sabbath. After reading his text he began:—"Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease; but then consider well, Hugh, from whence thou comest; upon whose message thou art sent! Even by the mighty God! who is all-present, and who beholdeth all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully." He then proceeded with the same sermon, but with more energy. Such courage should all God's children show when they have to do with man. Modesty is very becoming, but an ambassador of God must recollect there are other virtues besides modesty. 2. The world. This world is like a great field covered with brambles and thorns and thistles, and the Christian is continually in danger of rending his garments or cutting his feet. Luther used to say there was no love lost between him and the world, for the world hated him and he hated it no less. Care little for this world, but think much of the world to come. This poor quicksand, get off it lest it swallow thee up; but yonder rock of ages, build thou on it, and thou shalt never suffer loss. 3. The flesh, the worst of the three. We should never need to fear man nor the world if we had not this to contend with. Some have an irritable temper, others a covetous disposition. Some have to fight against levity, others against pride or despondency. But despite all this we shall one day be found without fault before the throne of God. 4. The devil. He knows our weak points, he understands how to cover up the hook with the bait; and how to take one this way and the other the opposite. But what matters the devil when we have this text. The devil is mighty, but God is almighty. III. WHO ARE NOT AGAINST US. 1. God the Father. He cannot be against His own children. 2. God the Son. How sweetly He has been for us! The Cross says, "Christ is for you," and to-day the tenor of His plea before the throne is, "I am for you." When He shall come a second time the trumpet will ring out, "Christ is for you." 3. The Holy Spirit as the Comforter, the Illuminator, the giver of life. 4. The holy angels, who are our ministers. 5. The law of God, once our enemy, is now our friend. Conclusion:—1. There is an opposite to all this. If God be against you, who can be for you? 2. But if God be for you, you ought to be for God. If God has espoused your cause, ought you not to espouse His? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *With God enough*:—The inscription on the front of Downing Hall, North Wales, translated, runs thus, "Without God, without all; with God, enough." *The apostle's challenge*:—I. ITS STRENGTH. This consists in the grounds on which it rests. 1. The all-sufficiency of God. 2. The covenant relationship of God to His people. "If God be for us." 3. The demonstrations of love which God has already given (ver. 32). 4. God's acquittal and acceptance of His people, as the moral Governor of men (ver. 33). 5. The completeness of Christ's mediatorial work (ver. 34). II. ITS SPIRIT. This will be illustrated if we contemplate—1. The circumstances under which the words are uttered. This is the language of a man who says, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 2. The boldness of his defiance (vers. 38, 39). 3. The objects of his defiance. Death, life, angels, &c. 4. The influence it exerts.—It leads to patience in suffering, and cheerfulness in doing, the will of God. (*T. Ely.*) *The safety of the saints*:—There are two ways in which a man may be deprived, against his will, of his privileges and possessions—by the lawless violence of the oppressor, or by legal forfeiture for his offences. And, if these two ways are effectually provided against, there is nothing to fear. Our apostle seems to have an eye to this, and shows us that the child of God has nothing to fear from—I. VIOLENCE. Let us look at—1. The premises of his argument. From which we gather—(1) That God is a Friend. "If God be for us." It is something to have a friend at all, *i.e.* one who would help us if he could: but the believer's friend is the mighty God. (2) What sort of a friend God has been. "He spared not His own Son," &c. See what a length His friendship carried Him! (3) What sort of a friend God will be. The future may be judged of from the past. "He spared not His own Son; how then shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!" 2. The conclusion—"Who can

be against us?" But here occurs a difficulty. "God is for us." Most true. "None can be against us." Is that a necessary consequence? Then, again, a conclusion, though illogical, might yet be a truth. Is that the case here? "None can be against us." Why, our apostle himself speaks of "many adversaries." The seeming difficulty is unreal. (1) The true idea is that the friendship of God shall so completely protect us from all our enemies, that our interests shall be as secure as if our enemies had no existence. You know what desperate attempts were made by Satan to ruin Job; but God was for Job, and he was not ruined. For the same reason he was foiled in the case of Peter, and his messenger in the case of Paul. (2) But sometimes the mere tone of a denial implies an affirmation of the contrary. Had we heard the apostle, his exulting tone would have conveyed the meaning (ver. 28). "Who can help being for us, when God is for us?" God was for Joseph, and so were his unnatural brethren. God was for the Church; and so were the princes of the world when they slew the Lord of glory! God is for the believer; and so is Satan, who but tries his faith. God is for the dying saint; and so is death, which hastens his translation to Paradise. II. LEGAL PROCESS BEFORE THE BAR OF GOD. 1. The first step in a legal process is to produce a charge; and so the apostle inquires, "Who shall lay anything," &c. What! have not many things, in all ages, been alleged against the righteous? No doubt. But—(1) Irrelevant charges will not do. Sometimes, *e.g.*, the accusation has been that they have kept God's laws and proclaimed His truth. But such charges are irrelevant. They make that an offence which is a duty. (2) Nor will false charges do. Elijah was called a troubler of Israel. But the troubler of Israel was the prophet's accuser. Drunkenness was imputed to the apostles, when they were under the influence of the Holy Ghost. Disloyalty and sedition are hackneyed imputations. And so is hypocrisy. Such charges may be safely despised by the Christian. They are relevant, indeed; but they are false, and God will not listen to them. (3) Has the child of God, then, no sins? Ah, he will never deny it. What then becomes of the text? Stay; it asks, "Who" is to bring the charge? Is a fellow-sinner competent to undertake the task? No. There must be clean hands, in the first place, and a commission and warrant, in the second; and a fellow-sinner has neither the one nor the other. None but God can do it, and He never will; for they are God's elect. Their names would not have been written in heaven if God was going to appear against them. 2. The next stage is that of the verdict—Guilty, or not guilty. The apostle has already shown that there can be no charge; but, if there were one, the believer will not be convicted of it. "It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" &c. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (1) They cannot be condemned, when nothing is laid to their charge. But then God is just, and justice demands the punishment of sin. The charge was made, but Christ bore it. For God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2) But what if no punishment followed? Was God to turn His wrath upon His own Son? Yes, "it is Christ that died"—died in thy room to expiate thy sins. (3) But was the punishment adequate—the expiation complete? If not, the believer may tremble still—he is not beyond the reach of condemnation. Christ "is risen again." But He would not be risen if He had not given justice every jot and tittle of its due. (4) But can we be sure that the sacrifice of Christ was accepted? The circumstance that the Son acted by the Father's commandment, shows that the sacrifice, if in itself complete and sufficient, must have been well-pleasing and acceptable; and to prove it beyond all doubt, Paul says, "Who is even at the right hand of God." (5) But we have not yet reached the end of the believer's guarantees. "Who also maketh intercession for us." We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. And if we are ever condemned, it is Christ that will do it. But an advocate never condemns his own clients. And the apostle announces the happy issue of his advocacy when he tells us, "It is God that justifieth." 3. When a criminal process succeeds there is execution. Suppose the believer condemned, all that remained would be to inflict the punishment. Yes: but there would be an insurmountable obstacle. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The believer's confidence has no cause to be shaken, unless he can be separated from Christ's love. In order to this—(1) You must prove that love to be nothing but a dream. But surely Christ's death is sufficient to prove its reality. (2) That love must be made to cease. It is not uncommon for the human love to fade. But Christ's love is everlasting. "Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. (3) One way remains. Who shall prevail against the believer in spite of Christ's love?

Love can do little, however great it may be in itself, if it has not corresponding power at its back. But the love of Christ has omnipotence at its command. "Shall tribulation, or distress," &c., separate? Nay. For (*a*) They are temporary evils. (*b*) The worst they can do is to separate the body from the soul for a season; but that is the indispensable and immediate preliminary to the full enjoying of the benefits of Christ's love, and therefore not a step towards our separation from it! Like the puny insects which mutilate themselves by striking with their stings, they are incapable of hurting us again. (*c*) The whole action and influence of these evils will be overruled for our good. Therefore, "in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." (*Andrew Gray.*) *The presence of God a source of courage:*—Why should I fear? Is man stronger than God? I go up to the Soudan alone, with an infinite Almighty God to direct and guide me, and am glad to so trust Him as to fear nothing; and indeed to feel sure of success. (*General Gordon.*) *Christian courage:*—Chrysostom before the Roman emperor was a beautiful example of Christian courage. The emperor threatened him with banishment if he still remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied, "Thou canst not, for the world is my Father's house; thou canst not banish me." "But I will slay thee," said the emperor. "Nay, but thou canst not," said the noble champion of the faith again; "for my life is hid with Christ in God." "I will take away thy treasures." "Nay, but thou canst not," was the retort; "for, in the first place, I have none that thou knowest of. My treasure is in heaven, and my heart is there." "But I will drive thee away from man, and thou shalt have no friend left." "Nay, and that thou canst not," once more said the faithful witness; "for I have a Friend in heaven, from whom thou canst not separate me. I defy thee; there is nothing thou canst do to hurt me." *The mightiness of God:*—When the army of Antigonus went into battle his soldiers were very much discouraged, and they rushed up to the general and said to him, "Don't you see we have few forces, and they have so many more?" and the soldiers were affrighted at the smallness of their number and the greatness of the enemy. Antigonus, their commander, straightened himself up and said with indignation and vehemence, "How many do you reckon me to be?" And when we see the vast armies arrayed against the cause of sobriety, it may sometimes be very discouraging, but I ask you, in making up your estimate of the forces of righteousness, I ask you how many do you reckon the Lord God Almighty to be? He is our Commander. The Lord of Hosts is His name. I have the best authority for saying that the chariots of God are twenty thousand, and the mountains are full of them.

Ver. 32. **He that spared not His own Son.**—*God's great gift the security for His other gifts:*—Note that—I. GOD HATH ALREADY GIVEN THE VERY GREATEST THING TO SET MY SALVATION AGOING, viz., what every parent who had but one beloved son would surely feel the greatest of his treasures. In human transactions the pledge is but a minute proportion of the complete performance, and yet there is a distinct hope awakened of the entire fulfilment, from the token that has thus been put into your hands. But in this transaction the pledge is more valuable to the Giver than all that He hath pledged Himself for. We may, indeed, feel that the joys of eternity may be of greater value than all the firstfruits and tokens in the shape of grace and growing meetness, here. But God feels that He has already given what to Himself was of the greatest value. II. THE DEEP AND MYSTERIOUS SUFFERING INCURRED AT THIS FIRST AND GREATEST STEP IN OUR SALVATION IS NOW OVER. The travail of Christ's soul hath already gone by; and now He has only to see of the fruit of this travail and be satisfied. When He set forth from glory on our world's restoration, He had persecution and cruel martyrdom before Him; but what He thus originated with pain, He has only now to prosecute in peace and triumph to its consummation. Will the Father who spared not His own Son a deep humiliation to commence the enterprise of our recovery now refuse to magnify Him, and bring the enterprise of Him who is the Captain of this glorious warfare to its most honourable termination? III. ALL WHICH GOD HATH DONE IN THE WORK OF OUR REDEMPTION HAS BEEN DONE ENTIRELY OF FREE WILL. It was not because He owed it to us, but because His own heart was set upon it. This makes it a wholly different case from that of a debtor who, after having made payment of so much, would like to get off from his obligation for the remainder. There is nought of this kind to stint the liberality of God. When He did give up His Son, it was because He so loved the world. It was because of God's longing desire after the world that He gave up His Son unto the sacrifice; and, after the sacrifice has been gone through,

He will not turn round upon His own favourite object, and recede from the world which He has done so much to save. That force of affection which bore down the obstacle that stood in its way will now bear onward with accelerated speed to the accomplishment of all the good that it is set upon. To do otherwise would be throwing away the purchase after the purchase-money had been given for it; and well may we be assured that after God has freely given such a price for our salvation, He will freely give all things necessary to make good that salvation. IV. WHEN HE GAVE UP HIS SON, IT WAS ON BEHALF OF SINNERS WITH WHOM AT THE TIME HE WAS AT VARIANCE. It was at the period when a blow had been inflicted on the dignity of His government, and a sore outrage laid on Heaven's high throne by the defiance of creatures whom its power could annihilate or sweep away. Now the state of matters is altered. The breach has been healed. The debt has been paid. And if God in the season of guilt gave up His Son, will He cease from giving now in the season of atonement? If, when nought ascended from the world but a smoke of abomination, the price of its redemption was freely surrendered, will there be no movement of grace now that there arises the incense of a sweet-smelling savour? And if in our state of condemnation, then, He delivered Him up for us all, is not the assurance doubly sure that, in our state of acceptance now, He will with Him freely give us all things? V. HE GAVE UP HIS SON AT A TIME WHEN MERCY WAS CLOSED IN AS IT WERE BY THE OTHER ATTRIBUTES OF HIS NATURE—when it had not yet found a way through justice and holiness of truth, and when it had to struggle against an obstacle high as the dignity of Heaven's throne. It was in fact on very purpose to open an avenue through this else impassable barrier that Christ went forth. And is not the inference as resistless as it is animating—that the same mercy which forced a passage for itself through all those difficulties will, now that they are cleared away, burst forth in freest exuberance among all those for whom it scaled the mountain of separation. He who gave His Son while Justice was yet unappeased, will freely give all things now that Justice is satisfied. Conclusion: But this subject is inexhaustible. It is not the preciousness of Christ as being Himself a gift that the text leads me to expatiate on. It is the goodness of it as a pledge of other gifts. There are other securities for this than those on which I have insisted that might well cause the believer to rejoice in it as in a treasure the whole value of which is inestimable. For will God stamp dishonour on this His own great enterprise, and leave unfinished that which He hath so laboriously begun? Will He hold forth the economy of grace as an impotent abortion to the scorn of His enemies? Never was foundation more surely laid, nor can we tell how many those unshaken props are by which it upholds the confidence of a believer. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The logic of redeeming love:*—First, to speak as it is expressed in the negative, "He spared not His own Son." First, take it in the first notion, as a word of bounty in reference to us; He did not spare Him, that is, He did not withhold Him; He was not unwilling to part with Him, or sparing to give Him. Now, for the better amplifying of this great gift to us, and the great love of God to us in it. We may take notice of it briefly in the several gradations of it, wherein it is considerable of us. First, for the kind of it. It was a Son: He spared not Him. There is many an one in the world that would be loth to part with a servant, such as he might be, but a son, that is somewhat more. There are a great many who could be content sometimes to spare many other things besides, so that you will be content to spare their children, or to let them to spare themselves. You know how it was with old Jacob, how loth he was to part with his son Benjamin. Secondly, for the propriety of it. As it was His Son which He did not spare, so it was His own Son too. He spared not Him. We see how all men are generally very indulgent of what belongs to themselves. Nurses and guardians and overseers are very often remiss and careless enough of other men's children which are committed to them, but their own are more indulged by them. His own Son—how so? Namely, by eternal and inexpressible generation, being of the same "substance with the Father, begotten of Him before all worlds." Thirdly, it was His only Son likewise; it was the only begotten of the Father (John i. 14). This is a farther amplification of it to us, where there is store and choice and variety; it is not so hard or difficult a matter as otherwise to part with some one, but to part with an only son, that is a great matter indeed. Lastly, it was His dear Son, the Son of His love, as He is called in Col. i. 13. Now what does all this teach us but to labour to work ourselves to the like disposition of spirit to God again? That we from henceforth should think nothing too good or too dear for Him. What can they spare for God that cannot spare Him a little time and opportunity for serving Him? It is a word of severity, and refers to Christ. He

did not spare Him, that is, He did not favour Him; He did not spare to punish or to afflict Him. First, in His body, He did not spare Him. Secondly, in His name, He did not spare Him. Thirdly, in His soul, He did not spare Him. The reason of it was this, because He did not look upon Him in His person, but rather in His office, so far forth as He bare the burthen of our sins and transgressions upon Him. Therefore let us own this perfect satisfaction of Christ to the justice of His Father, and His Father's general and universal punishing of Him, and not sparing Him at all. First, as it is a word of bounty, He did not spare to give Him. And secondly, as it is a word of severity, He did not spare to punish Him. Now the second is laid down in the affirmative or positive expression, which is in a sort included in the former: "But delivered Him up for us all." First, for the action itself—"He delivered Him up" (chap. iv. 25). There were three sorts of persons which had a hand in the delivering up of Christ. First, God delivered up His Son. Secondly, Christ delivered up Himself. Thirdly, Judas delivered up his Master. Now that which we have here exhibited to us is the former of these deliverings, to wit, God's delivering up of His Son—"He spared Him not, but delivered Him up." This He might be said to do two manner of ways especially. First, in regard of His eternal purpose and counsel. Secondly, in regard of His ordering and disposing of it in the fulness of time. But what did God deliver up this His Son unto? To the treachery of Judas, to the injustice of Pilate, to the malice of the Jews, to reproaches, and what not? The second is the persons it refers to, and who are more particularly concerned in it—"For us all." The second is the inference or improvement of this premised propitiation, in these words, "How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" First, take it simply and absolutely, as it lies in itself, and so there is this in it, that God will with Christ give all things freely to those who are true believers. There is here laid down a special privilege which does belong to the children of God. Wherein again there are three distinct particulars considerable. First, for the gift itself. This is here expressed to be all things (Psa. lxxxiv. 11). The second is the foundation of this gift, and that is, Christ with Him, while it is said here, "with Him." This may be taken three manner of ways. First, by way of eminency: "All things with Him," that is, all things in Him, as involved and implied. Secondly, by way of concomitancy: "All things with Him," that is, all things to Him, as added and subjoined. Thirdly, by way of conveyance: "All things with Him," that is, all things by Him, and through Him, and for Him, as dispensed and transmitted. The third is the manner or circumstance of donation; and that in our English translation is here expressed to be freely, "He will freely give us all things." This is somewhat, but yet not all, which is intended here in the text; the Greek word signifies two things especially, not only to give freely, but also to give favourably. First, He gives us all things freely; to take it as it is here in our translation, as God gives us Christ Himself, so He gives us all things else freely with Christ. And when it is said freely, we are to take it in the full extent of freeness, freely without our desire, and freely without our desert; of His own accord, and upon His mere grace. But then if we take freely in the latitude of our English idiom and propriety, so there is still somewhat more in it. Freely, that is, largely and plentifully, without diminution. "He giveth us all things richly to enjoy" (1 Tim. vi. 17). And freely, that is, readily and cheerfully, without restraint, not grudging, not repenting, not upbraiding. He gives us all things gratuitously. But then secondly, He gives to believers all things graciously, that is also, I say, here implied in the word in the text. When we say that God gives all things to His children favourably or graciously, there are two things in it; first, favourably, as to the principle. He gives them favourably, as to the principle, by intending favour to them in them, and giving them for that end. And He gives them favourably as to the effect, by making them favours, and doing them real good by them. Now further, secondly, we may look upon it in its connection and argumentatively, as inferred by rational consequence from that which went before. If God hath not spared His Son, but delivered Him up for us, we may well conclude that He will bestow all things else freely upon us. This is the main scope of the text, and the argument holds good upon a twofold ground. First, from the quality and condition of the persons, by comparing of them. If God had so much favour for us when we were enemies, how much more has He now that we are friends? Secondly, from the nature and condition of the gift itself. He that would give His Son will not stick to give anything else, because He that would give the greater will not stick to give the less. First, to make sure of the ground and

conclusion itself, seeing our having of all things else does thus depend upon our having of Christ, and in a manner follows from it. Secondly, as we should make sure of the ground, so we should be also careful to make the improvement, and thus to reason and argue within ourselves, as the Apostle Paul here sets us an example. Here is that which may convince them of that diffidence and distrustfulness which is in them, and make them to be ashamed, as it were, of it. What, has God given thee the greater, and dost thou think that He will deny thee the less? Has He given thee heaven, and dost thou think that He will deny thee the earth? Has He given thee eternal things, and dost thou think that He will deny thee temporal? (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *God's great and best gift to the world*:—I. THE PURPORT OF THE APOSTLE'S ASSERTION. It includes three capital points of Christian theology, viz.—1. That we are obnoxious to the punishment of death. "He delivered Him for us"; so then we ought to have been delivered up, that is, to penal suffering. This penalty pre-supposes transgression. 2. That "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man has appeared" in the provision of a Divine Substitute. "So God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," &c. And having "given Him" for this purpose, He "spared Him not" from suffering. Not by any means that our Saviour suffered the identical punishment due to us; but its equivalent, inasmuch as the divinity of the sufferer stamped the suffering with infinite magnitude. He made "a full perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," in virtue of which avenging justice can now no longer pursue, and redeeming mercy may honourably pardon the penitent sinner. 3. That the efficacy of the sin-offering is co-extensive with the range or influence of the sin. "For us all." There is no limitation in the grace of God, nor of the expiatory effect of the Saviour's sufferings, to any particular number of persons, any more than to any particular number or description of sins. If Christ died only for all believers, then sin has only affected all believers. No man's sins are more atoned for than another man's. The atonement in itself saves no man, and Christ by His death laid God's way open to save everybody; but it did not necessitate the salvation of anybody; it must be apprehended by faith, or else no salvation will follow. Fear not, thou vilest of the vile! thou art as much an object of God's love and of Christ's redemption as was St. Paul. Look unto Him and be saved, even from the "ends of the earth." II. THE OBJECTS OF HIS ANTICIPATION. Why limit His meaning here again? He means literally what He says—"all things." There is nothing to prevent God's bestowing all things we need or can receive. 1. Not strictly all temporal gratifications. Many of them are unessential, and some of them prejudicial. But whatever of this world's good shall subserve our convenience, and comport with that providential discipline by which our Heavenly Father is training us, we are entitled to expect. "No good thing will He withhold," &c. "Godliness is profitable for all things," even in regard to the present life, and shall give us the true enjoyment and use of all the good things which the providence of God bestows. We shall make more of them, we shall get more out of them; a religious poor man enjoys a great deal more than an irreligious rich man. 2. If these earthly blessings abound, they shall be a thousandfold enhanced, and if they are scanty, their absence shall be ten thousand times supplied to us by the better gifts of God's grace—reconciliation, adoption, communion with a reconciled God, power over sin, heavenly dignity, peace in tribulation, composure in death. 3. The blessings of immortality—including the resurrection and glorification of the body, a crown, a kingdom, a joyous reunion with our old companions, and, above all, a view of the Lamb in His own light, and an eternity spent in His praise. 4. All this is ours, "freely." (1) Without reluctance, as to the disposition with which the boon originates. (2) Without restriction, as to the persons on whom it is conferred. (3) Without recompense, or purchase, or desert. III. THE FORCE OF THE ARGUMENT. "With Him." It seems to refer to the gift of Christ—1. As the signal and practical intimation of God's perfect preparedness to "give us all things." "God is love," and no sooner had He called into existence objects on which He could exercise His affections, than the gushings of His heart flowed forth in streams of beneficence. But sin, alas! interposed; and if He had so pleased, sin might irremediably have cut off all desirable communication. But He "willed to have mercy"; and reached out His arms so far as to remove the obstruction. "Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" on the Cross, so that it no longer after that necessitated the exclusion of any creature from God's blessing. 2. As Himself intrinsically beyond all comparison more valuable than all things else. Having conferred the greater blessing, can He withhold the less? What "good thing" is so

good in our estimation as that we dare not now claim it in the view of Christ! Has He given His Son? why should He not give His Spirit? why should He not communicate Himself to our souls? 3. As the intentional procuring cause of "all things." Christ has "*obtained* eternal redemption for us," with all its rich and varied benefits. Then not only may we, but we ought to expect them. We dishonour Christ by mistrust of the power of His saving merit. We forget how solemnly the Father is bound to the Son by covenant faithfulness; we forget how dear His own Son is to Him, and that even had He no interest in our welfare, yet He is sure to look favourably upon those who are interested in His Son. Conclusion: Learn—1. That the love of God the Father should be recognised as the source of our salvation and all our blessings. 2. That we cannot present a more effectual or successful plea to God in prayer, than an appeal to His past mercies in Christ. 3. That Christ, especially in His atoning character, is "all in all." Sinner! embrace His atonement; for without it you can receive nothing. Believer! cleave to it; for with it you may receive "all things." (*W. M. Bunting.*) *The gift that brings all gifts*:—We have here an allusion to the narrative of Abraham's offering up of Isaac. The same word which is employed in the Septuagint for "withheld" is employed here. Consider—I. THIS MYSTERIOUS ACT OF DIVINE SURRENDER. The analogy seems to suggest to us that something corresponding to the pain and loss that shadowed the patriarch's heart flitted across the Divine mind when the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Not merely to give, but to give up, is the highest crown and glory of love. And notice—1. How the reality of the surrender is emphasised by the closeness of the bond which knits together the Father and the Son. As of Abraham, so in this lofty example the Son is the only Son. This cannot be any mere equivalent for a Messiah, or for a man who was like God in purity of nature. For the force of the analogy and the emphasis of that word "His *own*" point to a uniqueness of relation and unparalleled closeness of intimacy. "Having one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him." 2. How the greatness of the surrender is made more emphatic by the negative and the positive. "He spared not, but delivered Him up." 3. How the tenderness and the beneficence that were the sole motive of the surrender are lifted into light in "for us all." One great throb of love to the whole of humanity led to that transcendent surrender of God's unspeakable gift. 4. How this mysterious act is grasped by the apostle as the illuminating fact as to the whole Divine nature. We are accustomed to speak of Christ's life of unselfishness and His death of beneficence as being the revelation of the love of God as well as of Christ, because we believe that "God was in Christ reconciling the world," and that "He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father." But my text bids us see the great demonstration of God's love because the Father's will, conceived of as distinct from, and yet harmonious with, the will of the Son, gives Him up for us. II. THE POWER OF THIS DIVINE SURRENDER TO BRING WITH IT ALL OTHER GIFTS. 1. The question requires for its answer only the belief in the unchangeableness of the Divine heart, and the uniformity of the Divine purpose. These recognised the conclusion follows. "With Him He will freely give us all things." Because—(1) The greater gift implies the less. We do not expect that a man that hands over £1,000,000 to another to help him, will stick at a farthing afterwards. If you give a diamond you may well give a box to keep it in. There is a beautiful contrast between the manners of giving. The expression "freely give" implies a grace and a pleasantness in the act. God gives in Christ what we may reverently say it was something like pain to give. Will He not give the lesser which it is His joy to communicate? (2) The purpose of the greater gift cannot be attained without the bestowment of the lesser. He does not miscalculate His resources. Men build palaces and are bankrupt before the roof is on. God lays His plans with the knowledge of His powers, and having bestowed this large gift, is not going to have it bestowed in vain for want of some smaller ones to follow it up. Christ puts the same argument to us, beginning only at the other end of the process. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Do you think He will not give you bread and water on the road to it?" That is not God's way. He that hath begun a good work will also perfect the same, and when He gave us His Son, He bound Himself to give us every blessing which was needed to make that Son's work complete. (3) Everything is included and possessed in Christ when we receive Him. "With Him" Christ is as it were a great cornucopia, out of which will pour with magic affluence all manner of supplies according as we require. This fountain flows with milk, wine, and water, as men need. Everything is given us

when Christ is given to us, because Christ is the Heir of all things, and we possess all things in Him; as some poor village maiden married to a prince in disguise, who on the morrow of her wedding finds that she is mistress of a kingdom. 2. And so just as that great gift is the illuminating fact in reference to the Divine heart, so is it the interpreting fact in reference to the Divine dealings. Only when we keep firm hold of Christ as the gift of God and the Explainer of all that God does, can we face the darkness, the perplexities, the torturing questions that harasses men's minds as they look upon the mysteries of human misery. That gift makes anything believable rather than that He should spare not His own Son, and then counterwork His own act by sending the world anything but good. III. SOME PRACTICAL ISSUES FROM THESE THOUGHTS, IN REFERENCE TO OUR OWN BELIEF AND CONDUCT. 1. Let us correct our estimates of the relative importance of the two sets of gifts. On the one side stands the solitary Christ; on the other side all the things that vulgar estimation recognises to be good are lumped together into an "also." They are but the golden dust that may be filed off from the great ingot. They are secondary; He is the primary. What an inversion of our notions of good! Do you degrade all the world's wealth, pleasantness, &c., into an "also"? Do you live as if you did? Which do you hunger for most, and labour for hardest? "Seek ye first the kingdom," and the King, and all "these things shall be added unto you." 2. Let these thoughts teach us that sorrow too is one of the gifts of the Christ. "Tribulation, distress," &c., are some of the "all things." And looking upon all, Paul says, "They all work together for good"; and in them all we may be more than conquerors. It would be a poor, shabby issue of such a great gift if it were only to be followed by the sweetnesses and prosperity of this world. But the point here is, inasmuch as He gives us all things, let us take all the things that come to us as being as distinctly the gifts of His love, as is the gift of Christ Himself. The diurnal revolution of the earth brings the joyful sunrise and the pathetic sunset. The annual revolution whirls us through the balmy summer and the biting winter. God's purpose is one. His methods vary. The road goes straight to its goal; but it sometimes runs in tunnels, and sometimes by sunny glades. God's purpose is always love. His withdrawals are gifts. And sorrow is not the least of the benefits which come to us through the Man of Sorrows. 3. Let these thoughts teach us to live by a very quiet and peaceful faith. We find it a great deal easier to trust God for heaven than for earth. Many a man will venture his soul into God's hands, who would hesitate to venture to-morrow's food there. Why? Is it not because we want the less more really than we want the greater; that we can put ourselves off with faith for the one, and desire something more solid to grasp for the other? Live in the calm confidence that God gives all things; and gives us for to-morrow as for eternity; for earth as for heaven. 4. Make you quite sure that you have taken the great gift of God. He gives it to all the world, but they only have it who accept it by faith. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The unspeakable gift*:—Fear naturally follows guilt. When a breach has taken place the hardest to be won is always the offender. It is hard to believe that he whom I have provoked will forgive me, but how much harder is it to believe that he will be my greatest friend! For friendship does not necessarily succeed reconciliation, nor munificence forgiveness. It is no easy thing for a sinner to place his "faith and hope in God." But—1. It is necessary. We shall never go to Him till we can see that "He is ready to forgive." 2. It is attainable. He has caused His goodness to pass before us, and the despairing soul reasons itself into light and comfort from the text. Note—I. A WONDERFUL FACT. There are marvellous displays of God's power, wisdom, truth, holiness; but the miracle before us is a miracle of love. To magnify this goodness observe—1. The boon He did not withhold. He "spared not His own Son." How many things could you resign before you spared a child! How unwilling was Jacob to spare Benjamin though he had many children; how unwilling David to give up even a rebellious Absalom! History mentions a poor family in Germany who were ready to perish in the time of famine. The husband proposed to the wife to sell one of their children for bread. At length she consents. But which of them shall it be? The eldest was named, but he was the beginning of their strength. The second was the living image of his father. In the third the features of the mother breathed. The last was the child of their old age. And so they consented to starve together rather than sacrifice one. What was the severest trial of Abraham's regard for God? "Now I know that thou fearest Me, see that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." How dignified was God's Son (Heb. i. 5, 6). How dear was God's Son! The Son of His love; who always did the things that

pleased Him; in Him His soul delighted! Yet He "spared not His own Son." 2. The state into which He surrendered Him. He "delivered Him up." To what? To a world that disowned Him. To a people that abhorred Him, though prepared by miracles, and ordinances, and prophecies, to receive Him (John i. 11). To obscurity and indigence. He was born in a stable, and through life "He had not where to lay His head." To infamy and scorn. To pain and anguish. To be betrayed by Judas; to be denied by Peter; to be forsaken of all. To Caiaphas and Herod—who set Him at nought; to Pilate—who condemned Him; to the Romans—who crucified Him. Surely here is love for which we want a name! Especially when we consider—3. Those for whose advantage He was given. Not angels; but men. Not men only; but sinners. Not sinners humbled under a sense of our misery, and applying for mercy; but sinners regardless of their deliverance, and abusing the Divine goodness. To love parents, children, friends, is just and natural. To do good to strangers is humane. To relieve the poor and needy is kind and generous. But to love our enemies is Divine. And not for a few of these rebels, but for "all." II. THE INFERENCE. 1. The way in which He communicates His favours—"freely." If the blessings are great, they are equally gracious: and we are invited to come and "take of the water of life freely." 2. The extent of His liberality—"all things"—pardon, to remove our guilt; strength, to aid us in duty; consolation in distress; guidance in perplexity; heaven, and supplies for the wilderness on this side of it. The grant has only one limitation—the goodness of the things conferred; of this God only is the Judge, and therefore with Him the determination must be left. 3. The reasonableness of our most enlarged expectation. "How shall He not with Him." (1) He was designed to prepare the way for the communication of all the blessings we need. Sin had stopped the effusion of the Divine goodness, but He came to remove every obstruction, and to render the exercise of Divine favour consistent with the honour of Divine government. And now, if we go to God there is nothing to hinder His mercy. (2) He is superior to every other blessing. You are sometimes dismayed at the thought of your demerit; but if your demerit restrained the Divine goodness, the Saviour would never have appeared. You are sometimes dismayed at the greatness of the blessing you ask; but if the greatness of the blessing restrained the Divine goodness, He would have denied giving His own Son. What God has already given is infinitely more precious than anything we can in future implore. (3) Yea, He is in reality every other blessing; and we have all with Him. Conclusion: The subject should—1. Inspire you with encouragement. Never entertain any harsh and gloomy notions of God. 2. Impose upon you submission. Is anything denied you that seems desirable? He distinguishes between your welfare and your wishes. The blessing is not withheld from a want of power or love. 3. Inflame you with gratitude. "What shall I render?" &c. (*W. Jay.*) *Our Father's beneficence*:—The text is an epitome of Christianity. It is history declaring the most glorious fact, and logic deducing the most precious assurance. The history and the logic are alike Divine, for the writer "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost." 1. God is a benefactor. He made everything and pronounced it good; He manages everything, and His management is good. He gives us all things richly to enjoy. 2. Believers are His special beneficiaries. His tender mercy is over all His works, but His delights are with those who know and love Him. Here the Father speaks to His family only, that with faith they may adhere to Him more closely; that with hope they may rejoice in Him more ardently; and that with love they may serve Him more adequately. The text teaches us that God's beneficence is—I. PERFECT. The gifts of God are twofold—the gift of His Son and the gift of all things; and this beneficence is perfect because it is most ample and comprehensive. The first of these gifts is unmistakable; but the other is not thus definite. It is not to be taken absolutely, because God does not endow His children equally and absolutely. And yet there is a most important sense in which God bestows all things on His people. 1. About all things spiritual there can be no controversy. God gives all these to all His children alike. He feeds them all with the same milk of the Word and the same strong meat of truth. He pours upon them all the same Spirit, kindles and maintains in them all the same Divine life, leads them in the same way, to the same heaven. If we have not, it is either because we ask not or because we ask amiss. All things are for us, and it is our own fault if we do not possess them—mercy to pardon us, grace to help us, &c. 2. All things secular are to be understood in consonance with all things spiritual. The secularities that subserve our spiritual life our Heavenly Father bestows; all else He with-

holds or takes away. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Good is a relative term. What is good for one man may not be good for another, or for the same man in different circumstances. We must leave the interpretation of the text in specific cases to its Author. He alone can justly determine what is good. II. CERTAIN. The gift of God's Son assures us of the gift of all things, because of—1. Their comparative magnitude. The gifts of God vary, but one among all stands pre-eminent. This is an infinite gift, because the Son of God is an infinite being; and it is the greatest of all possible gifts because it is God Himself. This gift throws every other gift into shade. When the sun rises he casts the stars into oblivion. And can such a gift be conferred, and minor ones denied? May we call the ocean ours, and yet be forbidden to drink of the brook by the way? 2. Their close connection. The gift is related to the gifts—(1) as means to ends. The gift of God's Son is the beneficence of sacrifice, the gift of all things is the beneficence of sufficiency, and the former is the means of the latter. (2) As co-essential means. The gift of God's Son is the means of salvation; but salvation itself is a means, it is the means of God's glory and of eternal life. The holy is a means of the holiest, the life below is a means of the life above. The gift and each and all of the gifts are links of the golden chain that draws us up to the throne of God. 3. The Giver's motive and manner. To give freely is to give lovingly and readily, or from a loving motive and in a ready manner. (*J. G. Manly.*) *All with Christ*:—In order to grasp the argument we must understand that Paul is speaking to believers in the midst of a groaning world whose hope needed to be sustained by the strongest evidence. It was not enough to speak of God's purpose, and promise, so a more triumphant argument was used. God has already done so much that all that remains to be done is nothing in comparison. As a pledge to us that the great scheme of redemption shall not be defeated, God has Himself embarked in it so vast an investment that failure would not only be disastrous to us, but would involve a Divine bankruptcy—omnipotence baffled, external purpose defeated, an infinite outlay of Divine love thrown away. Let us look—I. AT OUR PRESENT STANDING PLACE BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE. 1. The past—"God hath not spared His own Son, but given Him up for us all." "For us all" suggests a collective interest, and not merely an individual share in the great transaction. If at times the soundness of redemption is felt to arise from a personal appropriation of its benefits, yet there is peculiar consolation in the view of it which embraces the entire Church of the firstborn. 2. That which is to come is the gift of "all things" which are to "work together for good to them that love God" (see also 1 Cor. ii. 21). Not only shall existing agencies, however adverse, be pressed into the service of redemption; but fresh agencies shall be brought forward at their appointed time to complete the work. We may therefore hail every fresh discovery in science, &c., as only another helper of God's work. "The earth shall help the woman," and all the wealth of nations shall flow into the city of God. 3. Our position on this line of redemption is between the past and the future. The one gift is ours, the second gift not yet. The extent of our realisations as compared with the extent of our hopes leaves much to be accomplished. II. THE PLEDGE WHICH IS THUS FURNISHED. We are not left to the bare power or willingness or promise of God to finish the work; we have in the past gift an advanced security as to the triumphant result. I know of no text that is better adapted to give a material guarantee of the final emancipation of the sons of God. As we contemplate the Cross of Christ we may adopt the sentiment of Manoah's wife (Judges xiii. 23). In arguing from the past to the future we mark—1. That, as a Divine work, the greatest thing is done already. In looking along the line of redemption we see that the crisis of it is past. To us the benefits of salvation widen and grow in value, but to God the most valuable thing has been introduced into the process. 2. The sufferings of Christ. He was not spared. And now God hath exalted Him to His own right hand to perfect the work. And we may observe—(1) That one part of His mediatorial work cost Him much more than the other. "We are reconciled by His death, and we are saved by His life." One part cost Him tears, agony, and blood; the other is carried on amidst the joy of His exaltation. (2) That the most costly part is that which is past and finished, and the less costly part of it is that which is to come. (3) That the connection between the two is that the finishing of the salvation is the very fruit of all He endured. If God spared Him not, shall He not let Him see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied? 3. The grace which pervades the entire plan of redemption. It was not because He owed it to us, but because His own heart was set upon it. And shall the love which gave

us Christ begin to measure out niggard bestowments when the greatest triumph is about to be realised in peopling heaven with redeemed souls? 4. The objects of Divine mercy. What has been done in the past was done whilst we were yet enemies. But we are now sons. Shall God do so much for His enemies, and then begin to withhold His hand? In conclusion: Our subject—1. Affords the strongest possible assurance of the completion of God's great plans. The Cross and the empty grave are pledges that the issue shall be triumphant, and that all things shall serve that end. 2. Shows who they are who are the real beneficiaries of God, whom all things serve. With Christ, not without Him, are all things ours. (*P. Strutt.*) *All things with Christ:*—I. THE IMPORTANT FACT ASSERTED. 1. "He spared not His own Son," &c. Man, made upright, lost the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and then became corrupt and could not extricate himself. God's mercy found remedy—He determined to give His Son. "Spare" has two senses. (1) He did not keep Him back; there was no obligation in God thus to give us Jesus. Herein is love, &c. (2) He did not excuse Him from suffering. The Divine nature could not suffer, but gave efficacy. 2. It was God that delivered Him up; whatever was done by Judas or Pilate was done by permission. 3. "For us"—not our remote advantage merely, as in resurrection, but in our stead—that we might not perish (Isa. liii.). 4. "For us all." Not some men of all countries, but "for every man." II. THE INFERENCE DEDUCED FROM IT. "All things" necessary and salutary. 1. All the comforts of this life which it is safe and proper we should enjoy. God has the prerogative of knowing what is best for us. He can best cater for us. Be thankful that He deigns to do this. Connect even our temporal blessings with the atonement of the Lord Jesus. 2. Chiefly spiritual blessings. The interrogation here is an assertion; to suppose the contrary would be ridiculous. Three positions may support this inference. (1) If He gave His Son to enemies what will He give to us who have thrown our arms away (chap. v.)? (2) He gave Him unsought, and even undesired. The first step to man's recovery was taken in God. (3) He gave us His best gift. His own Son—a Divine person. If a creature, the apostle would have magnified the greatness of the purchase with the small price. He has no such other gift. Omnipotence is limited here; we can ask no blessing adequate to this: hence what is the pardon of sins to God? Nay, He delights in it. Why, then, should He withhold inferior blessings? We are warranted to ask till we think of some gift greater than Jesus. 3. He will freely give us all things. No regard to merit or worthiness in the receiver. As He had no such regard when He gave His Son, so He yet acts freely—pardons, sanctifies, saves to heaven freely. (*J. Summerfield, A.M.*) *All things with Christ:*—It is a joint gift, so to speak, to which God has pledged Himself through the scheme of redemption—the gift of all things with Christ, but of nothing without Christ. If you will take Christ you may be sure of everything besides; but if you refuse Christ there is no promise of anything. There is perhaps no passage of Scripture which sets before you the love of God more overpoweringly than it is set in our text; not one which grounds on this love a more powerful argument why we should expect large things from the benevolence of our Maker; and yet is this very passage so constructed as to force on our attention that God has no mercy whatsoever for the sinful except through His Son. And this peculiarity in the text ought also to furnish a rule as to what may be lawful in Christian desires, and the subject of the Christian's prayers. Is the thing one with which Christ may be joined? The promise is that God will give me all things with Christ; but such a promise excludes whatsoever is not in harmony with Christ. Who can fail to see how chastening an influence would be exerted on our wishes and prayers if the exclusiveness as well as the comprehensiveness of a promise were borne diligently in mind? Tell me that all things are promised, and I might ask for riches, and pleasures, and honours; but tell me that all things are promised with Christ, and I shall be ashamed to solicit what would not combine well with Christ. But note yet again that God gives nothing to His people with which He does not at the same time give Christ. He may give riches, but He gives Christ with the riches, so that, sanctified by the Redeemer, they shall be employed to His glory. He may give sources of earthly happiness, but He gives Christ with them to make them doubly sweet, and yet to prevent their drawing off the affections from heavenly joys. He may give trouble, but He gives Christ to enlighten darkness, to hush disquietude. The Christian shall find nothing precious in which he does not find Christ. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *All things with Christ:*—If you were in prison, and the clemency of legal authority should pronounce your pardon, and the messenger who brought it to your cell should find you a cripple,

would you not expect that the same clemency would also reach its aid to the crippled limbs? If it would furnish no such aid as you lifted your hopeless eye to the opened door, you would execrate the misnamed mercy that had pardoned you! You would ask, Why torment me with an offer impossible for me to accept? There is a Holy Spirit for you as well as a crucified Christ. If you were an undutiful son whose profligacy had plunged you into misery, and the fatherly affection which you had abused should follow you still, and not only send you a message of forgiveness, but sacrifice the most valuable of his possessions that you might be free to return, could you have any thought that the same affection, when you had worked your way back to the door of the paternal mansion and stood there in want, would refuse a morsel of bread to your hungry lips? (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *All things with Christ*:—The greater ever includes the less. If an estate is bequeathed to me and becomes my own, I have complete possession alike of the whole and of its parts. I can thin the timber, or fell it and realise the gain. I can dig out the minerals and sell them, or build with them, or smelt them as I please. He who transfers to me his garden, conveys to me not only the plot of ground encircled by the fence, but its fruit-trees, shrubs, and flowers. He who spares not his own purse, but delivers it up for me, a free and loving gift, how shall he not with it freely give therewith the gold that it contains? But this is what I read concerning my Saviour: "It hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." Then "all the fulness" describes the extent of my resources, and Jesus says, "My joy shall remain in you, and your joy shall be full." I read of my Saviour, given for me, that "the Father hath committed all things into His hand"; then these, too, are mine; and Paul positively says so in as many words—"all things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." I read of Him that "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." And I read also that "He giveth strength" to His people, and that we are to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." No wonder with such omnipotent resources that Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." No wonder that with the Lord for his Shepherd, David says, "I shall not want." Do not minify the lot of your inheritance. Cultivate large views as to the extent of your resources. Live near to God, strong in your loyalty to Jesus, and boldly draw even in the hardest times on the Bank of Faith. That can never fail, however great the run upon it; as long as God's exchequer endures your cheques will never be returned; your allowances during the days of your earthly minority shall be on a scale commensurate with the royal wealth of the King, your Father, and when the shadow of death on time's dial announces the attainment of your majority, then shall you come into full possession of your estate, the inheritance of those who are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. God "spared not His own Son," but that did not lessen His resources. Human resources grow less and less in proportion as the outgoings from them are more and more. But it is far otherwise with the resources of the Christian whose whole fortune is invested in the love of God. He gave Himself, and yet hath all to give. The glorious sun, how little it feels the mighty drain on its resources! What oceans of glowing light it hath poured forth since the day when God said, "Let light be"! What a vast and wide succession of autumn fields he has nursed and ripened into rich and golden corn; what mountains of ice he has thawed; what untold snows he has melted into beneficent and fertile streams; what generations of luscious fruits and blooming flowers he hath matured and painted in fair colours; what magical changes he hath wrought in the blue heavens above and on the green earth beneath since the day when God first hung His brilliant lamp among the stars and charged His mighty reservoir with glorious power! And yet His glowing furnace has never cooled, neither is His natural strength abated; and to-day it shines abroad in pristine glory, true symbol of the exhaustless bounty of its God. So is it with the Sun of Righteousness. He who spared not Himself, but delivered Himself up to pour out His whole Divine soul to kindle life and light, to conquer death and darkness and open heaven to the human race, how shall He not, how can He help, impelled for ever by the same love, lifting up my soul, lightening my burden, succouring my spirit, soothing my sorrows, cheering my heart, and drying my tears? He must and will. "His love is as great as His power, and neither knows measure nor end. (*J. Jackson Wray.*) *The death of Christ and its consequences*:—I. How THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS HERE EXPRESSED. 1. Negatively—"He spared not His own Son." (1) God's act. There is a twofold not-sparing. (*a*) In a way of impartial justice (2 Pet. ii. 4, 5). No

clemency, but deserved punishment. So God spared not Christ when He took upon Him to satisfy for our sins (Zech. xiii. 7). (*b*) In a way of eminent and free bounty. We are sparing of those things which are most precious to us; but upon great occasions we part with them (John iii. 16). (2) The object—"His own Son"; not an adopted son, but only-begotten. What dearer to parents than their children? But God's love to Christ is not to be measured by an ordinary standard. Let us consider what might have moved God to spare His Son. (*a*) The incomparable worth and excellency of His person (Phil. ii. 6). (*b*) The singular and infinite love between God and Christ (Col. i. 13). The Father loved Him dearly; and we are chary of what we tenderly love (John i. 18; Prov. viii. 30). (*c*) No equal or advantageous exchange. What could God gain that might be an equal recompense for the death of Christ? Now no man doth give much for what is but little esteemed; but God gave His own Son to recover the perishing world. 2. Positively—"But delivered Him up for us all." Mark—(1) The person who—"God." This word is used of several agents: Judas (John xix. 11), Pilate (John xix. 16), the high-priests (Matt. xxvii. 2), the people (Matt. xx. 19); yea, Christ delivered up Himself (Rom. iv. 25); here, "God delivered Him." One word is used, but the act proceeded from several causes; the people delivered Him out of ignorance and inconsiderate zeal, Judas out of covetousness and treachery, the high-priests out of malice and envy, Pilate out of a faulty compliance with the humours of the people, Christ out of obedience to God, God Himself to show His infinite love for us. It is for our comfort to observe that it is God's act. The law which condemneth us is the law of God; the wrath and punishment which we fear is the wrath of God; and the fountain of all the blessings we expect is the favour of God; and God delivered Christ up for us all, to assure our comfort, peace, and hope. (2) The act—"He delivered Him up," not only to be made flesh for us (John i. 14), which was a state at the greatest distance from His nature, who was a pure spirit. But God, who is a spirit, was made flesh that He might be nearer to us, and took a mother upon earth that we might have a Father in heaven. But also made sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3) and a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13). (3) The persons for whom—for the cursed race of fallen Adam, who had no strength to do anything for themselves. II. God having laid this foundation, let us see WHAT A SUPERSTRUCTURE OF GRACE IS BUILT THEREON, and He doth "freely give us all things." 1. All good things are the gift of God (James i. 17); and whatever God giveth, He giveth freely, for there can be no pre-obligation upon Him (chap. xi. 35). But here the chief thing considerable is the largeness of the gift. Both the creature and the Creator, from God to the poorest thing in the world, through Jesus Christ all is ours (Rev. xxi. 7). 2. This "all things" reacheth to heaven and earth (1 Tim. iv. 8). 3. This "all things" concerneth the whole man—(1) The body (Matt. vi. 33). He that hath any place or office hath the perquisites of the place or office. (2) The soul (2 Pet. i. 2). 4. All things that are for our real advantage, of what nature soever they be (1 Cor. iii. 21; Psa. lxxxiv. 11). III. THE STRENGTH AND THE FORCE OF THE INFERENCE. This broad and ample foundation will support the building. 1. The giving of Christ is a sign and pledge of His great love to us. And what will not love, and great love, do for those whom it loveth (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 10)? 2. Christ is the greatest and most precious gift; and surely God, that hath given so great a benefit, will He stick at lesser things? He that hath given a pound, will He not give a farthing? Hath He given Christ, and will He not give pardon to cancel our defects, and grace to do our duty? comfort to support us in our afflictions? supplies to maintain and protect us during our services? and finally, will He not reward us after we have served Him? Reconciliation by His death is propounded as a more difficult thing than salvation by His life (chap. v. 10). 3. It is a gift in order to other things; and therefore He will complete that gift. Christ came to purchase all manner of benefits—the favour, the image, the everlasting fruition of the glory of God. Now, will God by an antecedent bounty lay the foundation so deep, and withhold the consequent bounty? Shall so great a price be paid and we obtain nothing? 4. The giving of Christ showeth how freely God will give all things to us: He gave Christ unasked, and unsought too. IV. WHO HAVE AN INTEREST IN CHRIST, AND MAY REASON THUS WITHIN THEMSELVES—"Shall He not also together with Him give us all things?" 1. Those to whom God giveth Christ. We read sometimes of Christ given for us, and sometimes of Christ given to us. The one speaketh the love of God to lost man, the other God's love to us in particular (Gal. i. 10; Rev. i. 5). The first gift is Christ (John v. 12; Heb. iii. 14; 2 Cor. xiii. 5). We do not live in the body till we be united to the

head; nor till we have Christ, do we receive the saving effects of His grace; clear that once, and shall He not with Him give us all things? God offereth Him to all, but He giveth Him to you when you believe. 2. Those that give up themselves to Christ (1 Cor. iii. 22). If you be to Christ what Christ was to God, a dedicated servant, ever to do the things that please Him; when you enter into covenant with Him, and devote yourselves to His use and service. If you be sincere and hearty in this, you need not doubt a plentiful allowance. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *On the passion*:—I. THE PERSON DELIVERED. "His own Son." This, though we make it the first step, yet indeed is the top of the ladder, from which the light of His countenance shineth upon us, and showeth that He loved us as His own Son; nay, more. In this manifestation of His love He appeareth rather a Father to us than to Him. He will rob Himself to enrich us; and, to make us His children, deliver up His own Son. 1. A strange contemplation it is. Can God delight to make His own Son a sacrifice who would not suffer Abraham to offer up his? Or might He not have taken an angel for His Son, as He did a ram for Isaac? It was His will to deliver Him; and this cleareth all doubts. If God will do anything, we have but one word left us for answer, "Amen!" "Let it be done!" He might not have done it. He might, without impairing of His justice, have kept Him still in His bosom; but as "of His own will He begat us with the word of truth" (James i. 18), so "He delivered up His own Son because He would." For as in the creation God might have made man by His "word" alone, yet wrought him out of the earth; so, in the great work of our redemption, He did not send a Moses or an angel, but "delivered up His own Son," and so gave a price infinitely above that which He bought. He was pleased to pay dear for His affection to us. How should this flame of God's love kindle love in us! That benefit is great which preventeth our prayers; that is greater which is above our hope; that is yet greater that exceedeth our desires: but how great is that which over-runneth our opinion, yea, swalloweth it up! Certainly, had not God revealed His will, we could not have desired it, but our prayers would have been blasphemy; our hope, madness; our wish, sacrilege; and our opinion, impiety. 2. And now if any ask, "What moved His will?" surely no loveliness in the object. In it there was nothing but loathsomeness, and such enmity as might make Him rather send down fire and brimstone than His Son. That which moved Him was in Himself, His compassion. He loved us "in our blood"; and loving us, He bid us "live" (Ezek. xvi. 6); and, that we might live, "delivered up His own Son" to death. Mercy is all our plea, and it was all His motive; and wrought in Him a will, a cheerful will. II. THE DELIVERY. Delivered He was—1. Into the virgin's womb. That was a strange descent; and even then, at His birth, began His passion. Here He was made an object for the malice of men and the rage of the devil to work on. 2. Being born, what was His whole life but delivery from sorrow to sorrow? What creature was there to whom He was not delivered? Delivered He was to the angels; "to keep Him," you will say, "in all His ways" (Psa. xci. 11). But what need had He of angels who was Lord of the angels? He was delivered to Joseph and Mary, to whom "He was subject" and obedient (Luke ii. 51). Delivered He was to an occupation and trade. He was delivered from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod to Pilate again, and from Pilate to the Cross. He was delivered to the devil himself, and to the power of darkness. He was delivered in His body, and in His soul. Delivered He was to envy, which delivered Him (Matt. xxvii. 18); to treachery, which betrayed Him; to malice, which scourged Him; to pride, which scorned Him; to contempt, which spat upon Him; to all those furious passions which turn men into devils. 3. He was delivered not only to their passions, but to His own also, which as man He carried about with Him (John xii. 27; Luke xxii. 44; Matt. xxvi. 37, 38). Trouble, vexation, agony, heaviness, and sorrow were the bitter ingredients which filled up His cup so full that He made it His prayer to have it taken out of His hand (Mark xiv. 36). He who as God could have commanded a legion of angels, as man had need of one to comfort Him. 4. Can the Son of God be delivered further? Delivered He was—not to despair, for that was impossible; nor to the torments of hell, which could never seize on His innocent soul; but to the wrath of God (Psa. cii. 3, 4; xxii. 15), the terriblest thing in the world; the sting of sin, which is the sting of death. It were impiety to think that the blessed martyrs were more patient than Christ. Yet who of all that noble army ever cried out they were forsaken? Their torture was their triumph; their afflictions were their melody. But what speak we of martyrs? Divers sinners have been delivered up to afflic-

tions and crosses, nay, to the anger of God; but never yet any so delivered as Christ. God, in His approaches of justice toward the sinner to correct him, may seem to go, like the consuls of Rome, with His rods and His axes carried before Him. Many sinners have felt His rods. But Christ was struck, as it were, with His axe. Others have trembled under His wrath, but Christ was even "consumed by the stroke of His hand" (Psa. xxxix. 10). I mention not the shame or the torment of the Cross; for the thieves endured the same. But His soul was crucified more than His body, and His heart had sharper nails to pierce it than His hands or His feet. 5. But to rise one step more. "He delivered, and in a manner forsook Him"; denied relief, withdrew comfort, stood, as it were, afar off, and let him fight it out unto death (Isa. lxiii. 5; Psa. xviii. 41; Matt. xxvii. 46). (1) There now hangeth His sacred body on the Cross, not so much afflicted with His passion as His soul was wounded with compassion; with compassion on His mother, on His disciples, on the Jews, on the temple, on all mankind; bearing the burden of all; delivered to a sense of their sins who feel them not, and to a sense of theirs who groan under them; delivered up to all the sorrows which all men have felt, or shall feel to the time He shall come again in glory. (2) The last delivery was of His soul into His Father's hands. Who can fathom this depth? No tongue, neither of men nor angels, is able to express it. The most powerful eloquence is the threnody of a broken heart; for there Christ's death speaketh itself, and the virtue and power of it reflecteth back again upon Him, and reacheth Him at the right hand of God, where His wounds are open, His merits vocal, interceding for us to the end of the world. III. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM. 1. "For us." A contemplation full of comfort, but not so easy to digest. Why for us? And we must go out of the world to find the reason. It was "the love" of God "to mankind" (Titus iii. 4). And what was in mankind but enmity, sin, and deformity? which are no proper motives to draw on love. "For us" men, then, and "for us" sinners, was Christ delivered (Isa. liii. 5). So that He was delivered up not only to the Cross and shame, but to our sins, which nailed Him to the Cross. Our treachery was the Judas which betrayed Him; our malice, the Jews which accused Him; our perjury, the false witness against Him; our injustice, the Pilate that condemned Him. Our pride scorned Him; our envy grinned at Him; our luxury spat upon Him; our covetousness sold Him. "He delivered Him up for us" sinners. No sin there is which His blood will not wash away, but final impenitency; which is not so much a sin as the sealing up of the body of sin when the measure is full. 2. "For us all"; for "all have sinned" (chap. v. 12). The blood of Christ is sufficient to wash away the sins of the world, nay, of a thousand worlds. Christ paid down a ransom of so infinite a value that it might redeem all that are, or possibly might be, under captivity. But none are actually redeemed but they who do as He commandeth, that is, believe and repent. Infidelity and impenitency only limit a proposition so general, and bound so saving and universal, and contract all into a few. IV. THE END OF ALL. That we may have all things. God cannot but give when we are fit to receive; and in Christ we are made capable. When He is given, all things are given with Him—more than we can desire, more than we can conceive. (*A. Farindon, B.D.*) *The great fact and the just inference:*—It may assist us in understanding the text if we take a brief view of the inventory of a believer's privileges in this chapter. 1. Their free and full justification by faith in Christ (ver. 1). 2. Their regeneration by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost (vers. 8–10). 3. The knowledge which they have of the relation to God as His children by the testimony of the Holy Spirit (vers. 15, 16). 4. Their right to eternal life (ver. 17). 5. Their title to such helps of providence and grace as may be necessary to prepare them fully for that inheritance and to conduct them safely to it (vers. 26, 28). It is after this review that the apostle exclaims, "What shall we then say to these things?" &c. Consider—I. THE FACT ASSERTED IN THE TEXT. This fact supposes the guilty, fallen, helpless condition of man without Christ. Now it was when the whole race was in this condition that—1. God "spared not His own Son," *i.e.*, (1) He did not withhold Him when the necessities of our condition required such a gift. This implies that God might have spared Him; He was under no obligation or compulsion of justice. (2) He did not exempt Him from the sufferings subsequent upon His undertaking the mediatorial and atoning office. The innocent infirmity of our Saviour's human nature wished to have been spared. But He could not be spared (as the fact proved) and we spared too. Had it been possible, in any other way, in answer to the prayer of such a Son, that other way would have been preferred. But He who saved others could

not, in consistency with the engagement into which He had entered, and with the claims of God on the Redeemer, save Himself from death. 2. He "delivered Him up." (1) It was the permissive providence of God which delivered Him to the malice of the chief priests, &c., &c. (2) He was thus delivered up for us. And this does not mean that He died in a general sense for our ultimate benefit, by any circuitous process, but instead of us. And this is the great doctrine of vicarious atonement and expiation, on which hang all our hopes, and from which flow all our legitimate comforts. II. THE INFERENCE FROM THIS FACT. By a very common mode of speech this interrogatory is equivalent to the strongest possible affirmation. 1. The "all things" are, of course, only all things conducive to the great purpose of our being, and especially to the great purpose of our redemption. (1) It may, doubtless, include all such comforts and blessings of the present life as God sees to be safe and fitting for us to possess. More than this no man in his senses would wish to have. Who would wish to have more worldly good of any kind than God sees to be safe and proper for him? Nor have we any right to complain that God has reserved to Himself the power of deciding how much of worldly good will be consistent with our highest welfare. Has anybody with common understanding, who has lived twenty years, not made the humbling discovery that, if he were left to choose his own lot, he would very often choose amiss? "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?" "How often," as an old Puritan remarked, "if we were left to carve our own portion, should we cut our own fingers?" None but God thoroughly understands the bearing of one thing on another; none but He so accurately sees the end from the beginning; none but He is so intimately acquainted with the peculiarities of every man's moral and mental constitution as to be able to see what will certainly be best for each individual. (2) By "all things" especially are meant things spiritual and eternal catalogued in this chapter. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us"—the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons; His Holy Spirit to renew our natures; the witness of our adoption, &c., &c. 2. Now consider, in support of the view which the apostle here takes of the "all things" that in giving us His own Son—(1) God bestowed a boon upon His enemies. What blessings, then, would He refuse to His friends, to His children? This is the apostle's own argument in chap. v. (2) God bestowed a boon which was in the first instance unasked, unsought, undesired. If the heart of God had never moved towards us, not the heart of any one human being would ever have moved towards God. If God had not taken this first step, not one of you would ever have had the smallest inclination to take one step towards God and goodness. Well, then, if the boon was unsought, what will not God give to His own elect who day and night cry unto Him—what will not God give in answer to the inwrought prayer which His own Spirit inspires? (3) God gave His greatest and best gift. The stress lies here: His own Son—His proper Son—His only Son. Were He to ransack His universe He could not find such another boon to confer. You think it a great thing that God should give you pardon for your innumerable sins. But though so great a thing, it is comparatively a little thing on the part of God; it implies no sacrifice; His justice is not compromised, for Christ has removed all barriers by His atonement. But when God gave His Son there was great sacrifice. He who finds it quite easy to do everything just because He wills it; He who finds it perfectly easy to make a world when He chooses to make one; He who has only to say, "Let there be light," and light is, is represented as obliged to use expedients and counsel, to make one thing fit another, when He wants to save a sinner. In doing this, then, in giving His own Son, He went to the utmost length to which even Divine compassion can go. Whatever God gives you after this, He gives you a less blessing than when He gave Christ. You think it a great thing that God should give you a place in heaven. But why not? That is nothing to what He did long before you were born, when He "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." 3. The same arguments go to show that God will freely give these things. In the language of Scripture, a thing is said to be given "freely" which is given without reference to the worthiness of the party. Now nothing can be more free than the gift of Christ; none of us can pretend, on good grounds, to have deserved *anything* at the hand of God. God looked just at man's necessities, and at nothing else, when He gave a Saviour; and He acts, we are told, in the same way in the dispensation of the blessings which are purchased by the death of Christ. Conclusion: We learn from the text—1. The close connection between the

great doctrines of the gospel and the comfort and stability of Christian experience and practice. 2. With what sentiments and views you ought to approach God the Father. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *The wants of men, and the supplies of God*:—I. MAN REQUIRES IMMENSE SUPPLIES FROM GOD TO SECURE FOR HIM A HAPPY DESTINY. 1. The ordinary. All creatures must be dependent upon communications from their Creator for being and well-being. The wants of intelligent beings increase as they advance. The wants of a man are greater than those of an infant. The wants of civilised nations are greater than those of savage tribes. As an intelligent being advances, his need multiplies, his capacities expand. The greater the creature the more deeply does he feel his dependence. What oceans of blessings will one solitary spirit require from God to make it happy through the endless ages of its history! 2. The extraordinary. He needs the pardon of his sin—the rectification of all the errors connected with his intellect, conscience, and heart—supplies of moral power to vanquish his spiritual foes, to resist the evil and to pursue the good. Thus he requires from his Maker infinitely more than an unfallen spirit. II. THE GREAT GOD HAS ALREADY BESTOWED ON MAN A GIFT OF UNUTTERABLE WORTH FOR THIS PURPOSE. Who can express the infinite value of the gift in language more simple and significant than that of the text? 1. "He spared not His own." What? Worlds, systems, universe? These are toys in the comparison. His own Son. He did not keep Him back, as He might have done, when the miseries of humanity cried for Him. 2. "But delivered Him up." To what? To the heart of friendship—to the seat of honour? No; to the wrath of His enemies, to ignominy to unutterable anguish, to the hottest rage of hell. 3. "For us all." III. THIS GIFT IS A CERTAIN PLEDGE TO THE CHRISTIAN THAT WHATEVER ELSE IS NECESSARY SHALL FOLLOW. The argument is from the greater to the less, and may be illustrated as follows:—That this greatest gift—1. Is of more worth than any amount of blessing that a Christian can possibly require through the interminable future of his being. 2. Was bestowed for the same end as that for which every other blessing will be needed, viz., to complete our happiness. Is it not certain that the Being who gave the greatest, and whose love and capacity are as great as ever, will give all the smaller blessings that are necessary? 3. Has not in the slightest degree lessened either the love or the capacity of the Giver. The gift is infinite, but the heart of the Giver is as benevolent as ever, and His means as ample. He is able "to do exceeding abundantly," &c. 4. Was bestowed when Christians were not in a position to appreciate the favour. Universal man was at enmity with God when He gave Christ. But Christians can, to some extent, value all other forces required. 5. Was bestowed without asking—Christians are praying for what else is necessary. And God has pledged answers to prayer. "Ask, and ye shall receive." Take heart, then, Christian. Don't be anxious. He that "spared not His own Son," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 33, 34. **Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?**—*The justification of the elect*:—First, to take it emphatically, God does indeed justify His elect. This is that which we have declared in ver. 30 of this chapter. The second is as it may be taken exclusively, "It is God that justifies," that is, there is none that justifies besides God; none have anything to do to absolve and acquit a sinner from guilt but God alone, thus chap. iii. 26. And the reason of it is clear, because it is God alone against whom the sin is committed; namely, in reference to future condemnation, and the judgment of another world, it is God alone that condemns, and therefore it is God alone that justifies. Again, it is God only that knows the heart and understands what is in man, and so alone can forgive; yea, it is He alone who is without sin Himself, and so alone can discharge us of it. First, it is done freely, without anything in us as meritorious or deserving of it. "Being justified freely by His grace" (chap. iii. 24). Secondly, it is God that justifies, therefore we are justified fully — fully without imperfection, and fully without reservation; all the works of God are perfect. No; while it is God that justifies, we are justified from all things (Act. xiii. 39). Thirdly, it is God that justifies, therefore we are justified truly, and so as we may rest satisfied and quieted in this justification. If our justifying were from anything of our own, we could not have that assurance of it in regard of our weakness and imperfection. But, secondly, there is a use which may be also made of it by us as taking it exclusively, and that is, as to the removing of all other persons besides from it. As—First, it is God that justifies, and therefore not we ourselves. It is laid to the charge of the Pharisees that they were such as justified themselves (Luke xvi. 15; x. 29).

Secondly, it is God that justifies, therefore not friends or Christian acquaintance. Thirdly, it is God that justifies, therefore not ministers or pastors of the Church. The ministers have a commission for the laying open of the sweet promises of the gospel, and the mercy of God in Christ, to all such persons as are willing to leave their sins. In brief, this is the advantage which is considerable in ministerial absolution, that where a minister does upon good grounds declare such a person to be pardoned and justified in the sight of God, this action of his shall be so far forth effectual to such a person as to the settling and quieting of his conscience, which before could have no rest in itself. And in this sense is not only declarative but likewise operative; not to the forgiveness of sins absolutely, but as to the evidences of it, and in that regard of greater use and availment than is always apprehended as being the ordinance of God which He has sanctified and allowed of for such a purpose as that is. The second is the conclusion which is enforced from it, and that, to make it more significant, is propounded by way of question, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" First, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" That is, who can do it? It is impossible; it is impossible that God's elect, who are justified by God, should have any charge laid unto them. First, there is nothing to accuse them of, there is no ground or matter of accusation in the elect and justified of God. There is enough to be found in them, but there is nothing to be charged upon them. Secondly, there is nobody to accuse them to, or to receive any accusation against them: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And so, if God justify us, who can accuse us, as having a fit person to lay the charge before (thus Isa. l. 8, 9). There is no higher court of justice than the tribunal and judgment of God Himself. We see in the affairs of men that that which is done in a higher court it cannot be nullified in a lower. Thirdly, there is nobody to make or frame the accusation, that is, who can do it with any success or hope to prevail in it. Secondly, Who shall? that is, Who may? It is that which is unwarrantable, and there are two things also in this. First, it is a pragmatical business for any to accuse those whom God does acquit, they meddle with that which they have nothing to do withal, for God He is both the Creditor and the Judge, and so where He does justify what has any to do to condemn? But then also, secondly, it is injurious for any to accuse any man whom the law has already absolved; it is in itself matter of accusation and is liable to exception. Thirdly and lastly, Who shall? that is, Who dare? It is unsafe and dangerous. And so there is a great deal of rashness and presumption in it. For a man to lay any false accusation upon the meanest subject in a kingdom, it were that which he were answerable for. They accuse God's elect, who are His choice and peculiar people, His favourites, and such as He esteems of, and therefore it concerns them to take heed herein what they do. We know how God took up Aaron and Miriam for their charging and accusing of Moses and speaking reproachfully of him. "How were ye not afraid (says He) to speak against My servant Moses" (Num. xii. 8). (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Elect, God's vindication of His*:—Who? The devil will try, but will he succeed? Methinks that at the last assize of the world the Great Judge of all will ask the question, and methinks I can see Satan come forward to give his evidence against them, which at the outset appears strong and overwhelming. But I see the Great Advocate for the defence, whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God," begin to cross-examine him:—"What is your name?" "Satan." "Yes, but you have a few *aliases*, have you not?" "Yes." "What are they?" "The Serpent." "Again?" "The Devil." "Again?" "Accuser of the brethren." "So it seems. Where do you dwell?" "Hell is the centre of my operations." "And what is your occupation?" "Well,——" "Speak out that heaven and earth may hear!" "Walking about in the earth, seeking whom I may devour." "So it appears. Were you ever in heaven?" "Yes; there I commenced my existence." "Yes; and were you driven out for pride, ambition, and rebellion against the Supreme authority, for lying and other evils?" "Those were the charges against me." "And proved, I believe?" "Yes, I suppose." "So it seems. Have you not done all you can against God's elect, and do you not bear them the greatest animosity?" "Well, I cannot deny that." "That is my case, my Lord," says the Great Advocate." "Justified!" exclaims the Great Judge. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? The devil will try, but he will never succeed. He is a biassed witness with a broken character whose word has no weight in the court of heaven." (*E. Williams.*) *Elect, how chosen*:—"The elect are whosoever will," Beecher once said; "the non-elect are whosoever won't." *Election: how to be regarded and determined*:—Let your

first act be an act of reliance upon Christ for pardon; let this act be so repeated by you day after day, as to ripen into a habit of reliance, and then shall we confidently look for the marks and evidences of your regeneration. And these marks may at length so multiply upon you—they might so brighten that you shall begin to suspect, nay, further, to guess, nay, further still, to be assured, and to read the full assurance that you are indeed one of the elect of God. If you are wise you do not meddle with the doctrine of election at the outset, whatever comfort or establishment of heart you may draw from it in the ulterior stages of your spiritual progress. When you go forth on the career of Christianity you look at the free offer of the gospel. You perceive it to be addressed to you, as well as to others. You yield a compliance therewith. You enter into peace with God in obedience to His own call, whereby He now beseeches you to be reconciled to Him. It were great presumption indeed for you to start with the assurance that your name is in the book of God's decrees, which He keeps beside Himself in heaven; but no presumption at all to set out with the assurance that you are spoken to in that book of God's declarations, which He circulates through the world. The "look unto Me all" and the "come unto Me all" and the "whosoever will let him come"—these are sayings in which one and all of the human family have most obvious interest. You presume nothing when you presume upon the honesty of these sayings. And if, furthermore, you proceed upon them, and forthwith enter upon that walk by which they who receive Christ, and receive along with Him power to become the children of God, separate themselves from the world; and pray for grace that you may be upheld and carried forward therein, and combine a life of activity with a life of prayer, then, and after perhaps many months of successful perseverance, you may talk of your election, because now you can read it, not in the book of life that is in heaven, but in the book of your own history upon earth. Even the apostle went no higher than this when judging of the state of his own converts. Their election was to him not a thing of presumption, but a thing of inference—drawn, not from what he guessed, but from what he saw—brought, not from those third heavens which he had at one time visited, but lying palpably before him (1 Thess. i. 4–7). (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **It is God that justifieth.**—*Justification*:—I. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION? It consists—1. In the pardon of all our sins (chap. iv. 6, 7). God, in justifying His people against the imputations of the world, doth bring forth their righteousness as the noon-day; but in justifying them against the accusations brought before His own tribunal, doth not vindicate our innocency, but show His own mercy in a free discharge of all our sins. 2. In accepting us as righteous in Christ, who died for our sins to reconcile us unto God; and therefore sometimes He is said to be "made righteousness to us" (1 Cor. i. 30), and we are said to be "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). II. HOW MANY WAYS DOTH GOD JUSTIFY? By way of—1. Constitution, *i.e.* by his gospel-grant, or the new covenant in the blood of Christ, by which we know whom, and upon what terms, God will pardon and justify—namely, all such as repent and believe the gospel. We may know the true way of justification by its opposition to the false way (Acts xiii. 38, 39). 2. Estimation, whereby God doth account them righteous who fulfil the terms of the gospel, and actually convey to them the fruits of Christ's death (1 Cor. vi. 11). 3. Sentence. This is in part done here, when God interpreteth our righteousness and sincerity (Job. xxxiii. 23, 24); but more solemnly at the last day (Acts iii. 10; Matt. xii. 36, 37). 4. Execution. This is in part done here, as God taketh off the penalties and fruits of sin, and giveth us many blessings as the pledge of His love, and above all, the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby He sanctifieth us. But more fully at the last day, when we enter into everlasting glory (Matt. xxv. 46). III. HOW IT CAN STAND WITH THE WISDOM, JUSTICE, AND HOLINESS OF GOD, TO JUSTIFY A SINNER. It is a great crime to take the unrighteous to be righteous, and against the word of God (Prov. xxiv. 24; xvii. 15). 1. Christ's ransom maketh it reconcilable with God's justice, and the honour of His law and government (Job xxxiii. 24; Rom. iii. 25). There is full satisfaction given to God's wronged justice. 2. His covenant reconcileth it with His wisdom. God is not mistaken in judging us righteous when we are not; for we are constituted righteous, and then deemed and pronounced so (chap. v. 19). 3. Conversion reconcileth it with His holiness; for a sinner as a sinner is not justified, but a penitent believer. IV. WHY NO CHARGE OR ACCUSATION CAN LIE AGAINST THEM WHOM GOD JUSTIFIETH. 1. Because God is the supreme law-giver, to appoint the terms and conditions upon which we shall be justified, and when He hath stated them, and declared His will, who shall reverse it or rebuke it? (Heb. vi. 17, 18). 2.

Because the promise of justification is built upon Christ's everlasting merit and satisfaction, and therefore it will hold good for ever (Heb. x. 14). 3. Because it is conveyed by the solemnity of a covenant (1 John i. 9; 2 Tim. iv. 8). 4. When we believe, God, as the supreme judge, actually determineth our right, so that a believer is *rectus in curia*, hath his *quietus est* (chap. v. 1). And, then, who can lay anything to our charge to reverse God's grant? 5. The Lord, as the sovereign disposer of man's felicity, doth many times uncontrollably give us the comfort of it in our own consciences (Job xxxiv. 29). None can obstruct the peace which He giveth. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Justification: its comfort*:—There is one aspect of justification that is peculiarly fitted to comfort the heart of a believer, viz. that it is the personal act of God. "It is God that justifieth." It is He to whom he was liable, declaring that all was fully paid. It is He who alone was entitled to make the charge against us, declaring how amply we stood discharged. It is He who before was our offended Lawgiver, Himself undertaking our cause and pronouncing upon the goodness of it. It is the God from whom at one time we have nought to apprehend but condemnation, pleading our cause, and protesting how completely He is satisfied. It is our vindication coming from the very quarter whence our vengeance was looked for; and that Being who alone had the right to accuse, not merely acquitting, but regarding us as entitled to all the positive regard that is due to righteousness. It is He who might have wreaked upon us of His sorest displeasure, now telling how much He is pleased with us, and how rightfully we are privileged to obtain from Him the rewards of a happy and honourable eternity. It is He whom we might well have dreaded, that when the arm of His justice was lifted up it would be lifted up to destroy—it is Himself saying that this very justice demanded not only our exoneration from all penalty but our preferment to the glories that are due to righteousness. They who have felt the terrors of the law—they who have been stung with the arrows of self-reproach and have shrunk from the dreaded eye of a judge and an avenger, as it took cognizance of all their ungodliness—they can report how blessed the emancipation is when all is clear with God, who now can at once be a just God and a Saviour—can be just while the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Justification by God*:—Justification is specially referred to God because—I. THE WISDOM OF THE FATHER PLANNED IT. His sovereign will must have the alone right to dictate the terms upon which He will take us back to favour. The Father, therefore, appoints the way, and plans the means, and even subordinates the dignity of His Son, as it were, in order that He may put an end to transgression, and bring in an everlasting righteousness.. II. THE LOVE OF THE SON ACCOMPLISHED IT. What God purposes, Jesus executes. The Father desired a missionary from heaven to our guilty world to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The eternal Son of God was heard to say, "Lo, here am I; send Me." The Father desired a victim who should bear the iniquities of man; and the voice of the same Son was heard again, "Lo, I come." The Father desired a justifier, one who should put an end to sin; and again the voice of the same Son is heard, not in heaven, but in earth, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Thus the part which Christ, the eternal Son, hath in human justification, is to pay His people's debts, to magnify His Father's law, to clear up and vindicate the righteous procedure of Heaven; to weave that spotless robe of righteousness, which might boldly challenge the purity of heaven, and gather in its ample folds the sins of all mankind. III. THE POWER OF GOD THE SPIRIT APPLIES AND ENFORCES AND SEALS IT. He shows the heart its wickedness, the will its stubbornness, the mind its blindness; and then, by penitence and faith, leads us to the feet of Him who "of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." It is this Spirit, then, that performs the last best office for our souls. He shows to us, in all its spirituality and breadth, that law which we have broken, sets before us the dangers that we are in, and points us to "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." Thus the Spirit is the preacher of righteousness. The Spirit it is that instructs us in the necessity of justification, that explains to us its way and manner, that seals our souls with a comforting assurance of God's favour; and being "justified by faith, we have had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) **Who is he that condemneth?**—*The believer's confidence*:—I. SOME THERE ARE THAT WOULD CONDEMN US. 1. Satan (Rev. xii. 10; Job i. 9, ii. 4, 5). 2. The law (John v. 45; Gal. iii. 10). 3. Conscience (1 John (ii. 20). II. AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST THERE CAN BE NO CONDEMNATION (ver. 1). To which is required—1. Faith in Him (John iii. 16). 2. Union to Him

by that faith (John xvii. 21, 22; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 17; John xv. 1-3). III. HERE ARE FOUR REASONS WHY THEY CANNOT BE CONDEMNED. 1. "It is Christ that died." (1) Christ died for our sins (Isa. liii. 5, 6; 1 John ii. 2). (2) Believers died in Him. (3) Hence they cannot be condemned, because He hath made satisfaction for their debts. 2. "Yea, rather, that is risen again." (1) Christ did really rise (Luke xxiv. 6). (2) His rising shows that He hath completed our redemption and satisfied for our sins (Acts ii. 24). (3) He rose as He died, the Head of the Church (chap. iv. 25). (4) All believers, therefore, rose with Him (Col. iii. 1). Hence there can be no condemnation to them, because, by His resurrection, He and they in Him were acquitted (ver. 1; Heb. v. 9). 3. "Who is even at the right hand of God," which betokens—(1) His honour (Heb. i. 3, viii. 1). (2) His happiness (Psa. xvi. 11). (3) His power (Mark xiv. 62; Psa. cx. 1), by which He will destroy—(*a*) Satan (Heb. ii. 14). (*b*) Sin (1 John iii. 8). (*c*) Death (1 Cor. xv. 26, 55, 56; Hos. xiii. 14). Hence they cannot be condemned (1 John ii. 1). 4. "Who also maketh intercession for us," which He doth by—(1) Appearing for us before God (Heb. ix. 24). (2) His sacrifice (Heb. x. 12, 14). (3) Pleading our cause (1 John ii. 1). (4) The Father's always hearing Him (John xi. 42; Matt. xvii. 5). Conclusion: 1. Consider—(1) That you are guilty (Gal. iii. 22; Rom. iii. 19), and condemned (John iii. 18). (2) That there is no way of acquittal but by Christ (Acts iv. 12). (3) That none come to God by Him but may be saved (Heb. vii. 25). (4) That consequently if you come by faith to Him, there can be no condemnation to you (Matt. xi. 28, 29). 2. Meditate often on the death, resurrection, &c., of Christ. 3. Be thankful to God for sending Christ (chap. xi. 33), and for making Christ known to you (Matt. xi. 25). 4. Be not dismayed at spiritual enemies, but triumph over them (vers. 34–37). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *A challenge and a shield:*—We should have but one hope of salvation. As long as we have half a dozen, we have half a dozen doubtful ones. When Charles V. went to war with Francis I., he sent a herald declaring war in the name of the Emperor of Germany, King of Castille, King of Aragon, &c., &c., &c., giving his sovereign all the honours that were his due. The herald of Francis, not to be out-done in the list of honours, said, "I take up the challenge in the name of Francis the First, King of France; Francis the First, King of France; repeating his master's name and office as many times as the other had titles. So it is a grand thing, whenever Satan accuses, just to say, "Christ has died, Christ has died." If any confront you with other confidences, still keep to this almighty plea. If one says, "I was christened, and confirmed," answer him by saying, "Christ has died." Should another say, "I was baptized as an adult," let your confidence remain the same. When another says, "I am a sound, orthodox Presbyterian," you stick to this solid ground, "Christ has died." There is enough in that one truth to include all that is excellent in the others, and to answer all the accusations that may be brought against you. Here is—I. A CHALLENGE TO ALL COMERS. The encounter is not to be a mere tilt in a tournament, but a battle for life or death. Who enters the lists against the believer? 1. Satan. It is his business to be the accuser of the brethren. He knows enough of our conduct to be able to bring to memory much that might condemn us. When this fails, the father of lies will accuse us of things of which we are not guilty, or will exaggerate our guilt, in order to drive us to despair. Up with your shield, then, and say, "Yes, it is all true, or it might have been; but 'It is Christ that died.'" 2. The world. As long as you go with evil companions they will applaud you; but when you give up their society they will sneer at you, and bring up all your past life against you. Tell the world, once for all, that it may condemn you, and that it is right that they should condemn you; but tell them also that Christ died. If they say that Christ's death does not repair the injury you have done to your fellow-men, tell them that, as far as you can, you mean to make restitution to them; and that your Master has done it more good than you ever did it harm. 3. Your own conscience. When David had cut off Saul's skirt, his "heart smote him." It is an ugly knock that a man's heart gives when it smites him. Thunderbolts and tornadoes are nothing in force compared with the charges of a guilty conscience. But when a man condemns himself let him tell conscience, as he told his former opponents, "it is Christ that died," and it will be perfectly satisfied, and will use its voice for other purposes. 4. The law of God, which must condemn sin. But when it has done its worst, say to it, I am "not under thee, but under grace." My Substitute has kept the law on my behalf. He has borne the penalty and I am clear. II. A REMEDY FOR ALL SIN. 1. "Look," says one, "there is sin." True, but yonder is the Saviour. 2. "Yes, but

you have been specially guilty; there is great sin against a great God." True, but there is a great sacrifice. 3. "But God must punish sin." It is even so; but sin has been punished, for "Christ has died." Not only is our sin punished, but the sin is gone. If my friend has paid my debt, it is gone. And that my sins are gone is further clear, for He rose again from the dead. If He had not paid the debt, He would have remained in the prison of the grave: and we have still another assurance that it is all gone, for Christ "is even at the right hand of God." He would not be there if He were a debtor. And as to our infirmities, He is there to plead for His people: "Who also maketh intercession for us." III. AN ANSWER TO EVERY ACCUSATION WHICH MAY ARISE FROM SIN. Sometimes the accusing whisper comes—1. "You have sinned against a great God." I will make no answer but this: "It is Christ that died." Christ is able to stand between me and God. It is true that God is great, but He cannot ask for more than Divine righteousness, and in Christ I present that. 2. "You have robbed God of His glory." I know it, but "Christ has died," and has brought all the glory back again. 3. "But you have sinned wilfully!" True, but then Jesus willingly died for me, the wilful sinner. 4. "But you sinned against light and knowledge." Yes; but Christ brings a sacrifice offered with His own full knowledge of all that it involved. 5. "But you have sinned with delight." Ah! it is so; but then my Lord delighted to come to be my Saviour. 6. "But you have sinned in spirit"; but then Christ suffered in His spirit. The sufferings of His soul were the very soul of His sufferings. 7. "But you have aforetime refused Christ." Yes; but I set over against that the fact that He always would have me. 7. "But you have trusted in others, and turned away from Christ"; but Christ never turns us away because we only come to Him when others fail us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The four pillars of the Christian faith*:—The protest of an innocent man against the charge of an accuser may well be vehement. But here we have the protest of a justified sinner, that his character is clear through the perfect mediation of Christ, which gives him this amazing confidence. We have before us the four pillars upon which the Christian rests his hope. Because of our unbelief and the attacks our faith has to endure, God has given us four strong consolations, with which we may fortify our hearts whenever the sky is overcast, or the hurricane is coming forth from its place. It reminds me of what I have sometimes heard of the ropes that are used in mining. It is said that every strand of them would bear the entire tonnage, and consequently, if each strand bears the full weight that will ever be put upon the whole, there is an absolute certainty of safety given to the whole when twisted together. Now each of these four articles of our faith is sufficient to bear the weight of the sins of the whole world. What must be the strength when the whole four are intertwisted, and become the support of the believer? The Christian never can be condemned because—I. CHRIST HATH DIED. In the death of Christ there was a full penalty paid to Divine justice for his sins. If we shelter ourselves beneath the tree of Calvary we are safe. One cries, "Thou hast been a blasphemer." Yes, but Christ died for blasphemers. "But thou hast stained thyself with lust." Yes, but Christ died for the lascivious. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." II. CHRIST HAS RISEN AGAIN. "Yea rather!" As much as to say, it is a powerful argument for our salvation that Christ died; but it is a still more cogent proof that Christ rose. Christ by His death paid to His Father the full price of what we owed to Him. Still the bond was not cancelled until the day when Christ rose. Death was the payment of the debt, but resurrection was the public acknowledgment that the debt was paid. On the Cross I see Jesus dying for my sins as an expiating sacrifice; but in the resurrection I see God accepting what He has done for my indisputable justification. His death was the digging of the well of salvation; but the resurrection was the springing up of the water. Christ was in His death the hostage of the people of God. Now, as long as He was in prison, although there might be ground of hope, it was but as light sown for the righteous; but when the hostage came out, then every child of God was released from durance vile no more to die. III. "WHO IS EVEN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." Is there not any word of special commendation to this? The last one had, "Yea rather" (see chap. v. 10). Here is an argument which hath much more power than even Christ's death. In other passages Christ is said to have sat down for ever at the right hand of God. Now, He never would if the work were not fully done. There were no seats provided for the priests in the Jewish tabernacle. Every priest stood daily ministering. But the great High Priest of our profession hath taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty on high, because now the sacrifice is complete. "Sitting at the right hand of God"

means—(1) That Christ is now in the honourable position of an accepted one. The right hand of God is the place of majesty and favour. Now, Christ is His people's representative. When He died for them they had rest; when He rose again for them they had liberty; when He sat at His own right hand, then they had favour, and honour, and dignity. (2) The place of power. Christ at the right hand of God signifies that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. Now, who is He that condemns the people that have such a head as this? IV. "WHO ALSO MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US." Our apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, puts a strongen comium upon this sentence. In the first he said, "Yea rather"; the second, "Much more"; but now "He is able also to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by Him," &c. If I had to intercede for my brother with my father, I should feel I had got a safe case in hand. This is just what Jesus has to do. (*Ibid.*) *The completeness of redemption*:—The privilege itself which is here mentioned, the believer's freedom from condemnation propounded for greater emphasis in the form of a question, Who shall condemn? which hath two things considerable in it. First, We will look upon these words, as they do present to us the state of a Christian in the matter and substance of them; who shall condemn? that is, none shall condemn. The second is, as it expresses to us the spirit of a Christian, and that is a spirit of triumph and exultation; who shall condemn him? as defying any that should undertake it, or go about it. The second is the confirmation of this privilege from the several arguments which are brought to enforce it; and they are, I say, taken from four articles of our Christian faith. We will view them in their several order as they lie before us. The first is, The death of Christ; "It is Christ that died." Christ's dying for believers does infer their freedom from condemnation. Now the strength of this argument it does depend upon a threefold consideration. First, The death of Christ does free God's children from condemnation, upon account of the nature and quality of it, considered in itself as most sufficient to such a purpose as this is. This it is again in a twofold respect. First, The dignity of His person; it is Christ. If it had been any other person who had undertaken to reconcile us to God and to free us from condemnation, we might have notwithstanding doubted of it, and called it into question. The second is, The fulness of His satisfaction. Those for whom Christ hath died they cannot be condemned, because Christ by dying for them hath taken away all manner of guilt and condemnation from them. The third is, The interest and propriety which all believers have in this death, in these words. First, In the intention of Christ; He hath designed His death to be effectual to all His elect, and did with a special respect unto them lay down His life. Secondly, As to their own improvement and application; they have laid hold on this death of Christ, and so made it their own, and the virtue and efficacy of it. The third and last is, The justice of God Himself in reference to both. It is satisfied in the surety, and therefore it cannot in justice be required of the principal debtor; the Judge of all the world must needs do right. And so much for that, namely, the first argument to prove God's children free from condemnation, taken from the death of Christ. The second is taken from His resurrection; "yea rather," that is risen again. First, In reference to the mystery and thing itself, as a more excellent and transcendent dispensation. For Christ to be risen again, this is such a glorious mystery, as dazzles the most curious eyes, and affects all men that behold it even with admiration. Secondly, In reference to Christ Himself, rather as risen again, as that which is the greater honour and dignity to Him; for hereby was there a discovery of His Godhead and Divine nature. Thirdly, In reference to ourselves, as of greatest use and improvement to us. For Christ's resurrection it is the ground and foundation of ours; and so of all other comfort which belongs unto us. This is the sum of the business: That Christ sits at God's right hand as a testimony of the fulness of His redemption and the completeness of His sacrifice for us. This intercession of Christ does not consist in a formal prostrating of the body of Christ, but especially in these following particulars. First, In His appearing and presenting of Himself for us to His Father in both His natures (Heb. ix. 24). Secondly, As Christ does appear in heaven for us, so He does likewise further urge and present to God the Father the rigour and merit and efficacy of that sacrifice which He once made on earth for us. Thirdly, He does also actually apply this His death and merit and satisfaction to believers themselves. As Paul in the behalf of Onesimus, "Set this upon my account." Fourthly and lastly, Christ is said to intercede for us in all those particular suits and requests which He puts up in our behalf. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*)

It is Christ that died.—*The death of Christ*:—I. WHO DIED? Christ—*i.e.*, the

Anointed of God. 1. Persons under the law, who were set apart to important offices, as prophets, priests, kings, were anointed with the holy oil, which was typical of the anointing of the Holy Ghost. So we read about our Lord (Luke iv. 18). As oil insinuates itself into the minutest pores of the substance which it touches, so the Divine nature wholly possessed the human form called Jesus; and there was that perfect union of God and man which we call Christ. Thus, though He be God and man, He is not two, but one Christ. But He was "anointed above His fellows." Thus, for instance, Aaron was anointed high priest, Saul king, and Elisha prophet; Melchisedek was king and priest, Moses priest and prophet; yet none but Christ was Prophet, Priest, and King. 2. And as He was anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure, so He communicates that unction to His people as they require; and as the oil which was poured upon Aaron was so copious as to run down to the skirts of his clothing, so the unction of the Holy One was so abundant on Christ, as the Head of His Church, that it ever has, and ever will, run down to the meanest and the weakest of believers. II. WHY DID HE DIE? 1. To deliver us from condemnation. 2. To testify God's love to a lost world (1 John iv. 10). 3. For the fulfilment of Scripture (Matt. xxvi. 52–54; Luke xxiv. 27). 4. Not only to satisfy God, but thus to save sinners. And looking at the Person who died, it secures the salvation of all the elect, for Christ is the emphatic word in all the sentence. Who died? Christ. You need no more. Nothing can be added to strengthen it. "Who is he that condemneth?" Christ has died. It shuts up all. III. THE EFFICACY OF HIS DEATH. God can now be "just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus"; but in no other way that we are told of but by Christ's death. And the sacrifice of Christ was once for all. It need not be repeated. There is no more, no other sacrifice for sin (Heb. x. 12, 14). (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) *The death of Christ*:—All the world has sung the praise of the Princess Alice. One child having died of a contagious disease, she was in the room where another was dying, and the Court physician said to her, "You must not breathe the breath of this child, or you yourself will die." But seeing the child mourning, she in sympathy kissed the little one, caught the disease, and perished. All the world sings of her heroism and self-sacrifice; but I have to tell you that when our race was dying, the Lord Jesus stooped down and gave us the kiss of His everlasting love, and died that we might live." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) **Yea rather, that is risen again.**—*Christ's resurrection a higher fact than His death*:—This—I. SUPPOSES THE FACT OF HIS DEATH. His death is not to be disparaged; none can appreciate it too highly. It is the highest expression of love the universe ever witnessed—the highest homage to truth, rectitude, and order that the Divine government ever received. It was a death-blow to all past dispensations; it rang in the new era of eternal mercy. But great as is His death, the great thing is implied in His resurrection. There could not have been a real resurrection had there not been a real death. II. DEMONSTRATES THE WONDERFULNESS OF HIS DEATH. 1. Its absolute voluntariness. He who could rise from the dead by His own power could have avoided death. His rising proved that He had power to lay down His life and take it up again. 2. Its supernatural character. Only a few of the millions that have died have ever been raised to life; only One ever rose by His own power, and that was Christ. The supernatural resurrection shows the supernatural death. It is the resurrection, therefore, that gives a meaning to Christ's death. 3. The moral purpose of His death. The great end of His death was to give spiritual life to humanity, and this His resurrection ensures. He is alive, to carry on by His gospel and His Spirit the great work of man's spiritual restoration. Conclusion: Let us think rather of the risen than of the dead Christ. Alas, the modern Church generally lives rather on the gloomy Saturday, when Christ is in His grave, than on the bright Sunday when He appeared to His disciples—the blessed Easter of the world. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Who is even at the right hand of God.**—*On Christ's being at the right hand of God*:—It imports—1. The advancement of Christ, in our nature, to the highest honour and glory. He is not only possessed of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and of which He was pleased, for a time, to empty Himself; but having taken our nature into heaven with Him, there is a most glorious beauty and lustre put upon it, of which the disciples that were with Him on the mount of transfiguration had a lively emblem, and of which Stephen and Paul, and John the divine, had visions. 2. Christ's being at the right hand of God implies the sovereignty, power, and dominion with which He is invested. 3. His being at the right hand of God expresses not only His honour and power, but also His blessedness and joy. He for ever drinks in the

highest pleasures from the indwelling Godhead, from His matchless nearness to, and communion with the Father, and from the review of His own finished work, and the glorious things which He accomplished. Being thus exalted, He can carry on and finish, by power, the redemption He has purchased by price; can give gifts to men, give repentance and remission of sins. (*T. Ferme, M. A.*) *The right hand of God*:—We honour the right hand more than we do the left. If in accident or battle we must lose one hand, let it be the left. The left hand being nearer the heart, we may not do much of the violent work of life with that hand without physical damage; but he who has the right arm in full play has the mightiest of all earthly weapons. In all ages, and in all languages, the right hand is the symbol of strength, and power, and honour. Hiram sat at the right hand of Solomon. Then we have the term, "He is a right-hand man," and Lafayette was Washington's right-hand man. Marshal Ney was Napoleon's right-hand man; and now you have the meaning of Paul when he speaks of Christ, who is at the right hand of God. That means He is the first Guest of heaven. He has a right to sit there. The Hero of the universe. Count His wounds—in the feet, in the hands, in the side, in the temples. If a hero comes back from battle, and he takes off his hat, or rolls up his sleeve and shows you the scar of a wound, you stand in admiration at his heroism and patriotism; but Christ makes conspicuous the wounds gotten on Calvary, that Waterloo of all the ages. Wounded all over, let Him sit on the right hand of God. He has a right to sit there. By the request of God the Father, and the unanimous suffrages of all heaven, let Him sit there. In the grand review, when the redeemed pass by in cohorts of splendour, they will look at Him and shout "Victory!" The oldest inhabitant of heaven never saw a grander day than the one when Christ took the right hand of God. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The ascension: mysteries in religion*:—The ascension is ever to be commemorated with thanksgiving. As the Jewish high priest, on the great day of atonement, went into the holy of holies with the blood of the victim, and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, so Christ has entered into heaven itself, to present His pierced hands and wounded side, in token of the atonement which He has effected for the sins of the world. Wonder and awe must always mingle with the thankfulness which the revealed dispensation of mercy raises in our minds. And this, indeed, is an additional cause of thankfulness, that Almighty God has disclosed to us enough to raise such feelings. Had He merely told us that He had pardoned us, we should have had overabundant cause for blessing Him; but in showing us somewhat of the means, He has enlarged our gratitude, yet sobered it with fear. We are allowed with the angels to obtain a glimpse of the mysteries of heaven, "to rejoice with trembling." I. CHRIST'S ASCENSION TO THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD IS A TOKEN THAT HEAVEN IS A PLACE, AND NOT A MERE STATE. The bodily presence of the Saviour is in heaven. This contradicts the notions of cultivated and speculative minds, and humbles the reason. Philosophy considers it more rational to suppose that God is in no one place more than another. It would teach, if it dare, that heaven is a mere state of blessedness; but, to be consistent, it ought to maintain that Christ's presence on earth was a mere vision; for certain it is, He who appeared on earth went up from the earth. And here again a difficulty occurs. Whither did He go? Beyond the sun and stars? Again, what is meant by ascending? Philosophers will say there is no difference between down and up as regards the sky. And thus we are led on to consider how different are the character and effect of the Scripture notices of the structure of the physical world from those which philosophers deliver. And when we find the two apparently discordant, the feeling we ought to have is not an impatience to do what is beyond our powers, to arbitrate between the two voices of God, but a sense of the utter nothingness of worms such as we are; of our incapacity to contemplate things as they really are; a conviction that what is put before us, in nature or in grace, though true in such a sense that we dare not tamper with it, yet is but an intimation useful for particular purposes, "until the day break and the shadows flee away." And thus, while we use the language of science for scientific purposes, we may reprove its upholders should they attempt to "stretch it beyond its measure." It may stand as a proselyte under the shadow of the temple; but it must not dare profane the inner courts, in which the ladder of angels reached to the throne of God, and "Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Note, too, that our Lord is to come from heaven "in like manner" as He went. Attempt to solve this prediction, according to the received theories of science, and you will discover their shallowness. They are unequal to the depth of the

problem. II. CHRIST HAS GONE UP ON HIGH "TO PRESENT HIMSELF BEFORE THE FACE OF GOD FOR US" (Heb. ix. 12, 24, 25; vii. 24, 25; viii. 1, 2). These passages refer us to the rites of the Jewish law. The high priest entering with the atoning blood into the holiest was a representation of Christ's gracious deed in our behalf. How does He fulfil the rite of intercession? Instead of explaining, Scripture does but continue to answer us in the language of the type; even to the last it veils His deed under the ancient figure (Rev. viii. 3, 4). Shall we therefore explain away its language as merely figurative? Far from it. Christ is within the veil. We must not search curiously what is His present office. And, since we do not know, we will studiously keep to the figure given us in Scripture. We will not neglect it because we do not understand it. We will hold it as a mystery, or a truth sacramental; that is, a high invisible grace lodged in an outward form. Thus much we see in it, the pledge of a doctrine which reason cannot understand—viz., of the influence of the prayer of faith upon the Divine counsels. The Intercessor directs or stays the hand of the Unchangeable and Sovereign Governor of the world, being at once the meritorious cause and the earnest of the intercessory power of His brethren. III. CONSIDER OUR SAVIOUR'S WORDS—"IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT I GO AWAY: FOR IF I GO NOT AWAY, THE COMFORTER WILL NOT COME." He does not tell us why it was that His absence was the condition of the Holy Spirit's presence. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." To the same purpose are John xiv. 12, 28; xx. 17. Now, proud and curious reason might seek to know why He could not "pray the Father" without going to Him; why He must depart in order to send the Spirit. But faith muses over the wonderful system of Providence, which is ever connecting events, between which man sees no necessary bond. The whole system of cause and effect is one of mystery; and this instance, if it may be called one, supplies abundant matter of praise and adoration to a pious mind. It suggests to us, again, how very much our knowledge of God's ways is but on the surface, and also leads our minds with great comfort to the thought of many lower dispensations of Providence towards us. He who, according to His inscrutable will, sent first His Son, and then His Spirit, acts with deep counsel, which we may surely trust, when He sends from place to place those earthly instruments which carry on His purposes. This is a thought which is particularly soothing as regards the loss of friends; or of especially gifted men, who seem in their day the earthly support of the Church. For what we know, their removal hence is as necessary for the furtherance of the very objects we have at heart, as was the departure of our Saviour. Their gifts are not lost to us. Yea, doubtless, they are keeping up the perpetual chant in the shrine above, praying and praising God day and night in His temple, like Moses upon the mount, while Joshua and his host fight with Amalek (Rev. vi. 10; xi. 17, 18; xv. 3, 4). Conclusion: What has been said about the ascension comes to this—that we are in a world of mystery, with one bright Light before us, sufficient for our proceeding forward through all difficulties. Take away this Light, and we are utterly wretched. But with it we have all and abound. Not to mention the duty and wisdom of implicit faith, what is nobler than the generosity of heart which risks everything on God's word, dares the powers of evil to their worst efforts, and repels the illusions of sense and the artifices of reason, by confidence in the truth of Him who has ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high? We will not wish for sight. It is enough that our Redeemer liveth; that He has been on earth, and will come again. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) **Who also maketh intercession for us.**—*The intercession of Christ:* —I. ITS NATURE. 1. As it implies a distance between the Father with whom Christ intercedes and those for whom He intercedes, so its aim and design is to remove this distance (1 John ii. 1; John xvii. 20-24). 2. In order to the attaining these ends, it consists primarily in Christ presenting continually before God that sacrifice He made of Himself on earth (Heb. ix. 24-26; Rev. v. 6; Heb. ix. 12; xii. 24). 3. Yet it may be reasonably presumed to comprehend some direct signification of His mind and will to the Father, in a manner worthy of Himself, concerning those for whom He intercedes. We are naturally led to conceive thus of Christ's intercession from the word itself, which properly signifies pleading. His work in heaven is also sometimes represented under the notion of His asking and praying to the Father (Psa. ii. 8; John xiv. 16; xvi. 26). But this is very different from that of all others, or even His own, in the days of His humiliation. The style of His intercession is majestic, as of One who has authority to challenge what He signifies His desire and will about (John xvii. 24). 4. One branch of it is to take care of the prayers of the saints on earth, to commend and present them to God, and to

secure acceptance for them (1 Pet. i. 5; Rev. viii. 3; Heb. iv. 14–16; x. 21, 22; xiii. 15; Col. iii. 17). II. ITS PROPERTIES. 1. It is just and right. (1) It is the intercession of One who Himself is holy, and ever stood right with the law of God. (2) It is also right in itself; not a mere suit for mercy, but a plea addressed to justice, for what He has first purchased. (3) It is also carried on in a perfectly holy manner, and according to the will of God. Thus is our Advocate, in all respects, Jesus Christ the Righteous (1 John ii. 2). 2. It is in common for the whole household of God, yet distinct and particular for every member; and in order to this, it is qualified with His perfect knowledge of what concerns them all. 3. It is conducted with consummate skill and prudence, and to the best advantage. We often ask and have not, because we ask amiss; but as Christ understands thoroughly the cause of His clients, He varies and disposes His pleas according to the nature and exigency of every case. 4. It is most affectionate and earnest. All His people's conflicts and complaints are not only before Him, but within Him (Heb. iv. 15; ii. 18). 5. It is constant and perpetual as long as there is any saint left to be brought to glory (Heb. vii. 25). 6. It is ever prevalent and successful. The interest of all is wrapt together; the Advocate is a dutiful Son to the Father, a loving Brother to the client, and God is a tender Father to them both. Christ knew in the days of His flesh that the Father always heard Him. And can the success of His prayers, or His confidence of their success, be less now He has the price and pledge of all He asks for in His hands? III. ITS USES. 1. It manifests God's glory. Is it not congruous, while the sins of those whom God will save are continually pleading on earth against the favours He is doing and designing for them, that the blood of perfect atonement should be alway pleaded in heaven against the crying guilt of these sins, and produced as a just ground of all the ample largesses of His grace to those who are daily making themselves unworthy of them? Does it not make it visible all over heaven with what strict regards to His holiness and justice He proceeds in dispensing the fruits of His grace? 2. It promotes Christ's own glory. As He glorifies the Father in the continual discharge of this office, so no less does the Father glorify Him in advancing Him to it (Heb. v. 4, 5). 3. It undoubtedly answers many unknown uses in respect to the inhabitants of the invisible world. Saints and angels behold the whole transaction. And who can tell how large a part of their happiness may arise from the sight of Christ's performing His temple service in the midst of them? Application: The subject—1. Teaches the humility and reverence which becomes us toward God at all times and in all our addresses to Him. 2. Inspires hope in God's mercy and grace for our salvation, together with frequent and cheerful addresses to the throne of grace (Heb. iv. 14–16; x. 19–22). 3. Comforts the saints under all the difficulties, dangers, and troubles of the present state. As long as Christ preserves His interest in heaven, He can never fail of an interest on earth. 4. Naturally and powerfully suggests our loving, cleaving, and living to Christ (Heb. iv. 14; x. 21–23). 5. Attracts the hearts of Christians from earth to heaven, and points their supreme views and desires thither (Col. iii. 1, 2). (*J. Hubbard.*)

Christ's heavenly intercession:—Christ Jesus does not lead a life merely of blessedness in heaven, but a life of office. He hath an unchangeable and everlasting priesthood. The one part of His priesthood He finished here on earth, when he offered up Himself to God a sacrifice; and the other, the interceding work of His priesthood, He still carries on in heaven. Intercession, in general, signifies a pleading and entreating with one person in behalf of another. We being unworthy of access to God in our own name, Christ Jesus is our intercessor to plead our cause with the Father, and to procure and dispense to us the blessings of His purchase. He virtually makes continual intercession for us, by appearing in our nature and name, presenting Himself in that body in which He suffered on earth, standing in the midst of the throne as the Lamb that had been slain. His intercession is founded on His atonement. By this intercession of Jesus Christ God is glorified. It is a striking testimony to God's awful majesty and infinite purity that He has appointed a standing Mediator between Him and us, and will confer no grace upon us but through Him; and it is, at the same time, an eminent instance of His love and grace, that He has appointed such a glorious Intercessor to plead our cause in heaven, even His own Son. By this also Christ Himself is highly honoured. His saving power is demonstrated: "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." The efficacy of His sacrifice, His love to His people, and the great influence and interest

He has in heaven, are continually shown forth. This doctrine of Christ's intercession tends to excite in us a due mixture of reverence and confidence towards God. Should it not support the awakened sinner under a sense of guilt, prevent his despairing of mercy, and encourage him to come to the Father by the Son of His love? (*T. Ferme, M.A.*) *Christ's intercession*:—I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION, or the manner in which it is performed. 1. The intercession of Christ, in His state of exaltation, consists in His personal appearance in heaven before God. It is from Him that blessings are to be obtained; and, as the advocate requires to come into the presence of the judge by whom the law is to be administered, and the case of his client determined, so it is a part of the Divine constitution, in the scheme of redemption, that the representative or advocate of sinners should not stand afar off, but come into the immediate presence of the Eternal. 2. But the intercession of Christ consists not in a simple appearance before God in His human nature, but in His official presentation of Himself as the sacrifice offered for sinners. His sufferings alone could give Him a title to become an intercessor; and when He appeared in heaven as such, He behoved to come with His proofs and credentials of His previous qualification for the office, by "suffering unto death." As the high priest entered with the blood obtained from the previous sacrifice, so Christ entered heaven with the blood of His sacrifice. It was known in the heaven above that His work was completed, and His very resurrection was a proof of it. 3. But besides this there seems farther to be included in Christ's work of intercession, the audible expression of His desires in behalf of His people. This is the case in the several examples recorded of His intercessions on earth. II. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM CHRIST INTERCEDES. III. THE SUBJECTS TO WHICH CHRIST'S INTERCESSION REFERS, or the things for which He intercedes in behalf of His people. 1. Christ intercedes for those whom God has given Him, that they may be made His actually by believing on His name. 2. Christ intercedes for the preservation of His people from evil, and for their progressive advancement in holiness. The Saviour, who knows a world's temptations, is busy within the veil, and, as in the days of His flesh, is His prayer ascending—"Holy Father, keep those whom Thou hast given Me from the evil that is in the world." 3. Christ, by His intercession, obtains the pardon of the sins which believers daily commit, and thus averts the wrath of God, and maintains their peace with heaven. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." What a source of consolation does this open up to the frail, the offending Christian! 4. Christ intercedes for His people that they may be brought to heaven, to enjoy His blessedness, and to see His glory. (*J. Clason.*) *The intercession of Christ: its method*:—It was when the high priest entered with the blood and incense within the veil before the mercy-seat that he made intercession for the people. The very presenting of the blood and incense was an act of intercession, whether words were used or not. It was done in behalf of Israel for the purpose of averting the displeasure and conciliating the favour of Jehovah. With reference to this, Jesus is represented as fulfilling in heaven this part of the priestly functions. In what precise manner His intercession is carried on, it may not be easy for us with certainty to determine. It is evident, from the type just alluded to, that there may be intercession in action as well as in words. If a general who had fought the battles of his country, and had received many a wound, were presenting a petition to his sovereign on behalf of any of his offending subjects, what could be a more effective intercession than the silent baring of his bosom and pointing to his scars? (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *A personal advocate*:—An old legionary asked Augustus to assist him in a cause which was about to be tried. Augustus deputed one of his friends to speak for the veteran, who, however, repudiated the vicarious patron, saying, "It was not by proxy that I fought for you at Actium." Augustus acknowledged the obligation, and pleaded the cause in person. (*C. E. Little.*) *Christ our Advocate*:—There are some subjects that soon weary us. But it is not so with Christ. Like the sun, and the dew, and the rain, and the fleecy snow, He is always full of freshness and beauty. Let us now think of Him as our Advocate and Intercessor. I. THE ADVOCATE'S WORK. It is—1. To study the prisoner's case, and understand it thoroughly. 2. To feel deeply interested in it. 3. To stand and plead his cause. 5. To obtain his deliverance. Christ does all this. II. HIS PLEA. Sometimes an advocate pleads that the prisoner—1. Is innocent. 2. Or ignorant. 3. Or insane. 4. Or that he was quite justified in the act. But Christ pleads that He died in our stead (Heb. ix. 11, 12). III. HIS REWARD. Christ is doing this work "for us." What shall we give Him for this great service? He asks but one thing, "My son,

give Me thine heart." To do this is right, just, blessed. Who will do this to-day? *The advocacy of Christ*:—There is only one Advocate in all the universe that can plead our cause in the last judgment. Sometimes in earthly courts attorneys have specialities, and one man succeeds better in patent cases, another in insurance cases, another in criminal cases, another in land cases, another in will cases, and his success generally depends upon his sticking to that speciality. I have to tell you that Christ can do many things; but it seems to me that His speciality is to take the bad case of the sinner, and plead it before God until He gets eternal acquittal. But what plea can He make? Sometimes an attorney in court will plead the innocence of the prisoner. That would be inappropriate for us; we are all guilty. Sometimes he tries to prove an alibi. Such a plea will not do in our case. The Lord found us in all our sins, and in the very place of our iniquity. Sometimes an attorney he will plead the insanity of the prisoner, and say he is irresponsible on that account. That plea will never do in our case. We sinned against light, knowledge, and the dictates of our own consciences. What, then, shall the plea be? Christ will say, "Look at all these wounds. By all these sufferings, I demand the rescue of this man from sin and death and hell. Constable, knock off the shackles—let the prisoner go free." "Who is he that condemneth?" &c. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Christ a pleader*:—Catherine Brettage once, after a great conflict with Satan, said, "Reason not with me, I am but a weak woman; if thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ; He is my Advocate, my Strength, and my Redeemer, and He shall plead for me." *Christ's intercession*:—Christ's love did not cease at the hour of death. We write in our letters, "Your friend till death"; but Christ wrote in another style—"Your friend after death!" Christ died once, but loves ever. He is now testifying His affection to us; He is interceding for us; He appears in the court as the Advocate for the client. When He hath done dying, yet He hath not done loving. What a stupendous love was here! Who can meditate upon this and not be in an ecstacy? Well may the apostle call it "a love that passeth knowledge." (*T. Watson.*)

Vers. 35–39. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**—*Dangers which cannot separate the believer from the love of God*:—We begin with the general proposition, "Who shall separate us?" &c. And for the love of Christ it may be taken either actively or passively; actively for our love of Him, or passively for His love of us, which latter acceptation of it seems to be that which is here chiefly intended. First of all, let us look upon it in the thing itself. Who or what shall take off the love of Christ from us? That is, indeed, nothing at all. First, no persons shall be able to do it, whether Satan or wicked men. These they do now and then attempt it: as they are out of God's love themselves, so they would fain make others so too. First, not by means of accusation: accusation is an expedient way to take off affection. It was the course which Ziba took with Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, in reference to David. And it is the course which the devil and his instruments take with those which are faithful in reference to God. Satan he is the accuser of the brethren. Secondly, as not by accusation, so neither by temptation. Again, as no enemy or person, so further no state or condition. That there is no condition, though never so forlorn, that can make God to forsake His people. Now there is a various account which may be given hereof unto us. Ye may take it in these following particulars:—First, from God's unchangeableness, and the immutability of His own nature considered in Himself (2 Tim. ii. 13; James i. 17; John xiii. 1; Jer. xxxi. 3; Isa. liv. 8). Secondly, there is nothing which can separate the love of God from His children, or which can separate His children from His love, because this love of His it is not founded in anything in themselves. If the Lord did therefore love His people because they were thus and thus accommodated with riches, or honours, or strength, or any such accomplishment, He would then also cease to love them when that these were taken away from them. Thirdly, God's love is immovable as to anything which may happen unto us, because it was pitched upon us before we were, or had any being. That love which is from eternity in its original. Fourthly and lastly, there is no removal or taking off of the love of God from His people, in regard of the conveyance of it to them and the person in whom it is laid; and that is in His Son Jesus Christ—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The love which God bears to a Christian it is a love of covenant; and this covenant made in Christ. The second is as to the discovery or manifestation of this His love—"Who shall separate us from the love

of Christ?"—that is, what shall be a sufficient argument to persuade us that Christ does not love us? The afflictions of God's children are no arguments for the separation of God's love. First, because they are all dispensed out of the principles of love; that cannot be an argument to prove the want of love which is an argument rather to prove the truth of love, His love unto them. "As many as I love, I rebuke," &c. Secondly, it cannot be that affliction should be a withdrawing of God's affection, because He never shows more affection than He does in such a condition. Thirdly, these outward afflictions are no good argument for the separation of God's love, because the love of God reaches farther than these things here below. It is not limited or confined to this present life. Times of separation in other respects, yet they cannot be separating in this. They may separate a minister from his people; they may separate a husband from his wife; they may separate a father from his children; they may separate the soul from its body. Oh, but they cannot separate a Christian or true believer from Christ, nor from the love of God to him in Christ. And so now I have done with the first general part of the text which is this question or challenge, as it is considerable in the general proposition, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The second is the particular specification of evils themselves, which are seven in number: "Shall tribulation or distress?" &c. The first which is here presented is tribulation. The word in the Greek signifies to press, or pinch, or vex; and the word in the Latin signifies a threshing instrument or flail, wherewith the corn uses to be broken or beaten out; both of them do serve to set forth to us the nature of this present evil. First, I say, this evil of tribulation, it is such as is incident even to the saints and servants of God; they are such as are liable to great pains and griefs of body. St. Paul he had his tribulation, his thorn in the flesh, &c. And so it is with many others, &c. The apostle here instances in this as a principal evil, as that which is more general and which few escape. As for some other particulars which we find here mentioned in the text, they are such as all do not taste of. But yet even this in the next place shall not separate them from the love of God in Christ; a child of God is most dear to Him, even under tribulation itself. The second particular evil is distress: shall distress? The Greek word signifies properly straitness of place, when a man is so hampered as that he knows not which way to move, as it is with those who are shut up in some close and strait prison, or are in some violent throng and crowd. Now, this is another evil which God's people are also liable unto, as to great and strong pressures of body, so to be in many sad distractions of spirit, to be in distress. It has been the lot sometimes of those who have been the dearest servants of God. This is an evil somewhat further and heavier than the former, which we spake of before; anguish of spirit is somewhat more than pressure of body, and which many times has a great influence upon it. A Christian is never brought into those exigencies and straits and extremities but he has still a God to go to, into whose bosom he may comfortably empty and unload himself, and find satisfaction in all his distresses. The third is persecution: shall persecution? which signifies properly a driving from place to place. When men are forced and constrained to leave their home and proper habitations, and to fly into other places and countries. It may separate us from our houses, these poor cottages of clay, but it cannot separate us from God, who is our abode and dwelling-place in all generations, nor deprive us of our everlasting habitation. The fourth thing here instanced in is famine. This is another great affliction which God's people are subject unto here in this life. It is a wonderful thing to consider what strange kind of ways and means God has been pleased to provide for His servants in this particular. The fifth particular evil is nakedness. This is another trial of the saints, and the evil of it consists in two particulars. The one is as it is matter of shame, and the other as it is matter of danger, and hazard of life itself. Well, but this nakedness or stripping of apparel cannot strip the children of God of His love and favour in Christ, which shall still compass them about as a garment. The sixth here instanced in is peril, whereby we are to understand any danger or hazard of life in any kind whatsoever. Danger and fear of evil is many times a greater evil than the evil itself; and we know what difficulties and adventures it has sometimes put men upon. There are seasons and times of peril which God's children are exposed unto; but God does not leave them at such times, nor withdraw His love from them; in the world sometimes it is otherwise. There are many that will own their friends in times of safety, which yet will not know them in times of danger. The seventh and last is sword, whereby we are to understand all kind of violent death whatsoever. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Christ's*

love to us:—An aged man over ninety years of age was asked by his pastor this question: "My dear aged friend, do you love Jesus?" His deeply-furrowed face was lit up with a smile that sixty-seven years of discipleship had imparted, and, grasping my hand with both of his, said: "Oh! I can tell you something better than that." I asked him, "What is that?" "Oh, sir!" he said, "He loves me." *The Christian's security*:—There is a well-known little shell-fish which has its dwelling on the rocks. To these it clings with such surprising tenacity, that almost all attempts to dislodge it are vain. It takes alarm at the slightest touch; resists the more, the more it is assailed; and maintains its persistency to such a degree, that it will sooner submit to be crushed than to be removed. . . . Christian, learn of this little animal the secret of your strength and security in times of trouble. Your "place of defence is the munitions of rocks." Let nothing draw or drive you from your stronghold. *The Christian rejoicing in Christ's unchangeable love*:—I. THE LOVE OF GOD AS THE GROUND OF THE CHRISTIAN'S SECURITY. This love in ver. 39 he terms "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is consonant with the general testimony of Scripture. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead"; and if the fulness, then the love. So that it is useless to seek God's love out of Christ—there is none out of Christ. Now to make this love our confidence, we must bear in mind two things—1. It has been the spring of all that has been done for our salvation. (1) We speak of God as acting in this with a view to His own glory. True, but this is what we might almost venture to call an incidental circumstance. The sun manifests his glory as he rises day by day, but it is not the brightness of the sun that causes him to arise; we must look elsewhere for the source of that. So, if we would find the spring and origin of our salvation, we must look for it, not in the glory of the Godhead, but in the love of the Divine mind. Wisdom, justice, faithfulness, power, all shine forth here and are glorified; but how? As love's instruments. But what set love in action? We can give no answer; there is none to give; we are come to the fountain-head; we can go no farther. (2) The same as to Christ. Various motives are assigned in Scripture for all He did and suffered for us; the hope of reward—"for the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross"; obedience to His Father—"He became obedient unto death"; but without setting these things aside, we may still say, "He loved us and gave Himself for us." He looked upwards—there was His Father whom He delighted to obey; He looked forwards—there was the glory He was soon to inherit; but no matter where He looked, His heart was with us. 2. The same love that was the spring of all that has been done for our salvation, still exists in God unimpaired and unchanged. The apostle, you observe, does not speak of it as something passed and gone. Many of the great things it has already done, it is not necessary it should do again. If Christ has once died for my soul, His "one oblation of Himself once offered" fully atones for all my sins; if God has once justified me, no other justification do I need; if He has built for me one heaven, I cannot want another; but so much does He love me now, that if my Saviour had not died, if my guilty soul had not been justified, &c., my God would do for me just what He has already done. For six thousand years the sun has shone without suspension, but there will come a day when he will shine no more. But the love of God existed for a boundless period before that sun, and it will exist for as boundless a period after Him. It is not something God has created; it is a part of His own nature. II. THE CONFIDENCE WE MAY FEEL, IF WE HAVE AN INTEREST IN THIS LOVE, THAT NOTHING CAN EVER SEPARATE US FROM IT. 1. There is a love of God in which we are all interested, for we are all partakers of it. It keeps us in being, it gives us innumerable comforts, it makes to us in the gospel the most gracious offers of salvation; but if we trample on these offers or neglect them, there comes a time when this love turns away from us. It would go farther with us, but it cannot. The question is, then, Are you the objects of God's peculiar, saving love? And the way to answer it is to ask, Have you ever sought to become the objects of it? Most men hold the love of God cheaper by far than they hold one another's love. Do you feel that it is dearer to your soul than all other love? 2. There are two ways in which we can conceive it possible for a separation to be made between us and God's love. One is, for Him to withdraw His love from us; the other, for us to withdraw ourselves from that. The uniting cord, we may say, may break at either end, either at its higher end with God, or at its lower end with us. (1) As to the former of these cases, we need scarcely say a word. The very supposition seems a dishonour to Jehovah. He abandon me after having once freely loved me, and brought me to love and trust Him? I can feel, with Paul, that the whole universe

could not prevail on Him to do it, were the whole universe to try (ver. 38). Other love will often cool and wither away of itself; here is a love which nothing can wear away. (2) But let us turn to the other case—the drawing of us away from our love to Christ. This, the apostle expresses his firm conviction, is also impossible; and this conviction, he states, is the result of his own experience. There may now and then, he intimates, be struggling and conflict; we may have to put forth our strength, and a strength greater than ours, against these things, the force and pressure of them, but the struggle is sure to end in one way—we overcome. He has made to us new discoveries of His love in it, and these have made us more determined to love and adhere to Him. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*)

Separated from Christ:—1. The apostle had passed through experiences varied and trying enough to entitle him to make this inquiry. He knew what he was talking about. It is not the unchastened enthusiasm of a recruit, but the sober declaration of a veteran that is before us—a No which has an unconquerable human soul in it! History has sufficiently answered this inquiry from one side of Christian experience. Set it down as a fact that terror has failed. The scaffold, the rack, the stake, the dungeon, have fairly been worsted in this great fight. Enemies have killed the body, but the principle of truth lives; they have slain Christians, but Christianity is conqueror. 2. But has the apostle covered the whole ground? Does he exhaust the whole possibility of Christian trial? I think not. It is instructive to mark the development of the antagonisms to Christianity. In the text we have nothing but the roughest and vulgarest of opposition, yet the most natural. The fist, the thumb-screw, the scourge, are what we think of at the beginning: first, that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. The opposition does not end where the cruelty ends. We have thought that now the day of persecution has gone. I propose to substitute, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall flattery, or ease, or luxury? shall selfishness or gentility, or the praise of men?" The apostles were not tried upon these points. They were only out in the rough weather; they knew not the warmth of flattery or the power of the soft tongue. They fought their battle to the point of triumph; how are we going to fight ours? They conquered the stake: can we throw off the silken cords? 3. Paul himself gave an answer to the inquiry at a later date: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." When he wrote this epistle no answer came back upon him. But when he became an older man he saw further into the subtle play of the devil, and lived to see that love of the present world had done what tribulation, distress, &c., had failed to do! See the beginning of the mischief! Demas was separated from his nominal love of Christ, not by the sword, but by a bribe. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "No man can serve two masters." "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!" Yet men are still tempted to believe that somehow, having two hands, they can carry two worlds, and having two feet, they can walk upon two paths. Go to a Christian man and say, "If you do not surrender your religious convictions you shall be burnt in the public market-place as a common felon," and if there is one spark of real manhood in his nature he will say, "So be it! in the sufficiency of Divine grace I am ready." Go to that self-same man in a neighbourly way and show him how a certain thing in trade can be done so as to put him into the possession of considerable resources—with which he can afterwards do good. Possibly you may succeed! When you threatened him with the stake, he spat upon your fire; when you tempted him with a bribe, he said, "I will think about it." Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Not Nero; but "a friend in the trade!" Men are separated from the love of Christ in the name of wife and children. If thou wast a single man, and thy universe bounded by a carpet-bag, how virtuous and honourable thou wouldst be! You say to God in effect, "The woman that Thou gavest to be with me, and the children of whom I am the father—these are my tempters." Has it come to this, that a man may not slay himself alone, but that he must do it in the name which should be dearest to him, and make his very children a weight about his neck that shall drag him to the depths of perdition? If you go to a Christian preacher and say to him, "If you don't cease to preach you shall be thrown to the lions," if he has one spark of manhood left in him, he will declare his readiness to suffer in the name of Christ. The best memories will crowd upon him; he will think of that wondrous climax—"Who through faith . . . stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire," &c. When is the apostle going to finish that, and say, "Refused the bribe; and as utterly defied the subtlety as the violence of the

enemy"? The apostle exclaimed to Timothy, "Endure afflictions!" What have we to say to young preachers now? Endure prosperity! It never occurred to Paul to say to Timothy, "Now be on thy guard against flattery and merely outward success." When he charged those who were following him in the good cause, he said, "Fight the good fight, endure hardness." All his talk ran along the line of his own experience, as if it never occurred to him that in the ages to come all the violent attacks would be laid aside and the enemy would betake himself to a more subtle course of assault upon the citadel of faith! 4. Turning this matter over carefully, I have seen how possible it might be for certain constitutions and temperaments really to be terrified from the open and distinct avowal of faith; yet right down in their hearts really to be loving Jesus all the time. But a man led away from the truth by a bribe, a soul to whom prosperity was shown as a lure—that is the meanest, basest cowardice! If the man who shrank from martyrdom may escape, what escape can there be for the man who took forbidden fruit, did things in secret which he was ashamed of in public, and who was separated from the love of Christ, not nominally and professionally, but who had his heart eaten out of him by some invisible and voracious foe? Separated from the love of Christ! What by? By the stroke of a feather! by a whispered temptation! by a mouthful of poisoned honey! The apostles gave the right answers to violence—what reply shall we make to subtlety? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The indissoluble bond*:—Who? No one who cannot do one of three things. I. ANNIHILATE THE LOVED ONES. The being who could blot out of existence those whom Christ loved might effect the object, but who could do this? No creature in the heavens or on the earth. No one but the Absolute. II. BLOT THE LOVED ONES FROM THE MEMORY OF THE LOVER. The being who could cause Christ to forget His disciples would succeed. For those whom we cease to remember we cease to love. But who can do this? He is omniscient, the past, present, and the future are all alike to Him. Duration is all a now to Him. He is "the same yesterday." III. GIVE NEW INFORMATION OF THE LOVED ONES TO THE LOVER. Were it possible for a being to inform Christ of some bad qualities and some enormous crimes connected with the loved ones of which He was ignorant, His love might be extinguished. But who could do this? No one in heaven or on earth. He knew from eternity all concerning the objects of His love. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The two states*:—Is this he who so lately cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me"? who now triumphs? O happy man! "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" Yes, it is the same. Pained then with the thoughts of that miserable conjunction with a body of death, and so crying out for a deliverer; now he hath found a deliverer to do that for him to whom he is for ever united. (*Abp. Leighton.*) **As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long.**—*Killing the saints*:—First, we will take notice of the affliction, and that is killing. "We are killed." We see here what is the lot of the saints and servants of God. First of all, in regard of the enemies. What is the matter with them, that in their dealings with the people of God nothing will serve their turn but killing and slaying and taking away their lives? Surely it is not to be wondered at; there is very good reason for it, which may be given in these considerations: First, look upon them in their brood and generation and the stock they come of. Whose children are they? and from whom do they proceed? Children take after their parents. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John viii. 44). Therefore, in the second place, their dispositions carry them hereunto, and that in a twofold respect. First, it proceeds from their malice; they hate them and cannot abide them, therefore they kill them. Hatred, when it comes to the height of it, very easily proceeds to murder. The second is their jealousy and fear. As they kill them because they hate them, so they kill them because they fear them. Herod feared John, and therefore beheaded him. The second is how it comes about in regard of the saints themselves, whence they come to suffer it, and for what reason God Himself permits it. Why does He so? First, for the honour of religion and for the evidence of their faith itself, that the world from hence may be convinced of their sincerity and universal obedience to the will of God. Secondly, which is pertinent hereunto, for the multiplying and increasing of their number and the drawing on of more unto them. Thirdly, as the signification and evidence of future judgment and the dispensations of another world, the slaying and killing of the saints, it tells us what shall be done to the enemies, and how it is likely hereafter to go with the servants of God. Therefore it teaches us both to expect and prepare for the like, to provide for killing, and to be content to pro-

fess Christianity, even at so dear a rate as this. It will be worth it when all is done. "For Thy sake we are killed." But if they were indeed killed, how could they say they were killed, and tell us so in so many terms? Killing, it takes away complaining, and makes the parties which are so dealt with incapable of saying what they are. First, as an expression of impatience, and making the worst of their evil and affliction that possibly they could. This we shall find sometimes to be the disposition of sorrow, to aggravate itself and make it seem greater than it is. But secondly, in the reality of the thing, the desperateness of their condition. They call it killing because it tended thereunto, and was in a manner death itself. Thirdly, from the preparation of their minds, and disposition which was in them hereunto, as occasion might require. The people of God in this Scripture count themselves killed, because they were ready to be so if God should please to call them unto it. Killing, it is not to be interpreted in this place according to the event, but according to the intention and purpose. They that go out in a wrong cause, they kill where they do not hit, because they go out upon killing and murdering principles. Lastly, the people of God might here say they were killed while they lived, by way of sympathy and participation. They were killed forasmuch as others were killed which they were interested in. And thus much now also of the first thing which I propounded to be considered in this complaint: the affliction itself, "We are killed, or put to death." The second is the occasion or ground of it, "We are killed for Thy sake," which may admit of divers constructions. First, as the pretence of the enemies. "They kill us for Thy sake," that is, they deal thus cruelly with us, and make the world in the meantime believe as if herein they had respect unto Thee. Secondly, "For Thy sake," that is, for our reference to Thee, because we are Thy people, and worship Thy name, and profess Thy truth, and have Thy ordinances amongst us. Thirdly, it appears that God's cause is the thing which the enemies aim at in their killing of God's people, from a consideration of the means and ways whereby they labour to effect it, and that is by such as are most effectual to the extirpation of religion itself. Thirdly, "For Thy sake." We may carry it a little further than so, not only as a complaint, but a confession. Not so much for a complaint of their enemies, as indeed a complaint of themselves. "We are killed for Thy sake," that is, in satisfaction to Thy justice, "Who art a just and righteous God, and wilt not suffer sin to be unpunished." Our enemies have nothing against us themselves, but they kill us for Thy sake, that is, to accomplish Thy holy decrees, to bring about Thy wise providence, to fulfil Thy righteous judgments, to visit and avenge the quarrel of Thy covenant. And so much of these words, as they may be taken under the emphasis of complaint. The second is under the emphasis of triumph, in the words of the apostle, and so we have this from it, that the main ground of rejoicing in suffering is the cause we suffer for. Then we have cause of quiet and comfort, when we can say, "'Tis for Thy sake." There are two things which are principally to be looked at in suffering—the one is a good conscience, and the other is a good cause. This it serves as a distinction between martyrs and malefactors. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Suffering in God's cause*:—First, we will take it emphatically, and consider it so. There is that in the cause of God which is able to keep the heart up in the greatest sufferings. To be killed for God's cause, it is a matter of special triumph. Secondly, it is a matter of rejoicing to suffer for God's sake, because herein we are made conformable to Christ Himself. Thirdly, we hereby come to partake of greater glory hereafter; suffering in a good cause has the promise of a good reward, and has amends made it for time to come in another place (Matt. v. 11, 12). And thus it is true emphatically. That suffering for God's sake is a matter of joy and rejoicing, we are killed: therefore glory in this our tribulation. Secondly, we may take it exclusively. "For Thy sake we are killed," and that is for Thy cause and nothing else. From whence we have this observable, that there is not anything in suffering which can comfort the heart for itself except it be for God's cause. It is not the punishment, but the cause, which makes the martyr. Again, further, as out of this there is no comfort in suffering, so indeed there is a great deal of discontent when a man shall reflect and enter into his conscience, and find that he does not suffer for God's cause; he will have a very sad reckoning to make of it when he shall give up his accounts to God. There are three particular considerations which do make our sufferings and persecutions to be said to be for God's sake. First, the intent of the enemies which we suffer from. We then suffer in this sense for God's sake when they

shall impose such evils and sufferings upon us in reference to God, because we are professors of religion and maintain the cause of God. It is thus far a suffering for God's sake because the enemy he looks at God in it. But, secondly, we may be said to suffer for God's sake from the nature of the thing itself which we suffer for. This now, it comes a little nearer, a man suffers for God's sake when he suffers for well-doing, not only in the apprehension of the enemy, but likewise in the thing itself. First, when it is sinful in itself. He that suffers thus does not suffer for God's sake, let an enemy be never so violent. Again, secondly, as when it is sinful in the thing. So likewise, when it is mingled and involved with any sinful circumstances, we do not properly suffer for God except we suffer every way for God. Thirdly, we are said to suffer for God's sake according to the disposition of the spirit we suffer with, that is, when we have a pure respect to God's glory in our suffering. And this is the second particular, the ground or occasion of these sufferings, "For Thy sake." The third particular in these words is the extent and continuance of the persecution, "All the day long." First, I say, but for a day. It pleases the Spirit of God to set forth to us the Church's persecution under an expression of short continuance; it is not a week, or a month, or a year, but only a day; it is but one day and we have done. When evils are at any time upon us, as we see they are now at this present, we think they will never be gone, through our impatient disposition; but we should learn in this case to submit to the providence of God in the humbling of ourselves for our sins. The second is the extent of its continuance. As it is but a day, so it is a whole day, all the day long. We must take notice of that. And under this expression we have three things intimated unto us. First, the continuance of the affliction, "An whole day." This it does denote unto us thus much, how that the afflictions of the people of God they do stay and abide upon them their appointed time. The second is the unweariedness of the enemy, "All the day long." It is a sign that they are not spent nor tired out in this execution. They kill, and take no respite between. First, because it is natural to them. It is a business which they are carried unto by their proper inclinations. Actions which are natural are unwearied. The eye it is not weary of seeing, nor the ear is not weary of hearing, nor the pulse is not weary of beating, because all these are natural to them. Secondly, it is delightful to them. That is another account of it. Those things which are pleasing are unwearied. Thirdly, they are unwearied in this business, because they have very good help and assistance to further them in it. Many hands they use to make light work. Where the burden lies all upon one, or some few, it is easy to be weary. Well, this teaches us what to do in this condition. If they kill all the day long, we should pray all the day long. The third is the patience of the saints, "Killed all the day long." Who could ever endure that? Yes, there where God gives help and strength to bear it men may be able to do it. And so was the Church here; she did not faint under continual tribulations. Here is now the great faith and constancy and patience of the saints. (*Ibid.*) *The world seeking to destroy the good:*— First, by way of designation, they have determined and appointed us hereunto. Thus it is with those who are enemies to the saints and people of God; they resolve, if they can, to destroy them. First, I say, they look upon them as unprofitable, as a people of whom there is no use or good comes at all. Creatures which are unprofitable, you know, we use to dispatch and destroy. But, secondly, as they look upon them as unprofitable, and so destroy them for that, so withal they look upon them as troublesome and pernicious, and destroy them for that. It is ordinary and familiar with them to impute all the mischief that falls out to them as the causes. Secondly, by way of expectation. "They count us as sheep for the slaughter"—that is, they make sure of our destruction; they do verily and fully make account to see us destroyed. The reason of it is this: First, because they would very fain have it so. That which men desire they believe. And then, secondly, because most commonly they judge according to outward appearance. And then, thirdly, the Lord does also infatuate them and give them up to their own imaginations and vain conceits many times. That is the second thing, by way, namely, of expectation, "They count us as sheep," &c., that is, they make sure of our destruction. Thirdly and lastly, which I conceive is principally intended in a way of scorn and contempt, "They count us as sheep for the slaughter," that is, they make no reckoning of our destruction. They make no more of killing us than a butcher would do of killing a sheep. First, I say, their readiness to procure it. That which men have any esteem or account of they are

very chary how they set themselves about it. These enemies they do it readily; they are not long ere they set themselves about it. That is one thing whereby they discover how cheap such men's deaths are with them. Secondly, their unmercifulness in the doing of it. These and the like considerations do manifest this truth unto us, how cheap the death of God's people is in the esteem and account of God's enemies. Well, let it be as cheap as it will be with such graceless persons as these are, yet we know there is One which sets a price and valuation upon it. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." The second is the form of allegation, "As it is written." Therefore let us be persuaded to the exercising of ourselves in this book with all kind of diligence, to be acquainted with the Word of God and the principal passages of it, so as it may be no strange or unheard-of thing to us. Ye see here how the apostle alleges it here in this place, "As it is written"; no more, but so. He does not tell them where, nor in what place, as taking it for granted that they knew it. We should be so cunning and skilled in the Scripture that we should be able to know when it is Scripture which is alleged to us and when it is not from our acquaintance and conversation in it. Now, secondly, for that which is intimated and signified from it. And that is this, as the consent of Scripture with Scripture, so the consent of times with times, and the conditions of the people of God in all ages of the Church. We see here that it is no new business for God's people to be under affliction; we have it here upon writing and record as that which has been long ago. First, there are the same grounds of persecution in God's people themselves. Secondly, there is the same disposition in their enemies as has been in times past. Thirdly, there is the same wisdom and power in God Himself: wisdom to know how to impose them, and power how to moderate that they exceed not and go beyond bounds and their due proper limits. (*Ibid.*) **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.**—*More than conquerors*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN IS "CONQUEROR." The battle consists of a moral conflict, with inward and outward enemies all leagued in terrible force against the soul. To this is added—what, indeed, was most peculiar to the early Church—a war of external suffering, of penury, persecution, and martyrdom. Now the way Christ provides for the holy warrior's passage through this fiery contest is not by shunning, but by facing the foe. The Captain of their salvation might have withdrawn His people from the field and conducted them to heaven without the hazard of a conflict. But not so. He will lead them to glory, but it shall be by the path of glory. They shall carve their way to the crown by the achievements of the sword. But in what sense are we conquerors? Just in that sense in which the Holy Ghost obtains the victory. It is not the believer himself who conquers; it is the Divine Spirit within. No movement is seen, no tactics are observed, no war-cry is heard, and yet there is passing within the soul a more important battle, and there is secured a more brilliant victory, than ever the pen of the historian recorded. There is the conquest of—1. Faith (Heb. xi. 1; John v. 4). Faith in the truth of God's word, in the veracity of God's character, in the might, and skill, and wisdom of our Commander; faith, eyeing the prize, gives the victory to the Christian combatant, and secures the glory to the Captain of his salvation. 2. Patience (Heb. vi. 12, 15). Is it no real victory when beneath the pressure of great affliction the Christian is enabled to say, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him"? 3. Joy (1 Thess. i. 6; James i. 2; John xvi. 20). And who but Jesus can turn our sorrow into joy?—not only assuaging our griefs and tempering the flame, but actually making our sorrows the occasion of thanksgiving. Confide your grief to Jesus, and He will cause it sweetly to sing (Psa. xxx. 11, 12; 2 Cor. vii. 4). II. HE IS MORE THAN A CONQUEROR. The same word as "a far more and exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So we are "far more exceeding conquerors." It is more than a mere victory which the believer gains. A battle may be won at a great loss to the conqueror. A great leader may fall at the head of his troops. The flower of an army may be destroyed, and the best blood of a nation's pride may be shed. But the Christian conquers with no such loss. Nothing whatever essential to his well-being is perilled. His armour, riveted upon his soul by the Holy Spirit, he cannot lose. His life, hid with Christ in God, cannot be endangered. There is not a grace in his soul but shall come out purer and brighter for the conflict. Losing nothing, he gains everything! All his resources are augmented by the result. His armour is brighter, his sword is keener, his courage is more dauntless, for the conflict. Faith is strengthened—love is expanded—experience is deepened—knowledge is increased. III. "THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US." Here is the great secret of our victory, the source of our

triumph. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Through the conquest which He Himself obtained, through the grace which He imparts, through the strength which He inspires, through the intercession which He presents, in all our "tribulation, distress, persecution," &c., we are "more than conquerors." Fear not, then, the darkest cloud, nor the proudest waves, nor the deepest wants—in these very things you shall, through Christ, prove triumphant. Nor shrink from the battle with the "last enemy." He stands at your side a crownless king, and waving a broken sceptre. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *More than conquerors*:—I. THE VICTORIES ALREADY WON by those who have been possessed by the love of Jesus. 1. "Tribulation," in the Latin, signifies threshing, and God's people are often beaten with the heavy flail of trouble; but they are more than conquerors, since they lose nothing but their straw and chaff. The Greek, however, suggests pressure from without. It is used in the case of persons who are bearing heavy burdens, and are heavily pressed upon. Now, there are very few who do not meet with outward pressure, either from sickness, poverty, or bereavement; but under all believers have been sustained. It is said of the palm-tree that the more weights they hang upon it the more straight and lofty it is; and it is so with the Christian. 2. "Distress." The Greek refers to mental grief. "Straitness of place" is something like the word. We sometimes get into a position in which we feel as if we could not move; the way is shut up; and our mind is distracted; we cannot calm and steady ourselves. Well, now, if you are a genuine Christian, you will be more than a conqueror over mental distress. Jesus shall say, as He walks the tempest of your soul, "It is I, be not afraid." 3. "Persecution." This in all its forms has fallen upon the Church, and up to this moment it has never achieved a triumph, but it has cleared it of hypocrisy; when cast into the fire the pure gold lost nothing but its dross, which it might well be glad to lose. 4. "Famine." We are not so exposed to this as they were in Paul's time, who suffered the loss of all their goods, and consequently did not know where to find food for their bodies. No doubt there are some now who by their conscientious convictions are reduced to famine. But Christians bear even this sooner than sell their conscience and stain their love to Christ. 5. "Nakedness." Another terrible form of poverty. 6. "Peril"—*i.e.*, constant exposure to sudden death. 7. "The sword"—one cruel form of death as a picture of the whole. The noble army of martyrs have given their necks to the sword as cheerfully as the bride upon the marriage day gives her hand to the bridegroom. At this day you are not, the most of you, called to all this, but if ye were, my Lord would give you grace to bear the test. Your danger is lest you grow rich, become proud, and conform to the world, and lose your faith. If you cannot be torn in pieces by the roaring lion, you may be hugged to death by the bear. I fear that the Church is far more likely to lose her integrity in these soft and silken days than she was in those rough times. Are there not professors whose methods of trade are just as vicious as those of the most tricky? II. THE LAURELS OF THE FIGHT. The words "more than conquerors" might be rendered "more exceeding conquerors." The Vulgate has a word which means "over overcomers," over and above conquering. For a Christian to be a conqueror is a great thing: how can he be more than a conqueror? Because—1. The power by which he overcomes is nobler far. Here is a champion just come from the Greek games. Why! the man's muscles are like steel, and you say to him, "I do not wonder that you beat and bruised your foe; if I had set up a machine made of steel it could have done the same." Where is the glory? One big brute has beaten another big brute, that is all. Dogs and bulls and game-cocks have endured as much, and perhaps more. Now, see the Christian champion. He is a simple, unlettered person, who just knows that Christ came into the world to save sinners; yet he has won the victory over philosophers. He has been tempted and tried; he was very weak, yet somehow he has conquered. This is victory indeed when the base things of this world overthrow the mighty. 2. The conqueror fights with some selfish motive, even when the motive is patriotism. But the Christian fights neither for any set of men nor for himself: in contending for truth he contends for all men, but especially for God; and in suffering for the right he suffers with no prospect of earthly gain. 3. The Christian loses nothing even by the fight itself. In most wars the gain seldom makes any recompense for the effusion of blood; but the Christian's faith, when tried, grows stronger; his patience, when tempted, becomes more patient. 4. Most conquerors have to struggle and agonise to win the conquest. But Christians, when their love to Christ is strong, have found it

even easy to overcome suffering for the Lord. Look at Blandina, enveloped in a net, tossed upon the horns of bulls, and then made to sit in a red hot iron chair to die, and yet unconquered to the close. Indeed, the tormentors were tormented to think they could not conquer timid women and children. I saw upon the lake of Orta, in northern Italy, on some Roman holy day, a number of boats coming from all quarters of the lake towards the church upon the central islet of the lake, and it was beautiful to hear the plash of the oars and the sound of song; and the rowers never missed a stroke because they sang, neither was the song marred because of the plash of the oars, but on they came, singing and rowing: and so has it been with the Church of God. That oar of obedience, and that other oar of suffering —the Church has learned to ply both of these, and to sing as she rows, "Thanks be unto God, who always maketh us to triumph in every place!" 5. They have conquered their enemies by doing them good. "The Church has been the anvil, but she has broken many hammers." All true believers are far more glorious than the Roman conqueror. What flowers are they which angels strew in the path of the blessed? What songs are those which rise from yonder halls of Zion, conjubilant with song as the saints pass along to their everlasting habitations? III. THE PERSONS THAT HAVE CONQUERED. Men who believed in Christ's love to them, and who were possessed with love to Christ. This is their sole distinction. The poorest have been as brave as the wealthy; the learned have died gloriously, but the unlearned have almost stolen the palm. There is room for all who love the Lord in this fight, and there are crowns for each. IV. THE POWER WHICH SUSTAINED THESE MORE THAN CONQUERORS. It was "through Him that loved us." Much depends upon the leader. Christ showed them how to conquer by enduring and conquering as their example. They triumphed through Christ as their Teacher, for His doctrines strengthened their minds, but, above all, because Christ was with them. The name by which the apostle called our Lord is the key to the text, "Through Him that loved us." They knew that He loved them, and that if they suffered for His sake, it was His love which let them suffer for their ultimate gain, and for His permanent honour. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *More than conquerors*:—They not only resist, but prevail; and not only prevail, but triumph. They not only refuse to succumb and submit to their enemies, but they make those enemies submit to them. They lead captivity captive; they take the spoils of death and hell. There is such a thing as so conquering in battle as to suffer as much loss as a defeat would have cost. Or an army may merely repulse a foe, and maintain its ground. Some commanders, who are too stubborn to be beaten, are yet totally unable to follow up a victory, or make any adequate use of it. It is not so with the Christian. He can keep his ground; he can repel his enemies. He can do much more than that. He can win from them, as it were, honour, riches, territory, and renown. He can make them defray the cost of the campaign. He can extort from them the materials of the reward of his triumph. He can bind them to his chariot wheels, and like the old Roman generals, when a public triumph was awarded them, he can make his vanquished foes serve his interests, and heighten the glory of his renown. All this, however, is not by any might or prowess of his own, but it is "through Him that loved us." Of Christ it is affirmed that His foes are made His footstool; and from their backs, prostrate in the dust, He leaps up to His throne. And Christ's victory is our victory too. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." (*T. G. Horton.*) *More than a conqueror*:—I. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MAN ON EARTH IS A BATTLE. This is true of all men, whether godly or ungodly. There are two powers in every man's soul eternally antagonistic—the spiritual and the carnal; the former struggling ever for the absolute right, and the other for the personally gratifying. In the case of the ungodly, of course the spiritual is the weaker. Selfishness and passions struggle to keep the conscience down; whereas, in the case of the godly, the spiritual is the stronger, and the struggle of the higher nature is, to bring the dictates of self and the flesh into absolute subjection. The preceding chapter is a moral history of this conflict. II. A CONQUEROR IN THIS BATTLE IS A GLORIOUS CHARACTER. He who conquers his passions, and subdues all the evil tendencies of his nature, is a hero in the highest sense. 1. He has developed some of the noblest attributes—as courage, self-sacrifice, perseverance. It requires a far higher courage to battle on the unobserved arena of the soul, against the favourite lusts and gods of the depraved nature, than to face an army in the open field. 2. He has pursued a course absolutely right. The course of a warrior admits of many solemn questions as to its rectitude; but he who battles against the wrong in his own heart is

engaged in a struggle of undoubted righteousness. 3. He has achieved a result entirely benevolent. Even the most useful of the mere material wars have been mixed with immense evils; but in the case of this moral victory, nothing is destroyed but the destroyer, &c. III. THE CHRISTIAN IS MORE THAN A CONQUEROR. A man is a conqueror when he overcomes his enemy; he is more than this when he is a gainer by the conquest. 1. He has lost nothing in the conquest. He might have been a conqueror and yet have lost much by his battles. Indeed, most material conquerors have suffered great losses; if not a loss of property, a loss of friends; a loss, perhaps, of health; a loss of peace of mind. But a Christian conqueror has lost nothing. 2. He has gained much by his conquest. (1) Power. There is a tribe of savages whose warriors have the idea that the strength of the men they have killed flows into them by the fatal stroke. This has a reality in the moral conflict. Every moral enemy slain gives the slayer strength. (2) Dominion. In material warfare a man may conquer, often does, and not become a king. Not so in this conflict; the Christian conqueror becomes the monarch of his own soul. (3) Invincibility. In physical campaigns, conquerors have been conquered over again. Not so in this spiritual victory; the man who once conquers sin, becomes unconquerable for ever—he is kept by the power of God, &c. IV. THE CHRISTIAN IS MORE THAN CONQUEROR THROUGH CHRIST. 1. Christ revealed the terribleness of the enemy. The soul would not have known how terrible her spiritual enemies were, had it not been for the revelation of Christ. He has shown what sin is. 2. Christ furnished the armour for the battle (Eph. vi. 14–18). 3. Christ gave the inspiration for the engagement. His love kindled the martial spirit in the sinner's soul, and roused him to the conflict. 4. Christ gave them the conquering power. He made His strength perfect in their weakness. Thus their victory is through Christ, and the songs of eternity ascribe all spiritual conquests to His love (Rev. v. 9, 12, 13). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *More than conquerors*:—A heterogeneous mass the apostle here brigades together as an antagonistic army. There is no attempt at an exhaustive enumeration, or at classification. I. THE IMPOTENT ENEMIES OF LOVE. There is contempt in the careless massing together of the foes which the apostle enumerates. He begins with the widest word that covers everything—affliction. Then he specifies various forms of it. "Distress," straitening, as the word might be rendered. Then he comes to evils inflicted for Christ's sake by hostile men, "persecution." Then he passes purely physical evils, "hunger" and "nakedness." Then he harks back again to man's antagonism, "peril," and "sword." And thus carelessly, and without an effort at logical order, he lumps together, as specimens of their class, these salient points, as it were, and crests of the great sea, whose billows threaten to roll over us; and he laughs at them all, as impotent and naught, when compared with the love of Christ, which shields us from them all. There is no need, in order to rise to the full height of the Christian contempt for calamity, to deny any of its terrible power. These things can separate us from much. They can separate us from joy, from hope, from almost all that makes life desirable. They can strip us to the very quick, but the quick they cannot touch. The frost comes and kills the flowers, burns the leaves, cuts off the stems, binds the sweet music of the flowing rivers in silent chains, casts mists and darkness over the face of the solitary grey world, but it does not touch the life that is in the root. You need not be very much afraid of anything being taken from you as long as Christ is left you. You will not be altogether hopeless so long as you feel the sweet and all-pervading consciousness of the changeless love of Christ. II. THE ABUNDANT VICTORY OF LOVE. Mark how the apostle, in his enthusiastic way, is not content here with simply saying that he and his fellows conquer. There must be something more than that to correspond to the power of the victorious Christ that is in us. Note, then, further, that not only is this victory more than bare victory, being the conversion of the enemy into allies, but that it is a victory which is won even whilst we are in the midst of the strife. No ultimate victory, in some far-off and blessed heaven, will be ours unless moment by moment, here, to-day, "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." So, then, about this abundant victory there are these things to say—You conquer the world only then when you make it contribute to your conscious possession of the love of Christ. Has the world helped me to lay hold on Christ? Then I have conquered it. Has the world loosened my grasp upon Him? Then it has conquered me. Note, then, further, that this abundant victory depends on how we deal with the changes of our outward lives, our sorrows or our joys. The set of your sails, and the firmness of your grasp upon the tiller, determine whether the wind shall

carry you to the haven or shall blow you out, a wandering waif, upon a shoreless and melancholy sea. The worst of all afflictions is a wasted affliction, and they are all wasted unless they teach us more of the reality and the blessedness of the love of Jesus Christ. III. THE LOVE WHICH MAKES US CONQUERORS. The apostle, with a wonderful instinctive sense of fitness, names Christ here by a name congruous to the thoughts which occupy his mind, when he speaks of Him that loved us. His question has been, Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? And his answer is, So far from that being the case, that very love, by occasion of sorrows and afflictions, tightens its grasp upon us, and, by the communication of itself to us, makes us more than conquerors. This great love of Jesus Christ, from which nothing can separate us, will use the very things that seem to threaten our separation as a means of coming nearer to us in its depth and in its preciousness. The apostle says, "Him who loved us," and the words in the original distinctly point to some one fact as being the great instance of love. That is to say they point to His death. And so we may say Christ's love helps to conquer because in His death He interprets for us all possible sorrows. The Cross is the key to all tribulation, and declares it to be a token and an instrument of an unchanging love. Further, that great love of Christ helps us to conquer, because in His sufferings and death He becomes the companion of all the weary. The rough, dark, lonely road changes its look when we see His footprints there, not without specks of blood in them, where the thorns tore His feet. And, lastly, this dying lover of our souls communicates to us all, if we will, the strength whereby we may coerce all outward things into being helps to the fuller participation of His perfect love. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Conquerors through Christ*:—There are two points of consideration before us—I. THE THINGS IN WHICH WE ARE VICTORIOUS. "In all these things," says the apostle. We may classify these—1. The condemning power of the law and sin. "Who is He that condemneth?" The Christian never loses sight of the fact that he has been, and still is, a guilty sinner. The power of sin to visit judgment through the law is a fearful thing to an unforgiven sinner; but before it all, the believer can stand in serene triumph and feel himself safe. Looking up, around, and beneath, he can see none that can enforce condemnation against him. The law cannot—for its honour and claims have been satisfied in atoning blood. 2. Further, a whole group of trials is found in the hindering powers of the world and Satan. Look at the array of troubles of which the apostle speaks—"Tribulations, distress, persecution," &c. In our day, the form and manner of opposition, temptation and danger are somewhat different, but they are just as real and almost as numerous. Till Satan and the world cease to be what they are, our Christian life must lie through temptations, opposing powers, influences that imperil and destroy. The forces of sin sometimes charge on men in violent assault—a fierce assailment in an open crisis battle, for supremacy in the soul. We all have our moral Sedans, where we are put to the alternative of winning or losing the crown of Christian character. Such times of mighty peril are more frequent than most persons suspect. For the battles are not always open in their meaning. Men are on trial for life or death, often, when they know it not. It is often a decisive battle between the powers of darkness and light for the soul of the young, when they are to decide their calling in life, between a business safe and pure, and one full of temptation. Sometimes the temptation is insidious and gradual in its approaches and power. Fabius' mode of warfare was that of ever hanging about his enemy and weakening him little by little, inflicting small but continual injuries. This is the commonest way of the warfare of the world and sin on the Christian. A continual pricking of a polished surface with needle-points will ultimately tarnish it. A continual dropping will wear away the solid rock; and the most perilous trials of Christians may be suffered from quiet but continuous touches of evil from the world and sin. It may be an incipient development of a worldly spirit, filling your heart with the love of money and moving you nearer and nearer to the edge of some moral precipice. It may be the growth of a temper of neglect for known duty, till the spirit of duty is eaten all out of your heart, or the plants of grace are all smothered to feebleness or death. So it is, too, as to afflictions, more generally so-called—the things that form distresses to be borne rather than temptations to sin. In the trials of the apostle, there was "a great fight of afflictions." And it is while burdened with trouble and struggling against sorrows that every believer has his victory to reach. But here again, in view of it all, God throws down on you the light and cheer of this experience of the apostle: "In all these things we are more than conquerors." II. HOW WE ARE MADE CONQUERORS. This is a point of grand importance to us. As the Israelites, imperilled

by Pharaoh's pursuing army, were concerned to see how to go forward in safety, we are concerned to know the way to overcome the oppositions and trials in our onward Christian way. How conquerors? "Through Him that hath loved us." 1. Not, therefore, in and of ourselves. Dependence on self alone is a broken reed that here plunges into defeat. However much extolled, and really grand a thing self-reliance is, in some relations in this spiritual work it is inadequate. The fetters of depravity and condemning sin are too strong for human strength alone to wrest off. The power of temptation is too mighty to be withstood without aid. 2. But "through Christ that loved us," we are conquerors. It is surely only by Him that we triumph against the threatening curse of sin, in the matter of justification. And in the matter of temptation and trials, our victory is in Him. With Christ on our side, "they are more that are for us than they that are against us." It is often surprising how Christ and Christ's love give strength to the feeble. "There were giants in those days." In a better sense, there are giants in all days—Christians made mightier than all the powers of evil. They have locks of triumphant strength against all the Philistines of temptation, sin, and harassment that may be upon them. 3. But though through Christ, it is not without our own effort. Christ keeps us by enabling us to keep ourselves. We are strong, not effortless, but by and in effort. Every iota of the might by which the victory is given us must run along spiritual nerves within us—must come into our hearts, go into the will, and flow out into the hands and feet of personal activity and steadfastness. Divine strength is always ready for the needy Christian, but he must use it. How do you overcome the perilous temptation of love of the world? It is by so receiving the grace of Christ as to crucify your affection for its follies and sins. How do Christians in general prove safe against the incessant temptations to evil about them? It is by storing their own minds and hearts with the light, truth, counsel, and quickening force of God's Word. All evils will be powerless against you, if, like the tree that grows strong against storms by receiving the strength that comes up from every root, pours through every vein into every branch, and hardens into firmness and might by the air and sunbeams, you take up into the fibre and nerve of your own Christian life the invigorating influence of all God's grace furnished you, and you grow strong and compact as a tree of righteousness, Christ living and acting in you. 4. But observe—the assurance goes further, With beautiful force it says: "We are more than conquerors." Our victories, in which we remain safe, are a means of increasing our faith, our love, our power. Trials are turned into occasions of development and power. The mind brightens by its use. The heart is enriched by the exercise of its virtues. Idleness and ease enfeeble. The Church is often too indolent and peaceful for its proper development and high glory. There is nothing like war to make soldiers. It is by wrestling with the angels of trial, affliction, and labour, that you become a "prince with God." How blessed is the Christian—the victory given him here, the crown hereafter. It is for us to know whether we are conquering, daily—defeating Satan, subduing sin, proving successful in doing good, in the face of everything that opposes. (*M. Valentine, D.D.*) *More than conqueror*:—Ignatius, who was martyred in the year 107, said, "Let fire and the cross, let wild beasts, let all the malice of the devil come upon me; only may I enjoy Jesus Christ. It is better for me to die for Christ, than to reign over the ends of the earth. Stand firm," he added, "as an anvil when it is beaten upon. It is part of a brave combatant to be wounded, and yet to overcome." In losing life he found it. *The Christian more than conqueror through Christ*:—It is a rough sort of life that most resolute Christians lead. I do not speak of commonplace professors, many of whom shuffle through easily enough. But those, of whom the apostle himself was one, have a severe and sifting ordeal to pass. "As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." It was thus that Immanuel Himself was treated. It was a doomed life He led on earth. The rudest language and the harshest treatment were reckoned good enough for Him. It is enough for the servant to be as his Lord. But just as Jesus conquered it all, so each disciple will overcome it too. Like the little boat that follows in the great ship's wake, which receives the blast somewhat abated by the statelier form ahead, but in other respects backs the same billows and plunges down into the same sea-trough; so the believer follows the Forerunner, encountering in mitigated fury the head-wind which opposed His course, but riding the same billows of tribulation, distress, and peril which He breasted on His path to glory. But, like the cord which connects the little boat and the great ship together, there is that which joins the Saviour and

the believing soul to one another. Tribulation, distress, persecution cannot sever them, and in the same haven of security, the same sea of glass, where the mightier sail is already furled, and Immanuel's own anchor is already dropped, the fragile little bark which follows will soon come to its quiet mooring, "more than conqueror through Him" who went before it. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *The Christian conqueror*:—I. CHRISTIANS ARE CONQUERORS. 1. At their first conversion, when through grace they obtain deliverance from the power of darkness and unbelief. 2. When grace gains the ascendancy, and particular corruptions are weakened and subdued. Growing Christians are going on conquering and to conquer. Partial advantages give assurance of a final conquest. 3. At a throne of grace. God fulfils their requests, and often exceeds them, as He did those of Solomon. 4. Over the afflictions and trials of the present life, and such as they are called especially to endure for Christ's sake. 5. In a dying hour. The victory then obtained is great and glorious, complete and everlasting (1 Cor. xv. 54–57). II. CHRISTIANS ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS. 1. They conquer those enemies which none besides can conquer, and which to all others would be invincible. They overcome those powers of darkness which have overcome the world. Those who have obtained the greatest victories are often the slaves of the basest lusts. But the Christian triumphs over himself; and while he is waging war with the corruptions that are in the world, he is no less successful in his opposition to that depravity which reigns within. They conquer that by which all are conquered, even death; thus they lead captivity captive. 2. The means by which they overcome are such as enhance the glory of their conquests. When kings go forth to battle, they muster the host, calculate their numbers, and oppose force to force. But in the Christian warfare, "it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." "I can do all things," said Paul, "through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Psa. xviii. 29; Isa. xxx. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10; Rev. xii. 11). 3. The manner in which they overcome makes them more than conquerors. They are sure of success beforehand, which no other combatants are. They also conquer in a little time. The sound of an alarm is quickly followed by the sound of triumph. The conflict may continue as long as life; but what is our life? It is but a vapour. Besides, continued resistance will weaken the hands of our enemies and strengthen ours, so that the conquest shall be easy, and obtained with little loss. A victory is often dearly purchased; but the Christian loses nothing that is worth retaining; he gains by every battle. 4. The victory obtained is over and above measure, as the word signifies. The victory is exceedingly great and glorious, far beyond what is accomplished in any other warfare. It is not like a drawn battle, in which both sides may claim the advantage; the defeat is total, and the enemy is "swallowed up in victory." We must remember, however, that all our successes are owing to Him that hath loved us (Psa. xli. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 7; 1 John iv. 4). Improvement. 1. Let not believers be dismayed at any opposition they may meet with (Psa. xxvii. 1–3). 2. The most successful Christian should take heed of pride and self-sufficiency. Let him say with the apostle, "Not I, but Christ who dwelleth in me." (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The gain of the Christian conqueror*:—To be simply a conqueror is barely to overcome an enemy—to be more than conqueror is to derive absolute gain from the contest. Those Roman Christians were engaged in a struggle so severe that it would often seem doubtful to them whether they could be conquerors at all. They saw corruption reigning unbridled in power, and regal in success, while they were subject to hunger, nakedness, and peril. It is a difficult thing to maintain firm belief in a truth when all circumstances seem to oppose it, and proclaim it untrue. And still more, their danger through the deepening hatred of the populace must have tempted them, daily, to save themselves by denying their Lord. Amid the long, hard struggle they would doubtless think it a great achievement if they could only hold fast till the close, and barely overcoming, enter heaven. Paul tells them they would do more. That phrase, "more than conquerors," &c., was a power to nerve those Roman men to stand fast in the evil day, until death found them steadfast still. But although the peculiar energy of the troubles of that day must have clothed these words with marvellous force, they still present a truth which every Christian needs to learn. For every man has his own temptation to overcome, and his own battle to fight, which no other can fight for him. But, if we conquer, it is better for us to have fought a hard fight, than to have been without one; our struggles become our possessions, crowning us with glory. Our subject becomes—the gain of the Christian conqueror. I. ITS NATURE. "More than conquerors." But at the outset we must guard against a perversion

of the truth. It is not true to say that by every struggle a man becomes better than if he had had no struggle, for if he allow himself consciously to slide into sin and then afterwards resist it, he is not nobler for that resistance than if he had not sinned at all. It has been said that a man's sins are aids to progress, because by falling under temptation and then overcoming it he is stronger than if he had never fallen. We are told that "young men must be young men"; that by a few outbursts of wild immoral life at first, they give vent to the fierce impulses of evil —which must come forth—and then settle down into a calmer and stronger manhood. Now, every form of that doctrine which makes sin a culture is false, and utterly different from Paul's assertion. Every temptation that conquers us blinds that fine spiritual preception by which we distinguish the right from the wrong. Every sin leaves a ghastly scar on the immortal soul that impedes it from soaring upwards to God. Paul is speaking of temptations resisted; and he affirms that he who conquers thus is greater than if he had never been tried. Let us proceed now to see how this is so—"Through Him that loved us." 1. Every conquered temptation deepens our love to Christ, and thus we are more than conquerors. We come here on the track of that great law, that the trial of principle is its true strengthening. Just as the virtue that stands temptation becomes stronger than the frail thing that has never been tested, so the love of Christ ripens to its manhood through temptations, and therefore our temptations become our possessions, and we are more than conquerors. . . . But to show this clearly, note that all great emotions render impediments aids to their own growth. Passion catches fire by antagonisms. Men speak of the power of circumstances to hinder a Christian life; of course they have a power, but it is none the less true that a strong love makes the most adverse circumstances the grandest aid to its own progress. Thus, the man of passionate temperament wrestles down the fiery impulse of a great passion, and when the battle-storm is over, he finds in his heart a deep, calm love, which renders the next conquest easier—therefore he is "more than conqueror." The lonely student in his chamber fights through the midnight hours with a subtle doubt which is driving him to unbelief, but when the victory is won, his faith is all the deeper for the struggle, and that struggle is henceforth a possession, rendering him "more than conqueror." 2. The love of Christ to us is a pledge that our conquests will become our gains. Paul evidently had this thought when he said, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," &c. The living Christ is watching the temptation, and He will take care that its issue is a greater glory than that which could have come from a life of perpetual repose. We may see, in fact, how this is so. Temptations enlarge our capacity of sympathy with the Saviour. In conflict, under slander, in sorrow, we get nearer to the Christ of the wilderness, the judgment-hall, and the garden; and that deeper sympathy is its own great reward. . . . God will open hereafter the marvellous book of the human soul, and show how each struggle left its eternal inscription of glory there. II. ITS ATTAINMENT. How shall we know that we are becoming "more than conquerors"? When the love of Christ is—1. The strongest power in life. 2. A progressive power. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The Christian conquest*:—We begin with a Christian's success. First, to speak of the positive supposition, "We are conquerors." But whom or what is a Christian conqueror of? First, he is a conqueror even of God Himself. First, from the reflection of their graces, and that loveliness which is put upon their purposes. Secondly, the children of God they do conquer Him by the efficacy of their prayers. Prayer, it is wonderful victorious. This victory in prevailing with God, it is the ground and foundation of all other victories besides. They which can conquer Him, they may conquer everything else. Secondly, they are their own conquerors; they conquer and overcome themselves. He that cannot conquer his affections will never conquer his afflictions; whereas he that can do that, he will find these by little and little yielding unto him. Take a carnal man, and he is a captive to every temptation: he is like a city without walls, which is easily taken; but a good Christian he is otherwise affected. But thirdly (which is most agreeable to the scope of the text), in regard of all their enemies. First, the children of God are conquerors over their personal enemies; and in particular evil men, they have a great deal the better of them. First, a Christian conquers his enemies by doing of that which is good. Secondly, by suffering of that which is evil; a Christian conquers thus also. Thus the martyrs in ancient times overcame their very tormentors by their patience and constancy. A Christian, he is above all the evils which in this world are incident unto him; and that in three respects

especially. First, by prevention of them. Secondly, by cheerfulness under them. And thirdly, by profiting by them. And so much may suffice to have spoken of the success of a Christian, as it is here laid down in the first notion and proposal of it, namely, in its positive supposition, and that is, "We are conquerors." The second is in its comparative amplification, we are so, and somewhat besides—we are conquerors, yea, more than conquerors. It is a very emphatical word, and such as our English language does not easily reach to—over-overcome. First, as to the thing itself, being Christians, we are more than conquerors here, and that again in two particulars. First, as to the disabling of our enemies. A man may conquer his enemy for the present, but yet he may recover again. All the enemies of a Christian shall be at last perfectly subdued unto him, and so as they shall not be able any more to rise up against him. Secondly, "We are more than conquerors," so far forth as we hereby benefit ourselves. A Christian does not only destroy his enemy, but he does likewise divide the spoil. Now secondly, are we so likewise as to the manners of the victory, and that in sundry circumstances in which it may be made good unto us. First, we do more than conquer, because we conquer with a little strength. They conquer many times by very weak and feeble means. It is all one with God to conquer by many or few. Secondly, they do more than conquer, because they conquer in a little time. Thirdly, they do more than conquer, because they conquer with a little loss. Fourthly, they do more than conquer, because they conquer where they do not fight. Stand still, says Moses to the Israelites, and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord. Lastly, God's servants do more than conquer, because they conquer when they are conquered themselves. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us, namely, as to show us the dignity and excellency of all true Christians and believers. The world, for the most part, looks upon God's children as a contemptible generation, as those who of all others are the most easily conquered and overcome. The second is the account or ground of this success unto him, that is laid down in these words, "Through Him that loved us." First, to take notice of his affection, in his great care for the shunning of pride and ostentation, and vainglory in himself. He had said in the words before of himself, and the rest of believers, "That in all these things we are more than conquerors." This was a big and great word, and it might seem to carry a price of too much self-confidence in it. Now, therefore, does he here seasonably correct it, and qualify it, "Through Him that loved us." So, likewise, Phil. iv. 13, a place much like to this at present, there he says, "He can do all things." He can want and abound, and everything; well, but how? "Through Christ that strengthens me." Still he is careful of this, not to give way to a spirit of presumption. First, it is a thing which is easy, if men do not the better look to themselves. But then secondly, it is again very dangerous, and it is that which the children of God smart for, where they are guilty of it. Pride and presumption in assurance is the next way to lose assurance. Now in the next place we may take notice of his expression, in the substance of the words themselves, "Through Him that loved us." "Through Him that loved us"! Who is that? namely, Jesus Christ. And there are two things again which are here considerable of us. First, for the description of Christ. It is by this periphrasis, of "Him that loved us," as that indeed whereby He is best of all known unto us; and as if there were none that loved us but He alone. "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). "Who loved us, and washed us in His blood" (Rev. i. 5). "Christ loved His Church, and gave Himself for it," &c. (Eph. v. 25). This love of Christ unto us, it was manifested in sundry particulars; that wherein it first showed and discovered itself unto us, was in the business of His incarnation, and taking of our nature upon Him. Especially if we shall further consider upon what terms, and in what circumstances He took it. And so the acts of His mediatorship, which were consequent and dependent hereupon; they were the expressions of the same love. There are two reasons especially why he makes use of this expression in the text, rather than of any other besides. First, it was most comprehensive; when he said, "He that loved us," he said in effect everything else. He that was born for us, that died for us, that redeemed us, that saved us; all is comprehended in Him that loved us, because that all these things were the effects of His love. Secondly, as it was the most comprehensive expression, it was also the most proper expression, and pertinent to the business in hand; for he had made mention before of afflictions and persecutions, and such things as those as unable to separate believers from the love of Christ. The second is the account, or cause, of victory to a Christian, and that is through the help of this Person thus described. Now there

are three ways especially whereby Christ does accomplish this victory for us, and help us to be partakers of it. First, I say, in that the Spirit of Christ works the graces and abilities themselves. There are divers graces of this nature; as to instance in one or two of them. First, the grace of faith, that is a conquering grace (1 John v. 4). Secondly, another grace is self-denial; that is another victorious accomplishment. The best way for any man to get victory over his afflictions, is by a restrained affection to his comforts. Thirdly, the grace of humility. As there is nothing which is nearer ruin than pride, so there is nothing which is nearer victory than humility. God Himself resists the proud, pitches battle against them; but He gives grace to the humble, and success with it. Lastly, the grace of patience. This grapples with the greatest evils. Now further, He does also upon occasion actuate those graces in us; and thus He helps us to conquer by His power. Secondly, as by His Spirit, so by His example (1 Pet. ii. 21). Thirdly, by His Word. In this Christ goes forth conquering and to conquer. It is His chariot of triumph (2 Cor. ii. 14). "Ye are strong, and the Word of God abides in you" (1 John ii. 14). One thing more, and so I have done: "Through Him that loved us." These words may be taken not only simply, but reflexively, and by way of reduplication; as intimating unto us whence it is that Christ does enable us to be such conquerors, and that is from His unspeakable love. It is from Him that loved us; and from Him so far forth as He loved us. When it is said here from His love; this does not exclude His power, but supposes, and it takes it in; therefore as in this place it is said, "Through Christ that loves us." So again in another place it is said, "Through Christ that strengthens us"; because indeed they are both concomitant. There is nothing whatsoever we enjoy, if we be true believers, but we enjoy it as a fruit of Christ's love. It is from the love of Christ that He afflicts us, and it is from the love of Christ also that He strengthens us and enables us to endure affliction. It is not from common providence, but from special favour; it is not from the power of nature, but from the privileges and prerogatives of grace. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Christian heroes:*—Conquerors, although victorious, are often all but defeated. The battle of Waterloo was won by a hair's breadth. Napoleon said, on the morning of the day of Waterloo, "We have ninety out of a hundred chances." The conquering army had nothing to spare. The believer in Christ has many foes and fiercer to war against, but he has no doubt as to the result; and when the battle is over he has a surplus of force by which he could conquer still worse and more numerous enemies. He is more than a conqueror. God is with him, and he cannot fail. His last enemy is death, to which, as he looks it in the face, he triumphantly exclaims, "O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be unto God which giveth me the victory!" *Through trials to victory:*—When Garibaldi was thrown into prison he said, "Let fifty Garibaldis be thrown into prison, but let Rome be free." This spirit set Italy on fire. When he went before a crowd of young men to appeal for recruits, they asked what he had to offer as inducements. The old man replied, "Poverty, hardship, battles, wounds, and—victory." They caught his enthusiasm, threw their hats into the air, and enlisted on the spot.

Vers. 38, 39. **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.**—*The best persuasion:*—A visitor said to a poor wounded soldier, who lay dying in the hospital, "What Church are you of?" "Of the Church of Christ," he replied. "I mean, what persuasion are you of?" "Persuasion!" said the dying man, as he looked heavenward, beaming with love to the Saviour, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." *Love's triumph:*—These rapturous words are the climax of the apostle's long demonstration that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." His argument started with sombre, sad words about man's sinfulness; like some stream rising among black and barren cliffs, or melancholy moorlands, and foaming through narrow rifts in gloomy ravines, it reaches at last fertile lands, and flows calm, the sunlight dancing on its broad surface, till it loses itself at last in the unfathomable ocean of the love of God. We are told that the biblical view of human nature is too dark. Well, the important question is not whether it be dark, but whether it be true. Certainly, a part of it is very dark. The picture of what men are, painted at the beginning of this Epistle, is black like a canvas of Rembrandt's. But to get the whole doctrine, we have to see what men may become. Christianity begins indeed

with, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one," but it ends with this victorious pæan, which tells us that the love of God is—I. UNAFFECTED BY THE EXTREMEST CHANGES OF OUR CONDITION. 1. The apostle begins his catalogue of vanquished foes by a pair of opposites, "neither death nor life," which cover the whole ground, and represent the extremes of change which can befall us. If these two stations, so far from each other, are equally near to God's love, then no intermediate point can be far from it. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord." His love to us makes no account of that mightiest of changes. How should it be affected by slighter ones? The distance of a star is measured by the apparent change in its position, as seen from different points of the earth's surface or orbit. But this great light stands steadfast in our heaven, nor moves a hair's breadth, nor pours a feebler ray on us, whether we look up to it from the midsummer of busy life, or from the midwinter of death. 2. Of course the confidence of immortality is implied in this thought. Death does not affect the essential vitality of the soul; so it does not affect the outflow of God's love to that soul. It is a change of condition and circumstance, and no more. 3. How this thought contrasts with the saddest aspect of the power of death! Death unclasps our hands from the closest, dearest grasp, parts soul and body, loosens every bond of society; but there is one bond which his "abhorred shears" cannot cut. Their edge is turned on it. One Hand holds us in a grasp which the fleshless fingers of death in vain strive to loosen. The separator becomes the uniter; he rends us apart from the world that he may "bring us to God." The love filtered by drops on us in life is poured upon us in a flood in death! II. UNDIVERTED FROM US BY ANY OTHER ORDER OF BEINGS. "Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers." The supposition which is, indeed, an impossible one, that these ministering spirits should so forget their mission and contradict their nature as to seek to bar us out from the love which it is their chiefest joy to bring to us; and its very impossibility gives energy to his conclusion (see also Gal. i. 8), preaching another gospel than that which he had preached to them. The general thought implies—1. The utter powerlessness of any third party in regard to the relations between our souls and God. We have to do with Him alone. These two, God and the soul, have to "transact," as if there were no other beings in the universe. (1) Angels, principalities, &c., may behold with sympathetic joy, and minister blessing in many ways; but the decisive act of union between God and the soul they can neither effect nor prevent. (2) And as for them, so for men around us; the limits of their power to harm us are soon set. They may shut us out from human love by calumnies, and annoy us in a thousand ways; they may build a wall around us, and imprison us from many a joy and fair prospect: but they cannot put a roof on it to keep out the sweet influences from above, or hinder us from looking up to the heavens. Nobody can come between us and God but ourselves. 2. These blessed spirits do not absorb and intercept His love. The planet nearest the sun is saturated with fiery brightness, but the rays pass on to each of the sister spheres in its turn, and travel away outwards to where the remotest of them all rolls in its far-off orbit. Like that poor woman who could lay her fingers on the hem of Christ's garment, notwithstanding the thronging multitude, we can reach our hands through all the crowd, or rather He reaches His strong hand to us and heals and blesses us. All the guests are fed full at that great table. One's gain is not another's loss. The multitudes sit on the green grass, and the last man of the last fifty gets as much as the first; and more remains than fed them all. This healing fountain is not exhausted of its curative power by the early comers. III. RAISED ABOVE THE POWER OF TIME. "Nor things present, nor things to come." We had first a pair of opposites, and then a triplet; now again a pair of opposites, again followed by a triplet. The effect of this is to divide the whole into two, and to throw the first and second classes more closely together, as also the third and fourth. Time and space, these two mysterious ideas, which work so fatally on all human love, are powerless here. 1. The great revelation of God, on which the whole of Judaism was built, was that made to Moses of the name "I am that I am." And parallel was that symbol of the bush, which signified not the continuance of Israel, unharmed by the fiery furnace of persecution, but the eternity of Israel's God. Both proclaimed the same great truth of self-derived, self-determined, timeless, undecaying being. 2. And this eternity of being is no mere metaphysical abstraction. It is eternity of love, for God is love. We know of earthly loves which cannot die, and we have to thank God for such instances of love stronger than death, which make it easier for us to believe in the unchanging duration

of His. But we know, too, of love that can change, and we know that all love must part. How blessed then to know of a love which cannot change or die! The past, the present and the future are all the same to Him. The whole of what He has been to any past, He is to us to-day. 3. So we may bring the blessedness of all the past into the present, and calmly face the misty future, sure that it cannot rob us of His love. Looking on all the flow of ceaseless change of earthly affection, we can lift up with gladness, heightened by the contrast, the triumphant song of the ancient Church, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good: because His mercy endureth for ever!" IV. PRESENT EVERYWHERE. The apostle ends with, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," as if he had got impatient of the enumeration of impotencies, and having named the outside boundaries in space, flings, as it were, with one rapid toss, into that large room the whole that it can contain, and triumphs over it all. As the former clause proclaimed the powerlessness of time, so this proclaims the powerlessness of that other great mystery of creatural life which we call space. Height or depth, it matters not. That diffusive love diffuses itself equally in all directions. The distance from the centre is equal to Zenith or to Nadir. Here we have the same process applied to that idea of omnipresence as was applied in the former clause to the idea of eternity. That thought, so hard to grasp with vividness, and not altogether a glad one to a sinful soul, is all softened and glorified, as some solemn Alpine cliff of bare rock is when the tender morning light glows on it, when it is thought of as the omnipresence of love. "Thou, God, seest me," may be a stern word, if the God who sees be but a mighty Maker or a righteous Judge. But how different it all is when we can cast over the marble whiteness of that solemn thought the warm hue of life. In that great ocean of the Divine love we live and move and have our being, floating in it like some sea flower which spreads its filmy beauty and waves its long tresses in the depths of mid-ocean. The sound of its waters is ever in our ears, and above, beneath, around us, its mighty currents run evermore. We need not fear the omnipresence of love, nor the omniscience which knows us altogether, and loves us even as it knows. Rather we shall be glad that we are ever in His presence. Conclusion: 1. The recognition of this triumphant sovereignty of love over all these real and supposed antagonists makes us, too, lords over them, and delivers us from the temptations which some of them present us to separate ourselves from the love of God. They all become our servants and helpers, uniting us to that love. So we are set free from the dread of death and from the distractions incident to life. So we are delivered from superstitious dread of an unseen world, and from craven fear of men. So we are emancipated from absorption in the present and from careful thought for the future. So we are at home everywhere, and every corner of the universe is to us one of the many mansions of our Father's house. "All things are yours, . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 2. But remember that this love of God is "in Christ Jesus our Lord." Love illimitable, all-pervasive, eternal; yes, but a love which has a channel and a course, love which has a method and a process by which it pours itself over the world. In Christ the love of God is all centred and embodied, that it may be imparted to all sinful and hungry hearts, even as burning coals are gathered on a hearth that they may give warmth to all that are in the house. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Persuaded of the constancy of the Divine love:*—We begin with the form of protestation, "I am persuaded," where the apostle, while he speaks of the state of a true believer in reference to grace and salvation, speaks of it as a matter of certainty and full persuasion. There are two manner of ways especially, whereby we come to be assured of our salvation. 1. By the inward persuasion of the Holy Ghost in our own consciences. 2. We come to be assured of our condition, from the reflection of conscience itself, our rejoicing is this (2 Cor. i. 12; 1 John iii. 21). The second is the matter of it, or thing itself protested; and that is much one with that which he had before harped upon, "That nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ." Now this again is here laid down in these two verses together, two manner of ways. First, by an enumeration or induction of the several particulars; and secondly, by a winding-up of all together in one general conclusion. First, death shall not do it; death, it makes a great separation, it separates the soul from the body, two friends which have been a great while joined together, and it separates a man from the world. Oh! but for all this it does not separate a believer from Christ. First, for the souls of God's children; these are not separated from Him by death. Not separated? Nay, they are so much the more conjoined. St. Paul desired to be

dissolved, that he might be with Christ (Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 6, 8). And so likewise for the bodies of Christians; these they are not separated from Christ neither, even when they lie in the grave, they are very accountable in the eyes of God, and He has a special care of them and regard unto them. The very dust of God's people is precious, and their very bones are numbered by Him. No, nor secondly again by life; that is another part of this link. Life, it shall not prove hurtful or prejudicial to the people of God. First, not the good of life—I mean the outward good, and comfortableness of it. There is a great deal of hazard and danger in this. First, as it is an occasion to make men to be so much the more in love with the world. But God's children are delivered from it, as having their affections weaned in them. A second evil of life in the prosperous part of it is, that it makes a man to defer his repentance and conversion to God. Thirdly, life is thus far dangerous, as it keeps a man from suffering for Christ; the more that any man has to lose, the less commonly is he willing to it. So again, as to the evils of life, ye may take it there also, that life in this sense is not prejudicial to God's servants, but sanctified to them. First, as it is a time of sinning, for so this present life is, and therein irksome to God's children. Secondly, as it is a time of misery. And thirdly, as the time of deferring of their reward; as long as God's children live they are kept out of their inheritance. Thus we see how God's children have an interest in life and death both, as making for their advantage, and it does belong unto them, as it is elsewhere expressed (Rom. xiv. 8). The second is, "Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers." First, not the good angels. Why? Whoever suspected them? What need was there for the apostle to put in that? I answer upon a double account. First, by way of supposition. The apostle seems to argue here, as he does also in another place, "Though we, or an angel from heaven," &c. (Gal. i. 8). Not as if they were likely to endeavour it, but if they should do it, it would be to no purpose, for they should never effect it. The good angels may be conceived to be possibly prejudicial to the saints and servants of God ministerially, and in reference to their office; and that is, by the withdrawing of their help to us, or as being instruments of inflicting punishment and vengeance upon us; but thus now they are not to God's elect, for they are still active for them to good upon all occasions. We may understand it of the devils. Thus (Rev. xii. 8) it is said that Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon and his angels. It is most certain that the devil, that is, the chief and principal of them, hath very great power for a while permitted unto him, as to the trouble of God's servants. I will instance in one particular amongst the rest, and that is his casting of evil and troublesome fancies and conceits into the mind, and that sometimes with that force and violence, as that the mind shall not be able to resist them or keep them out. These are those kind of thoughts wherewith the devil does oftentimes disturb and perplex the minds of Christians; but that these are no way prejudicial to them in matter of guilt, or arguments for the questions of God's love, or real ground of disquieting to them, will appear unto us upon these considerations. First, from their manner of acting and proceeding in the soul itself, wherein there is neither assent nor consent given unto them, but only a bare apprehension of them. Secondly, this may also appear from the suddenness and quickness of them; for they are commonly darted into the mind without any connection or dependence, whereas a man's own proper thoughts are with more leisure, and deliberation, and subordination of one thing to another. Thirdly, from the frequency and multiplicity of them, together with their unseasonableness; for they may be a thousand times in a day passing as lightning into an house from one end of it to another, and in continual motion. Fourthly, from the quality and condition of them, as being contrary to the very light of nature, and the habitual frame and disposition of the soul, which of itself is considerable in it. The main ground and foundation of this restrainedness of Satan's power is intimated to us in the text, and that is in reference to Christ; it is the love of God in Him, and therefore Satan cannot separate us from it; and Christ is considerable of us under a double notion, of an head, and of an advocate. The third is neither things present nor things to come. These shall not be able neither to separate us from God's love in Christ. First, not things present; they shall not be able to do it, whether we take it in good things or in evil. This is a point very satisfactory in the worst times that are. No, nor yet, secondly, "Things to come." These shall not do it neither. "Things to come"—they are such things as are hid from men's discerning, and they know not what to make of them; yea, but thus far they are certain, as they shall make for the good of God's people; and therefore in the place before cited (1 Cor. iii.

22), as things present are made a part of their portion, and said to be theirs; so are things to come likewise. And so indeed upon the point, all things in the full latitude and extent of being. If we speak of things to come, but as to this life, and as taken under the notion of uncertainty, God's children are not at a loss here, but upon very good terms; but then if we speak of things to come as to the life following, and as under the notion of certainty, here they are infinitely and transcendently glorious. "Things to come"—these are the greatest interest and concernment of believers, and such as above all others they do most reckon and depend upon. It is the great disadvantage and prejudices of men of the world that their happiness it is confined to things present. (*Thomas Horton, D. D.*) *The triumphant hope of the Christian*:—Who can look upon the sun setting in the west and not be silent with wonder? One who sees Mont Blanc from the Lake of Geneva for the first time, lifting itself in awful splendour and glory, does not break forth into words, but gazes silently. So there are texts which, like the one before us, subdue us to silence. I. THIS CROWNING LOVE OF GOD IS MADE KNOWN TO US IN THE BIBLE. The sea swelling with its tides, this great earth revolving on its axis, and rushing forward in its orbit the systems of worlds, all speak of the power of God. That He is a God of beauty we read in the leaf, the flower, the sea shell. But we do not find out from nature that God loves. When we understand this love of God, then are we ready to understand redemption. II. THIS LOVE FASTENS ITSELF UPON HUMAN BEINGS. Compared with the mighty forces of nature, how weak we are; compared with eternity, how brief is life. What is man that God should observe him, and, much less, love him? Then we are so severed from God in capacity of mind, and so impure. We can readily believe that God loves the Church, or this and that eminent Christian, or the martyrs, but we doubt concerning ourselves. So many a Christian walks this world with timid apprehensions instead of the assurance of one who walks a world he knows his Father rules. If he realised that God loved him, then would he be joyous and triumphant—be strong for any service. III. THE ETERNITY OF THIS LOVE. We feel at times that God loves us. But is this love eternal or fleeting? Is it fastened upon our personality, or upon our changing disposition? If we have been deceived in the character of one we love, or if that character has undergone a change, our love changes. Now if there is a radical change or degradation of character, God's love may change; but aside from such change, it is not possible that anything can produce a change in the love of God. The assurance of this is the wine of life, poured from the chalice in God's hand, into our fainting hearts. 1. Death cannot separate from the love of God. We go with a friend up to the last moment on earth. We see the mind still active, the memory clear, the noble impulses of the soul still predominant. Do you suppose that he who built the cathedral is ended while the work of his hand calls forth the admiration of mankind? We have the assurance in the resurrection of Christ, that death does not destroy the soul. Rather it sets the soul free from the lassitude and inactiveness of the body. The body hampers and manacles the soul. Now, can you conceive that death, which so adds to the spirit, can separate from the love of God? Death does not affect our love for our departed friends, save to augment it. How much more will it but augment the love of God. 2. But may not life? Life may reach its fourscore years and work many changes. The vigour is gone, and the beauty; decrepitude has come. But what is life to eternity? A dewdrop to the ocean; less than a single modest daisy to the innumerable worlds above. Shall the decrepitude of this brief life stand against an eternity without decrepitude? No changes wrought in the circumstances of life can affect the love of God. These are as nothing to the God of infinite resources. To Him, what matters it whether we dwell in a palace or a cottage? The favour is rather on the side of those who are in adverse circumstances. We love those who struggle more than those who enjoy; those who suffer patiently more than those who reign in royal splendour. Christ, when in the world, did not take His apostles from among the rulers; He made His abode with the poor rather than the rich. No; life cannot bring from the love of God, but rather brings us nearer because of its trials, temptations, and weaknesses. 3. But may not other powers? There are mighty ones above. May not these absorb the love of God? No; He takes care of the least as of the greatest. No star staggers in its course and halts to be caught in the grasp of God and held in its place. All the universe goes on evenly, quietly, surely. His love cannot be exhausted any more than His power. Weakness makes more certain this love. He sees us struggling against temptation which angels cannot experience. Nay, more, this love came to us through Jesus, His only Son. 4. May not time produce

this separation? In the unrolling cycles, may not changes be wrought, powers developed, &c.? No; here come in the unchanging nature and the eternity of God. The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Yesterday just gone, to-day which is here, and for ever—oh, what a launch of thought! 5. May not space cause this separation? When we think of the vast distances in the universe; that the diameter of this system is seven hundred million miles; that astronomers, by an approximate parallax, show us that yonder star is so far away that it would take its light, travelling twelve millions of miles a minute, seventy-two years to reach us; that the unresolved nebula is so far away that its light would not reach us for seven hundred thousand years. When we think of these vast spaces, have we not reason to be fearful that there may be something in them that can separate us from God's love? No, God is everywhere Master. Conclusion: 1. What a terrific power is sin, since it can separate us from this love of God! More powerful than life or death, than all the universe. 2. What a privilege is this of the Christian to be safe in the love of God beyond all power of harm, to have a portion with God for ever. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Things that cannot separate from the love of God*:—First, neither the height of worldly advancement nor the depth of worldly abasement. First, honour and advancement, dignity and height of place or preferment, that shall not do it. It is that which it sometimes does to some kind of persons, when they are not more watchful of themselves; high-standing it is apt to make men giddy, especially when they shall look down upon others which are far inferior to them. And there are great temptations which are now and then attending thereupon, of pride, and scornfulness, and security, and self-confidence, and the like. A child of God he shall not be afraid of that which is high, as we find the phrase used in another sense, and upon another occasion, in Eccles. xii. 5. And so for abasement and lowness of condition; he does not suffer from that neither, as St. Paul says of himself in another place: "He knows how to abound, and he knows to be abased; to be full, and to be hungry; to abound, and to suffer need." There is a depth of affliction as well as an height of prosperity. And so for all other kinds and conditions of abasements of reproach, and contempt, and ignominy, which is cast upon them; these things they are digested by them. He that is low in his own eyes he can be content to be low in another's. Secondly, not the height of spiritual enlargement, nor the depth of spiritual desertions. Spiritual enlargement, it is an height, and a very great one. Neither is the doctrine of assurance a doctrine of pride; neither is the state of assurance a state of pride. So again, as to spiritual desertions; the depth of that shall not hinder neither. This in Scripture is sometimes called a depth, as in Psa. cxxx. 1. Thirdly, take this height and depth here spoken of, as to the mysteries, whether of faith or providence, and ye shall find that neither these shall prove any disparagement to God's servants. Lastly, neither height nor depth; that is, neither things above nor things below. It is a large and comprehensive expression which the Scripture uses in suchlike cases, when it will take in all, and so speak of anything, as to leave nothing out. Yet if we will take it more restrainedly and particularly, we may take it thus. First, take it as to the influences of Heaven. These are such as many people, especially now at this time, have a great regard unto, and that a great deal more than to other things which are more to be regarded. But those which are the servants of God are above all these heights. Those who are the children of God, and careful to walk in His fear, they shall not need to be "dismayed at the signs of heaven" (Jer. x. 2). And so likewise we may take it as to the earth and the depths thereof. How many dangers are we here incident to, and yet graciously preserved from them? Now while the apostle is thus curious in this exact enumeration of particulars, and such as are so full and comprehensive, there are two things which we may gather from it: First, the weakness of our faith, especially in times of temptation, which the Spirit of God is fain to provide for, by such a complete dealing with us. Secondly, it shows the certainty of our own salvation. Seeing none of these things fore-mentioned are able to hinder us, we may from hence take notice of the sureness of the thing itself against all opposition. The second is, the general conclusion or main doctrine itself, and that is, "that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Wherein again we have two branches more: First, the firmness or immovableness of God's affection. That nothing whatsoever shall be able to separate us from it. This is agreeable to the whole current of Scripture (Psa. cxxv. 1; Heb. xii. 28). Now the firmness and stability of God's people, in regard of their spiritual estate, may be thus surrendered: First, from the promise of God;

it is a part of His gracious covenant with them. Secondly, the strength and power of Christ, that does likewise lay a ground for this truth; there His ability joined to God's faithfulness, and the power of God joined to the truth of God (Heb. vii. 25). Thirdly, it may be further evinced from the nature of saving grace itself, and the work of regeneration, which is a constant and abiding principle, and so is signified to us to be in 1 John iii. 9. Take anything else in the world, besides true grace indeed, and ye shall find an uncertainty in it; let it be education, or custom, or natural conscience, or the credit of religion; none of these things are sure to hold or to continue long. But now for the power of godliness, and a true gracious heart in good earnest, it is such as is lasting and remaining. Fourthly, a Christian's unmovableness is confirmed from the intercession of Christ. Whatever it is that Christ asks in the behalf of believers, it is most undoubtedly granted unto them. Fifthly, from the nature of election, which is a firm, and unchangeable decree; thus in ver. 33 of this present chapter, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" And so much may suffice to have spoken of the first particular in this second general, which is the firmness or immovableness of God's affection considered in itself; that nothing is able to separate true Christians and believers from His love. The second is the ground or conveyance of this affection, and that is expressed in these words—"Which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." First, He is the conveyance of His Father's love unto us, by virtue of that near union and relation which we have to Him; forasmuch as we are very members incorporate into Him, and made one with Him. Secondly, Christ is also the conveyance of the Father's love to us meritoriously, and by way of procurement; Christ has obtained of God the Father to love us together with Himself. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Faith's final pæan*:—We seem to have been climbing up Jacob's ladder, all through this magnificent dissertation, and now we have reached its summit. The base was on earth, and there we found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; the summit is the skies, and here the song which we sing is one of enraptured triumph. Christ is the first and the last in the scale of the Christian's boasting and joy. It is through Him that we have no condemnation; and now it is in Him that we have confidence of happiness for ever. In the matter of our redemption He is all and in all, the Alpha and the Omega, the author and the finisher of our faith. I. THE CONSTANCY OF THE LOVE OF GOD TO THEM THAT ARE IN CHRIST JESUS. 1. We are the objects of God's love. Now, it is the very nature of love, in its truer and more noble forms, to be constant. "Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love," &c. Love is not mere transient sentiment; it is a passion which moves with innate energy; of all moral forces the strongest. You may torture and slay a man, but you cannot coerce his affections. Formidable difficulties may oppose his love in its course, but love will surmount them or perish in the attempt. There may be unworthiness on the part of its objects, but even then how often have we seen a mother's, a wife's, a daughter's love burn as brightly as ever. Love can accomplish what no mechanical or physical force can. There is truth in the quaint old fable, which represents a traveller pursuing his way with a mantle round his shoulders. The sun and the wind contested as to which was strong enough to compel the wayfarer to abandon his cherished covering. First, Boreas blew his fiercest blast, but the harder he blew, the faster did the traveller bind and clasp his cloak. Then Sol began to pour upon his head his melting beams. In a little while our hero freely surrendered; the oppressive garment was unwrapped, and loosened, and thrown open, and finally flung away altogether. The wind represents physical force, and the sun the energy of love. Well, now, God loves us; and we may at least be sure of this, that God's love is a nobler affection than any human love whatever (Isa. xlix. 15; Jer. xxxi. 3). 2. This love is God's love. If it were the love of a creature, mighty and good, we might fairly put confidence in its stability; but now we see it to be that of the Creator. If He loves us, who can separate us from His love? Look at—(1) The power of the Almighty. There may be angels, men, heights, depths, things present and things to come; but all are equally powerless against the Omnipotent. None can injure whom He defends; none can impoverish whom He enriches. (2) The sovereignty of His will (Mal. iii. 6). God knew everything about us before He set His love upon us. He has nothing further to learn concerning us. We cannot surprise Him by new revelations of character. He elected us as objects of His love while we were yet sinners. All being known to Him, and all being in His hands, surely it is impossible that if He once resolved to love us, He could ever be moved from that love. 3. God's love is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In other words, it is a

love whose outflow and development are based upon the redeeming work of Christ, and whose constancy, therefore, is guaranteed and assured by all the value and validity which attach to that work. II. THE CREATURES PRESUMABLY HOSTILE TO THE SAINTS. 1. "Death," whether natural or by violence, may sever us from many comforts and companions, but not from Jesus or His love. On the contrary, death brings us nearer to Christ than we were before. When we die, we go to be with Jesus, which is far better. Death, then, is an enemy converted into a friend. 2. "Life." It is often a more perilous thing to live than to die. But let us not fear life. If for us to die would be gain, for us to live is Christ. 3. "Angels, nor principalities, nor powers." We conceive of the angels as divided into ranks; some being higher and more powerful than the rest. But whether they are the ordinary angels, or whether they be the captains and chieftains, subordinate or supreme, of the angelic creation, all alike are powerless to intercept God's love. But suppose it possible that all the angels, good and bad together, were to be in league against us; suppose that the malice of the one class were to be combined with the majesty of the other, we should still be secure, invulnerable, inviolable, and nothing they could do should separate us from the love of God. 4. "Things present." Things visible are all our present surroundings of difficulty and circumstances of trial. These are enumerated, in some measure, in the former verses; but God loves us through them all. He will not suffer us to be tempted beyond our power of endurance, but does with every exigency open a door for our escape. 5. "Things to come." We often forebode evil, and dread the future. But things to come are known to God; and whatever may betide, He will stand by us to the last. As our days, our strength shall be. 6. "Height" and "depth." Whatever high thing there is, or whatever low thing, it need not alarm, as it cannot overpower us. It may be worldly honour or abasement, but still we need not fear them. Neither the luxurious blandishments of affluence, nor the humiliating straitnesses of penury, shall separate us from God or destroy our interest in His love. 7. "Any other creature." There, I have mentioned everything I could think of, and if I have omitted anything there is nothing to fear. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Assurance, not presumption*:—From this passage you see how safe and scriptural a full assurance is. By assurance I mean a firm, unfaltering trust in the declarations and promises of God. By personal assurance I mean a firm, unfaltering trust in the promises of God, as made to me from the moment that by believing in Jesus I make these promises my own. The apostle first of all believed in Jesus, and then as a believer in Jesus he was sure that he would go to heaven. He cast his helpless, guilty soul on Christ, and from that moment he was persuaded that he was the object of God's love, and was persuaded that nothing could ever separate him from that love. And he was anxious to bring his Roman friends to the same persuasion. For the sake of their salvation he wished them to repose entirely on the finished work of Christ, but for the sake of their comfort and eminent sanctification, he wished them, having done this, to rejoice in hope of glory. Some tender-hearted Christians almost deprecate personal assurance, and probably the reason is that they have seen some profess assurance whose hope was evident presumption. But no two things can be more distinct. Presumption is Satan's lie; assurance is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Presumption is hope without foundation; assurance is founded on the Word of God without, and the work of the Spirit within. Presumption makes a man proud and hard-hearted, censorious and flippant, reckless and undevout. Assurance makes a man stoop in humility lower and lower, the more he is persuaded of his heavenly Father's love. And it gives him a panting after the living God. And it makes him tender-hearted—makes him like his Master, who does not despise the day of small things, who, when a bruised reed is put into His hand, does not snap it asunder and fling the fragments from Him; who, when a smoking flax is put upon His altar, does not sweep it off because it is flax, nor extinguish it because it is only smoking, but cherishes and fans that smouldering tow, till it burst in flames and fire the living sacrifice; and who shows His power and Divine compassion by taking the drooping shattered reed, and making it the rod of His might, a staff of strength in His hand. Even so real assurance is considerate and tender-hearted, does not scowl disdain on the smoky beginnings of grace in any heart, but finds a godlike pleasure in fostering it into a flame. Presumption is an intoxicating poison, and sends the self-deceiver reeling forward in a merry delusion, neglecting known duty and perpetrating known sin from day to day, and yet fancying that the Spirit of Christ is in him; assurance enlightens the eyes, and whether sedate or ecstatic, is always

a cautious and circumspect thing, abhorring the garment spotted with the flesh. Presumption is impudent; assurance is filial and affectionate. Presumption talks about crosses; assurance carries them. Presumption is bustling and loquacious; assurance is full of zeal, but is often doing much when it says nothing. Presumption is heady and high-minded; assurance is sober, and vaunteth not itself. Presumption is self-indulgent; assurance is self-denied. Presumption, like an eastern nabob, would shut his eyes, and fold his hands, and nestle his cheek upon some balmy pillow, and then without any trouble to himself be wafted to heaven in a silken palanquin; whilst assurance, like a primitive disciple, is content to strap on the pilgrim's sandals, and shoulder the weighty cross, and foot it all the way to glory in the steps of the great Forerunner. Presumption is a vile fleshly counterfeit; assurance is a holy and sanctifying grace, because the gift of the holy and sanctifying Spirit. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Christian confidence*:—The account given of the death of Mr. Robert Bruce of Kinnaird is very beautiful in its simplicity: "That morning before the Lord called him to his rest he came to breakfast at his table. After he had eaten, as his use was, a single egg, he said to his daughter, 'I think I am yet hungry; you may bring me another egg,' and instantly fell silent; and, after having mused a little, he said, 'Hold, daughter, hold; my Master calleth me.' With these words his sight failed him, and he called for the Bible; but finding he was not able to read, he said, 'Cast me up the eighth chapter to the Romans, verses twenty-eight to thirty-nine,' much of which he repeated, particularly 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord,' and caused his finger to be put upon them, which was done. 'Now,' said he, 'is my finger upon them?' They told him it was. Then he said, 'God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night,' and straightway gave up the ghost without one groan or shiver." *Security*:—A lady was riding in her carriage, when, spying a beautiful flower by the side of a large rock, she alighted to take it up, that she might remove it to her conservatory, but found that, delicate as it appeared, it resisted all her efforts, because the root ran under the rock. Ah, thought she, this is an illustration of the safety of the Christian, whose life of beauty is under the shelter of the Rock, and whose root of strength runs far beneath it.

CHAPTER IX.

VERS. 1–5. **I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.**—*The truth*:—I. Should be SPOKEN ALWAYS, and under all circumstances. II. Should be SPOKEN IN CHRIST. 1. As a Christian duty. 2. As in Christ's presence. 3. In Christ's Spirit. 4. For Christ's honour. III. Should be ATTENDED BY CONSCIENCE. 1. Enlightened. 2. Influenced. 3. Approved by the Holy Spirit. IV. May only be CONFIRMED by direct appeal to God under very solemn and extraordinary circumstances. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ the sphere of spiritual being*:—"In Christ." This was one of the apostle's favourite expressions. All Christians according to him are "in Christ." They have been "baptized in Christ" (chap. vi. 3), *i.e.*, they have been united to Christ by the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13); so that they are in Christ as if they were parts of His person, members of His body. When the apostle thinks of this union, he sometimes allows the relations of time past and time future to interpenetrate, so that to his eye believers have not only been crucified with Christ (Gal. ii. 20) and buried with Him (chap. vi. 4), but also raised with Him (Col. ii. 12; iii. 1), and glorified with Him in heavenly places (Eph. ii. 6). Christians have their Christian being in Christ. They are justified (Gal. ii. 17), sanctified (1 Cor. 1, 2), triumph (2 Cor. ii. 14), speak in Christ (2 Cor. ii. 17; xii. 19). The personality of Christ had, to his transfiguring conception, become the sphere of his spiritual being and activity, so that what he did, in the express consciousness of his Christian state, he did in the realised presence of Christ, and thus all the nobler elements of his spiritual being were intensified and exalted. In such a mood how could he stoop to wilful misrepresentation? Realising that he was, so to speak, "interred" in Christ, he felt that in his ethical acts he was dominated by the power that ensphered him. (*J. Morison,*

D.D.] *Conscience and the Spirit*:—1. St. Paul does here a most difficult thing. He distinguishes two voices within, and his own voice from either. Conscience—the Holy Ghost—bearing me witness. These distinctions are important. Some confuse conscience and the Spirit, others leave the Spirit altogether out, and conscience alone recognised as the guide of man. 2. Conscience—which is, literally, co-knowledge—is a natural faculty. Like intellect, affection, or any other department of the man, conscience is rather a state than an ingredient of the person. We introduce confusion when we speak of the unit being as split into parts. Memory, will, conscience, and the rest, are, in reality, only so many conditions or moods of the one man. 3. Conscience is that state of the man in which he reviews and judges his own actions. It is natural to every man to ask of himself, Of what complexion is this thing which I have thought, spoken, or done, in regard to right and wrong? We cannot help it—it is a sign, therefore, neither of good nor evil—we must sit in judgment upon ourselves. Who is so happy as never to have passed an unquiet night in the remembrance of word spoken or deed done during the day? And yet there was no one to reproach him! The thing itself was unknown to the world. No matter! He was his own accuser, witness, judge, and executioner. But conscience also exercises a legislative as well as a judicial function. It says, This is right, do it—this is wrong, shun it—as well as, This was wrong, and thou hast done it, &c. 4. This conscience was without the gospel, and is still with it. See the case of Paul (Acts xxiii. 1, *cf.* xxiv. 16; 2 Tim. i. 3, *cf.* 1 Tim i. 19). As much towards man's nature, as towards the law, Christ's office was to elevate, to deepen, to perfect, not to abolish. Just as Christ took the instinct of patriotism, and turned it into a world-wide benevolence, or the love of those that love us (Matt. v. 46), and consecrated it into a universal charity; so He took the natural instinct which we call conscience, and both instructed it in the Divine law of which before it had but the dimmest conception, and also enabled it with that preventing grace which is the presence of the indwelling Spirit. 5. It is a great thing to be conscientious, but it does not make a man a Christian. St. Paul was conscientious, so were some Pharisees, and in these days of grace and the gospel there are conscientious lives which are both un-Christian and anti-Christian. But I am well assured of this, that for one man who lives a good life out of Christ, a hundred thousand are wallowing in the sty of sin for lack of Him. Even in those men who think themselves able to dispense with Him I can always notice some damaging deficiency, self-conceit, coldness, exclusiveness, or uselessness. All this makes me understand why St. Paul and the Master should make so much of that superadded gift, which is the presence of God's Holy Spirit. There are those amongst us who have bitterly felt the powerlessness of conscience. They have suffered, resolved, hoped, struggled, but again and again they have found themselves no match for the strong man armed. We may blame, but the weak by nature may be made strong by grace. A man whose conscience has failed to give him the victory may find victory in Christ. It will be hard work for him; but prayer can prevail where resolution has faltered; the man whose conscience has been blunted may have it set again and edged and made powerful by grace; he who knows what it is to have stifled and all but silenced the inward voice, may yet hear it again in new tones, but with new powers also, speaking of Christ crucified and the love of the Spirit. 6. The Church and the Church's Lord can compassionate the feebleness which man never pities. The Physician came not for the whole but for the sick. This it is which makes His gospel so inestimably precious, and makes us weep for surprise and joy when we find Jesus sitting at meat with publicans and sinners, bidding welcome to sinful women, and drawing His loveliest parables from the history of prodigals, &c. Cry out to Him for the Spirit of adoption—and where nature fails, and conscience, prayer and the Spirit shall prevail and conquer yet! Most of all do I commend this to those who have sunk the deepest. But the gospel is a voice for all men. It addresses the moral man as well as the sinner. It says to him, St. Paul was no libertine; yet even he found his righteousness of no avail in the day of his trial. In the brightness of heaven's light his fabric of self-assertion melted like snow. He cast away all trust in himself, and began to build quite afresh upon the one foundation which is Jesus Christ. How should it be otherwise with you? 7. Let so many of us as have risen into this higher life of grace and the Spirit see that we seek therein a liberty, not of sin, but of God. St. Paul himself exercised himself day by day to have always a conscience void of offence. Conscience in him was still the law; only it was a conscience not bounded by law, but enlarged and illuminated by the Spirit. When he described himself, for a moment, as without law, he yet was

careful to add, lest any should misinterpret him, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Conscience, consciousness, and the Spirit*:—In order to do justice to the Greek idea it is necessary to cord together mentally the two words "conscience" and "consciousness." In the usage of New Testament and Stoic philosophy the term almost always throws out into relief its moral import. Hence we read of a good and pure, and also of an evil, defiled and seared conscience, of a conscience toward God, and one void of offence. The moral character of the conscience in this acceptation of the term is strikingly represented by the derivation "conscientiousness." In Heb. x. 2 the psychological idea of conscience is predominant, and is strong in 2 Cor. i. 12. Here it must not be lost sight of, but the moral idea is predominant. The conscientious principle within the apostle attested the veracity of his utterance when he said, "I am not lying." It is worthy of note that the apostle allows himself the use of a popular representation of the conscience—viz., as if it were distinct from himself—reminding us of Adam Smith's phrase, "the man within the breast." Paul makes his appeal to this "man." He had referred simply to himself when he said "I lie not." That was his own proper testimony concerning himself. But either deliberately or instinctively realising that men often falsify even when they say "We lie not," he turns to the "man within," and listens till he hears him say, "True, thou liest not." Of course the Romans could not look within the apostle's breast and verify the concurrent testimony. There was but one person in the witness box, the apostle himself. But the apostle had not merely to satisfy the Romans; that might or might not be possible. He had to satisfy himself; and that was possible if he was honest. Thus it is that after his outward affirmation he turns in, and receiving inward confirmation, he, as it were, reaffirms. To all who know the man, such a solemn reaffirmation would render "assurance," if that were possible, "doubly sure." Once more, the apostle's conscience bore witness "in the Holy Spirit." Like the rest he "was a man full of the Holy Ghost," so that at every point of his spiritual being he was touched and energised by the heavenly influence. There was still, it is true, the unimpaired principle of moral freedom in the centre of his being, in virtue of which it devolved on himself, as a real self-contained person, to welcome and cherish the hallowing influence. The man's individual manhood was not absorbed into the infinite essence. Neither was his moral accountability merged or superseded. But he in his freedom had made his choice. "To him to live was Christ." And hence all the avenues to the very centre of his being were habitually left open to the ingress of the Holy Spirit whom he neither resisted nor grieved. And when, therefore, his inward conscience bore concurrent testimony with his outward declaration, there was more than itself in the voice of that conscience. There was the echo of the voice of God's Spirit. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) **That I have great heaviness.**—*Paul's concern for Israel*:—I. ITS CHARACTER. 1. Sincere. 2. Divinely inspired. II. ITS INTENSITY. 1. Great. 2. Continual. 3. Self-sacrificing. III. ITS SPECIAL GROUNDS. 1. Their high privileges. 2. National affinity with Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Concern for other men's souls*:—I. THE PERSONS ABOUT WHOM PAUL FELT THIS ANXIETY. 1. His worst enemies. If any of you in following Christ should meet with opposition, avenge it in the same way. Love most the man who treats you worst. 2. His kinsfolk according to the flesh. Charity must begin at home. He who does not desire the salvation of those who are his own kith and kin, "how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Is thy husband unsaved? Love him to Christ! Next to your homes let your own neighbours be first of all considered, and then your country, for all Englishmen are akin. 3. Persons of great privileges. (1) They had privileges by birth—"Who are Israelites." Many of you have the privilege of being born in the midst of gracious influences. Those poor gutter children start in the race of life under terrible disadvantages. And some of you have had everything in your favour; yet we tremble for you, lest you should be cast out, while many come from the east and from the west and sit down at the banquet of grace. (2) They had the adoption, and enjoyed national advantages; and God has been pleased to adopt this nation, giving it special liberty, an open Bible, and the free proclamation of the gospel. (3) They had the glory, *i.e.*, God had revealed Himself in their midst from the mercy-seat in the bright light of the Shekinah. And in this very house of prayer the Lord has manifested His glory very wonderfully. Many hundreds have been turned from darkness to light in this place! (4) They had the first hold of all spiritual gifts. They had seen God revealing His Son to them by types; but Christ is not so well seen in bleeding bullocks and rams and hyssop, &c., as He is seen in

the preaching of the gospel. 4. Yet Paul had a great solicitude for these people because he saw them living in the commission of great sin. Although many of them were exceedingly moral and religious. The greatest of sins is to be at enmity with God. The most damning of iniquities is to refuse Christ. So many now value their external religiousness above faith in Jesus. II. THE NATURE OF THIS ANXIETY. It was—1. Very truthful. There was no sham about it, "I say the truth in Christ." He did not fancy that he felt, but he really felt. He did not sometimes get up into that condition or down into it, but he lived in it. "I lie not," he says. "I do not exaggerate." For fear he should not be believed he assoverates as strongly as is allowed to a Christian man. Do we feel the same, or is it only a little excitement at a revival meeting? You must feel deeply for the souls of men if you are to bless them. 2. Very gracious. It was not an animal feeling, or a natural feeling; it was "in Christ." When he was nearest to his Lord, then he felt that he did mourn over men's souls. It was truth in Christ that he was expressing, because he was one with Christ. It is of no use to try to get this feeling by reading books, or to pump yourself up to it in private; it is the work of God. 3. Spiritual. The Holy Spirit bore witness with his conscience. I am sometimes afraid that our zeal for conversion would not stand the test of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps we want to increase our denomination, or enlarge our church for our own honour, or get credit for doing good. None of these motives can be tolerated; our concern for souls must be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. 4. Most deep and depressing he had great heaviness, and he tells us that this did not come on him at times, but that he always felt it whenever his thoughts turned that way: I have "continual sorrow in my heart." In his very heart, for it was not a superficial desire; a continual sorrow, for it was no fitful emotion. 5. Most intense (ver. 3). Of course the apostle never thought of wishing that he could be an enemy to Christ, but he did sometimes look at the misery which comes upon those who are separated from Christ, until he felt that if he could save his kinsmen by his own destruction, ay, by himself enduring their heavy punishment, he could wish to stand in their stead. He did not say that he ever did wish it, but he felt as if he could wish it when his heart was warm. His case was parallel with that of Moses when he prayed the Lord to spare the people and said, "If not, blot my name out of the Book of Life." When the heart is full of love even the boldest hyperboles are simple truths. Extravagances are the natural expression of warm hearts even in ordinary things. What the cool doctrinalist pulls to pieces, and the critic of words regards as altogether absurd, true zeal nevertheless feels. Christ "saved others, Himself He could not save." Men are extravagantly prudent, dubious, profane; they may therefore well permit the minister of Christ to be extravagant in his love for others. Such a text as this must be fired off red hot; it spoils if it cools. It is a heart, not a head business. The apostle means us to understand that there was nothing which he would not suffer if he might save his kindred according to the flesh. III. ITS EXCELLENCES. What would be the result if we felt as Paul did? 1. It would make us like Christ. After that manner he loved. He became a curse for us. He did what Paul could wish, but could not do. I want you to feel that you would pass under poverty, sickness, or death, if you could save those dear to you. I heard of a dear girl the other day who said to her pastor, "I could never bring my father to hear you, but I have prayed for him long, and God will answer my request. Now you will bury me, won't you? My father must come and hear you speak at my grave. Do speak to him. God will bless him." And he did, and her father was converted. 2. It will save us from selfishness. The first instinct of a saved soul is a longing to bring others to Christ. Yet, lest there should grow up in your spirit any of that Pharisaic selfishness which was seen in the elder brother, ask to feel a heaviness for your prodigal younger brother, who is still feeding swine. 3. It will save you from any difficulty about forgiving other people. Love mankind with all your soul, and you will feel no difficulty in exercising patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. 4. It will keep you from very many other griefs. You will be delivered from petty worries if you are concerned about the souls of men. 5. It will put you much upon prayer. That is the right style of praying—when a man prays because he has an awful weight upon him, and pray he must. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Concern for kindred*:—I. ITS TRUE EXPRESSION. 1. Heartfelt compassion. 2. Earnest prayer. 3. Self-sacrificing zeal. II. ITS POWERFUL MOTIVES. 1. Our brethren. 2. Specially privileged. 3. Dear to Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Home and foreign missions*:—The fervency of affection professed by Paul in this passage is all in behalf of his own countrymen;

and yet none more zealous than he in the labours of a Christian missionary among the distant countries of the world. What gives more importance to this remark is the tendency in our own day to place these two causes in opposition to each other. It might serve as a useful corrective to look at Paul and at the one comprehensive affection which actuated his bosom, cleaving with all the devotedness of a thorough patriot to the families of his own land; and yet carrying him beyond the limits of a contracted patriotism among all the families of the earth. The truth is, that home and foreign Christianity, instead of acting upon the heart like two forces in opposite directions, draw both the same way, so that he who has been carried forward to the largest sacrifices in behalf of the one, is the readiest for like sacrifices in behalf of the other. The friends of the near being also, as they have opportunity, the most prompt and liberal in their friendship to the distant enterprise; recognising in man, wherever he is to be found, the same wandering outcast from the light and love of heaven, and the same befitting subject for the offers of a free salvation. We cannot therefore sympathise with those who affect an indifference to the Christianisation of the heathen till the work of Christianisation shall have been completed at our own door. Let them be careful, lest there do not lurk within them a like indifference to both, lest the feelings and the principles of all true philanthropy lie asleep in their bosoms; and they, unlike to Paul, who found room for the utmost affection towards the spiritual well-being of his own kinsfolk and the utmost activity among the aliens and idolaters of far distant lands, shall be convicted of deep insensibility to the concerns of the soul, of utter blindness to the worth of eternity. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Earnestness in promoting the salvation of others*:—We were going from Camden to Philadelphia some years ago very late at night after a meeting. It was a cold winter night, and we stood on the deck of the ferry-boat, impatient to get ashore. Before the boat came to the wharf, a man who stood on the outside of the chains slipped and dropped into the water. It is the only man that we ever saw overboard. It was a fearful night. The icicles had frozen on the wharf, and they had frozen on the steamer. The question was how to get the man up. The ropes were lowered, and we all stood with feverish anxiety lest the man should not be able to grasp the ropes, and when he grasped it and was pulled up on to the deck, and we saw he was safe, although we had never seen him before, how we congratulated him! A life saved! Have we the same earnestness about getting men out of spiritual peril? Do we not go up and down in our prayer-meetings, and our Christian work, coldly saying, "Yes, there is a great deal of sin in the world; men ought to do better. I wish the people would become Christians. I think it is high time that men attended to their eternal interests"; and five minutes after we put our head on the pillow we are sound asleep, or from that consideration we pass out in five minutes into the utmost mirthfulness, and have forgotten it all. Meanwhile there is a whole race overboard. How few hands are stretched out to lift men out of the flood! how few prayers offered! how earnest opportunities! how little earnest Christian work! (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

Ver. 3. **For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren.** —*St. Paul's wish*:—A considerable group of expositors have regarded the first moiety of this verse as parenthetical, "I have great heaviness and sorrow of heart (for I myself used to wish to be accursed from the Messiah) for my brethren," &c. The apostle is supposed to be referring to his own infatuation during the time of his antagonism to Christ and Christianity, for the purpose of obliquely depicting, from the standpoint of his own experience, the lamentable condition of his countrymen, and of thus accounting for the overwhelming sorrow under which he was suffering. Others, without the mechanical parenthetical expedient, give substantially the same interpretation, "I was wishing, viz., at a former period, not now." But it is impossible that the apostle was speaking historically. The expression is a Greek idiom meaning, "I could pray or wish to God"—an idiom which grew out of the imperfect or incomplete tense, "I was praying." If it were wished to represent the act as completed some other tense would be required. Take another instance (Gal. iv. 20). "I could wish [for reasons obvious enough, and if my other engagements did not forbid] to be once more in the midst of you." Or (Acts xxv. 22) "Agrippa said to Festus, I also could wish to hear the man myself" (viz., if it were not, O Festus, trespassing too far on your indulgence). So in the case before us "I could wish to God to be vicariously an anathema for my kinsmen, if my conceptions of my duty on the one hand, and of God's wisdom and will on the other, would allow me to carry forth into completion such a desire and such a prayer.

The apostle did not actually desire to be an anathema. He knew that such a desire would never be Divinely fulfilled, and hence he did not cherish it. A wise man keeps his desires under control. A pious man takes God's desires and purposes into account, and does not entertain any desire which he knows to be at variance with the Divine will, or with the arrangements that are dependent on the Divine will. Hence it is that the apostle does not say, "I desire," but only "I could desire." So far as he was concerned, he was ready for the self-sacrifice, provided it was legitimate, and could be efficacious. It would not, however, have been of avail, and hence the wish was never fully formed. The potential did not pass into the actual. It is true that the potential translation of the verb, though doubtless the only correct one under the circumstances, is nevertheless an imperfect reflection of the original "imperfect" tense. The tense is a time, not a potency; but it is a past tense incomplete. Hence the real idea of the word is "I was desiring." The desire rose up in the apostle's heart, and to a certain extent he allowed it, yet only to a certain extent, for a higher desire struck in and controlled it—the desire to be in perfect accord with God's desire and will. Hence it hung suspended, and remained imperfect. It was conditional, and the condition that would have brought it to maturity was never forthcoming. Thus the embryo desire was in reality but a potency. It may now be further noticed that the word means properly "I could pray." The word is so rendered in 2 Cor. xiii. 7; James v. 16, and has really that meaning in 2 Cor. xiii. 9; 3 John 2; Acts xxvii. 29. In the last text they lifted up their desires to their gods and prayed for the break of day. The word only occurs elsewhere in Acts xxvi. 29. "If I might venture to use the liberty of openly expressing the fulness of my feeling, I would audibly lift up my prayer to God." Hence our text is admirably expressed in our idiomatic "I could wish to God." It is impossible to believe that St. Paul ever presented such a prayer. The utmost stretch of conceivability extends no farther than this—that the apostle felt, time after time, the incompleted uprising of an impulse to pray that if it were compatible with all great interests, permission might be given him to be, by the sacrifice of his own happiness, the means of rescuing his infatuated countrymen from their doom. Such sacrifice he would gladly make, if it were among the moral possibilities. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Paul's wish*:—The word "accursed" often signifies no more than being devoted to temporal death, or being made a sacrifice of (Deut. xxi. 23, *cf.* Gal. iii. 16), and the words "from Christ" may signify "after Christ," *i.e.*, after His example (2 Tim. i. 3). The verse then would read thus: "I could be content, nay, I should rejoice to be made a sacrifice myself, as Christ has been before me, for my brethren." (*D. Waterland, D.D.*) *Accursed from Christ*:—The solutions that have been offered of this difficult text group themselves under one or other of the three following alternatives. I. IF HIS JEWISH KINSMEN COULD ONLY THEREBY BE SAVED, PAUL COULD HIMSELF SUBLIMELY CONSENT TO BE FINALLY DAMNED. Many have so understood him, and applauded the sentiment as the climax of the morally sublime, as exhibiting "a love stronger than death," because stronger than even hell. But is this a Christ-like love? When did Christ consent to be made a curse in a sense so vile, or incur a doom so final? For me to wish myself accursed from Christ for any end whatever, would be to wish not only doom, but sin. So far from glorifying God, it would but dishonour and contradict Him, for it would be to choose as a means of good what God brands as the very quintessence of evil. II. A QUALIFIED AND SOFTENED SENSE THAT FALLS SHORT OF FINAL DOOM. 1. Some have taken the phrase, "accursed from Christ," to mean temporal death, in proof of which appeal is made to the prayer of Moses in Exod. xxxii. 32. But Moses' expression for temporal death presents no parallelism whatever to the apostle's expression. Moreover, if Paul meant temporal death, what could he mean by "from Christ"? Temporal death, so far from separating the believer from Christ, cuts short all seeming separation. Anathema originally denoted the act of depositing gifts in temples, and also the votive offerings themselves. These were of course sacred and irrevocable. When the gift was a living creature, beast or man, the life was devoted in sacrifice. Hence "devoted" stands for "doomed." In the spiritual sphere the doom thus expressed was utter and final. As "anathema from Christ" the life, what less could it be? This we find to be its intensity of meaning in all the other places in which the word occurs in the New Testament (Acts xxiii. 14; 1 Cor. xii. 3, xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8, 9). Thus the words "accursed from Christ" refuse to be softened down. Whatever final damnation may mean, all that they mean. Nor will it in the least help the matter to resort to the forms of Jewish excommunication, for in its milder form of expulsion from the synagogue, the phrase

before us is far too strong, and is never once so employed: while in its direr form of thorough Jewish malediction, it embraced all the terrors of "eternal judgment." 2. Turn we now to the opening expression "I could wish." The tense in the original is the imperfect: and the explanation given is "I was wishing, only it was no use." But if Paul wished, in any degree and for any reason, to be "accursed from Christ," he wished what was wrong. If he wished, or professed to wish, an acknowledged impossibility, he simply trifled with his readers, and with his tragic theme. And if he did not really wish at all, then his words reduce themselves at best to a simple extravagance. That be far from our apostle (see ver. 1). III. THE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION REMAINS. 1. The tense used is the imperfect, and the most literal rendering would be, "I wished." In Gal. i. 13 the same tense occurs, and that, too, in an affirmation very parallel to the one before us. Had our translators rendered that imperfect tense there as they have done here we should have had, "I could persecute." 2. Again note that the word "myself" stands connected with the word "wished." "For I myself used to wish to be accursed from Christ." This makes it clear that he takes us back to his unconverted past. It is as if he had said, "I myself used to hurl those curses which you are now launching at the Nazarene. I, even I, once dared the doom you now defy, and it is because I once did so, and now see the terrible doom I incurred, that I feel such sorrow for my kinsmen." 3. But how Paul could be said to wish this dreadful anathema for his brethren's sake? Granting that the connection is the true one the answer would be, Paul did all this as a zealous Jew, devotedly attached to his nation, and thinking that he was doing them, as well as God, service by those dreadful maledictions. But the clause is clearly parenthetical. The sorrow, not the wish, is for his brethren. 4. But if the words "accursed from Christ" mean nothing less than final doom, how, even in his unconverted state, could Paul have wished that? The answer is that the Jewish anathema was double-edged. It might be launched directly at Jesus, and doubtless it often was by Paul amid his breathings of "threatening and slaughter." But it might also take the more indirect form of imprecating direst anathemas upon himself if he espoused the cause of the Nazarene. 5. But while recalling the past he cannot forget the present. To his unbelieving sense the anathemas at that past period meant one thing. To his now Christianised sense they are seen to have meant infinitely direr things than he then conceived. He now saw that the Nazarene was no false Messiah, but the true; hence the significant use of the article in the original, "accursed from the Christ." He wished, and willed, that rejection of Christ which leads to the curse of utter and irremediable woe. IV. CONCLUSION. 1. Let the reckless dealer in common oaths beware. His lightly uttered blasphemies may have more momentum than he thinks. Your oaths may fasten on your soul a lasting curse. 2. Be not hasty in your conclusions. Paul once allowed himself to be borne away by the current. He had need to "save himself from that untoward generation." So have we from ours. We may have to breast the current that would else float us past Christ, and drift us to ruin. 3. See how remote Christianity is from Pharisaism. The Pharisees scowled on Jesus because He was the friend of sinners. They cared for no man's soul. Now, if we want a picture the very opposite of that, we may behold it here in Paul. But that same Paul was himself once a Pharisee. And lo! here he stands stripped of the last shred of his Pharisaic cloak, and dissolved in tender tears for the souls of his fellows! 4. We have here a splendid example of love to our deadly foes. This word "anathema" may remind us of what dire anathemas those very Jews pronounced over this same Paul (Acts xxiii. 14). And how does he repay them? By returning blessing. So well had he caught the spirit and conned the lesson of his Master (Matt. v. 44, 45). 5. We have also here a spirit-stirring example of love to souls as souls. It was the spiritual condition and prospects of his Jewish kinsmen that wrung his heart; but Gentiles drew forth this tender concern no less than Jews. 6. How solemn is human life! How tragic is human ruin! How saddening to reflect that such tragedies are hourly enacting themselves under all the sheet-lightning play of laughter and shallow merry-makings of the world! "Life is real, life is earnest." 7. How vitally indispensable is the gospel; for is it not implied in our apostle's statement that there is life only in Christ? Separation from Christ is here assumed to be separation from bliss, and to be identical with curse. 8. And how free is that gospel! No reprobating decree; else these tears of Paul, if tears of sympathy for men were tears of antipathy and even treachery in relation to God. The grace of God that hath appeared "brings salvation unto all men." It is brought to our very door. It is pressed upon us, but not

forced. The issue rests with our own free will. Paul the persecutor acted out his "wish," or choice; and so with equal freedom did Paul the preacher (Deut. xxx. 19, 20). (*J. Guthrie, M.A.*) *Anathema*:—The word was originally employed to denote what was by way of consecration put up in a temple. The "anathema" might be an offering of gratitude for deliverance or some other blessing; or it might be, in the ages of spiritual darkness, a kind of sacred bribe presented to the deity. But whatever it was it would, if of convenient shape and bulk, be hung up on a pillar, or suspended on the wall of the shrine. It thenceforward belonged to the god, and it would have been not only theft but sacrilege for any one, even a priest, to have appropriated it. When the term was adopted by the Greek-speaking Hebrews it was used in exchange for the Hebrew *cherem*, which had for its radical import the idea of severance. Whatever was by Divine arrangement utterly "cut off" from any man's enjoyment was *cherem* to that man. God reserved its use. It was His *cherem*. If it were a thing that still continued fit for human use, God might assign it to His peculiar servants for their benefit (Levit. xxvii. 21; Numb. xviii. 14; Ezek. xliv. 29), or if that were not desirable He might put it entirely out of the way, or doom it to destruction (1 Kings xx. 42). Such devotement to destruction is often desirable in a world such as ours, so polluted, perverted, abused. There are things which cannot be turned to better account than to be utterly destroyed. There are moral nuisances which can only be swept away by "the besom of destruction." Among these moral nuisances are morally leprous and festering men, who "will not" be healed of their contagious sores. These and their infected rookeries must be swept away. The sooner the better for society at large. God will be glorified in the work of destruction. Hence "anathema," which at first meant something valuable devoted to a god, came, when applied within the sphere of the moral government of the living and true God, to denote objects which had become irreclaimably corrupt, and which consequently He wisely doomed to be destroyed. The apostle disintegrating one particular line of Hebrew thought from amid the complexity of ideas that were woven around the word felt at times that, if the ethical element were eliminated from the case, he could submit to be himself destroyed, even from "the presence of his Lord," if thereby his kinsmen could be constituted heirs of everlasting life and bliss. The destruction of which he thought was thus the annihilation, not of his being, but of substantial elements and factors of well-being. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Anathema from Christ*:—St. Paul closes the previous chapter with the triumphant confidence that "neither death nor life," &c., should be able to "separate him" from the love of God which is in Christ." The inventory of possible separating forces is comprehensive enough, but it is not exhaustive. The apostle omitted one potentiality which, alas! is constantly separating men from the love of Christ—self. The citadel which can resist any combination of external adversaries may fall through the voluntary act of the garrison within. The gate which cannot be battered down can be opened. Men cannot be driven from Christ, but they can "go away." But in his rush of inspired feeling St. Paul would not entertain the thought of himself as withdrawing from the love of Christ, and naturally so. He knew himself too well to admit for one moment the likelihood of a guilty abandonment of One who was his "life." There was no possibility of spiritual murder, nor probability of spiritual suicide. But the rush of feeling over he now in cool thought recollects that separation from Christ and His love was not only conceivable and possible, but, in certain circumstances, even desirable; and not from a sinfully selfish motive, but for one Divinely philanthropic. His "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (chap. x. 1). How much depended upon the gratification of that desire in relation to the Jews themselves, to the kingdom of Christ, and Christ Himself, he goes on to show. How was this devoutly wished for consummation to be reached? He had used every means within his power, and had sacrificed every interest but one—his interest in Christ. Could the salvation of his countrymen be accomplished by the sacrifice of this? Would a self-devotion paralleled only by that which extorted the "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" suffice? If so he asked to drink of the same cup, and be baptized with the same baptism—knowing, unlike the sons of Zebedee, what he asked. To secure the world's redemption the Master did not shrink from the Divine abandonment; to secure the effectual application of that redemption to his kinsmen the servant would not shrink from the abandonment of his Master. The greatness of the issue overshadowed the magnitude of the personal sacrifice. Let us ponder—I. THE WONDERFUL WISH. What did it mean? 1. Dismissal from the work of Christ. This was the apostle's joy,

and not all the persecutions of this world nor all the allurements of the next could tempt him even to wish that he could abandon it. Yet anathema from Christ meant dismissal after all he had accomplished, and prohibition against attempting any more. The labourer was willing to set aside that another might continue and reap the fruits of his labour; the warrior was willing to resign the weapons of the warfare and the laurels of the victory to other hands. 2. Alienation from the friendship of Christ. What the friendship of Christ was to the apostle may be gathered from what he gave to win it, what he did to cherish it, his own testimony to its surpassing worth and the recorded instances of its tenderness and power. This was the effectual consolation of the lonely man in the strange city, in the presence of raging mobs amidst the perils of shipwreck, and at last in the Roman dungeon. Measure then what it must have been for Paul to perfect it. 3. Dissolution of union with Christ. Review his own illustrations of what this oneness was: that between head and body, husband and wife, tree and branches, foundation and building, &c. Christ and Paul were one in life, one in mind, one in heart. Yet Paul was willing to be anathema from all this. 4. Eternal abandonment by Christ. Life would have been unendurable but for Christ, yet Paul did not shrink from the prospect of eternity without Him. II. The wonderful wish VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF ITS ULTIMATE PURPOSE. Many have become anathema from Christ, abandoned His work, renounced His friendship, sundered the union between them and gone away into everlasting destruction from His presence, for the lowest and most selfish motives. The labour has been felt to be too hard, the friendship too exacting, the union so self-crucifying, and the heaven so holy and so far away. Or association with Christ has barred the way of pleasure, riches, advancement, and renown. In Paul's case self was absolutely annihilated. Christ was all to him, he was willing to renounce that all if by that means others might have it. He was only one, his kindred were many. He was content that he, the unit, should be sacrificed so that the multitude might be blessed. His wish in this view of it was—1. That his beloved work in other hands might be more successful. Hitherto he had only aroused the hatred of his kinsmen to his Lord. He wished, therefore, to stand aside if another agency could win their love. 2. That by his exclusion from it the circle of Christ's friends might be indefinitely enlarged. If mere prejudice against himself were keeping his brethren away, he would gladly forego all the blessed privileges connected with Christ's companionship, if his brethren would only come and accept them instead. He would, if possible, view with gratitude from a distance the unceasing spread of Christ's influence, and the constantly augmenting number of Christ's friends. 3. That the whole race of which he was but a solitary member might become one with Christ at his expense. He saw what this would mean for the world. A Christianised Judaism as a moral force would be irresistible. He, then, would not stand in the way of this. 4. That heaven might be now richly peopled by his exclusion. The thought of the great body of his kinsmen anathema from Christ for ever was so terrible that, if lawful, he would renounce his heavenly hopes that they, instead of himself, might be for ever with the Lord. Conclusion: 1. The wish marks the advance of Christianity beyond all the world's conceptions of philanthropy. Many sublime sacrifices had been made, but where is the record of such a wish as this? Read it in the light of chap. v. 7, 8. 2. The wish could not be gratified. Paul could have devoted himself without sin; but Christ could not have consented. Even such an end could not justify such a means. Christ loves the world, but He loves the individual, and such an individual as Paul could not be sacrificed for the world without the sacrifice of Christ's own love and equity as well. 3. The carrying out of the wish is unthinkable. Anathema from Christ from such a motive would necessarily bind more closely to Him. The means of repulsion are the very means of attraction. Paul's wish is the very spirit of Christ; and for Christ to have allowed it would have been for Christ to deny Himself. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The vicariousness of gospel philanthropy*:—I. ITS STRONG SUBSTITUTIONARY CRAVING. Paul wishes here to suffer for the sake of his brethren. All love is in a sense substitutionary. It suffers for others. The more love a being has in a world of suffering, the more vicarious agony he must endure. Love loads us with the infirmities and sorrows of all around. Christ came here with an infinite love for the whole world; and by an eternal law of sympathy He suffered for the world. But there is, moreover, a craving in love to suffer instead of its object. Does not the mother desire to suffer instead of the babe that lies on the bed of anguish? Substitution of this kind is the law of love. II. ITS SELF-SACRIFICING POWER. The apostle not only desired to suffer instead of his brethren, but to suffer the greatest

evil, to sacrifice his all for them. He desired to be anathema from Christ. What does this involve? "Terrible enough," says Dean Plumptre, "would have been that word "anathema" if it had brought with it only the thoughts which a Jewish reader would have associated with it. To come under all the curses, dark and dread, which were written in the book of the law; to be cursed in waking and sleeping, going out and coming in, in buying and selling, in the city and in the field; to be shunned, hated as a Samaritan was hated, shut out from fellowship with all human society that had been most prized, from all kindly greeting of friends and neighbours. This was what he would have connected with the words as their least and lowest meaning. The Christian reader, possibly the Jewish also, would have gone yet further. The apostle's own words would have taught him to see more. To be 'delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh'; to come under sharp pain of body, supernaturally inflicted, and to feel that that excruciating agony or loathsome plague was the deserved chastisement of a sin against truth and light, and to be shut out from all visible fellowship with the body of Christ, and therefore from all communication with Christ Himself; to be as in the outer darkness while the guests were feasting in the illumined chamber, here too to be shunned by those who had been friends and brothers. This would have been the Christian's thoughts as to excommunication in the apostolic age. But beyond all this the apostle found a deeper gulf and a more terrible sentence. To be anathema from Christ, cut off for ever from that eternal life which he had known as the truest and highest blessedness, sentenced for ever to that outer darkness, the wailing and gnashing of teeth, this was what he prayed for if it might have for its result the salvation of his brethren." Gospel love involves self-abnegation. Self sinks as love rises. Christ is the highest example. He loved us, and He gave Himself for us. Here is the cause and the effect. Love is the high priest of the soul; it offers the whole self. III. ITS SOUL-SAVING AIM. Why did Paul wish to sacrifice himself? What was the grand object he had in view? The spiritual salvation of his countrymen. The vicarious love of the gospel endures and craves sufferings, not merely or mainly to serve men materially and temporarily, but chiefly spiritually and eternally; to save their souls. It counts no perils too great, no sufferings too distressing, no sacrifices too exacting, in order to redeem immortal spirits from ignorance, selfishness, worldliness, guilt, misery, hell. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The extravagance of holy love*:—One of my hearers used to keep puzzling himself fearfully with that passage in Scripture about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. He went and looked at Dr. Gill about it, he went to Thomas Scott about it, and he went to Matthew Henry about it; and these good divines all puzzled him as much as they could, but they did not seem to clear up the matter. The good man could not understand how Jesus Christ could say as He did, "How often would I have gathered thee, but thou wouldst not!" One day he received more grace, and got to have a love for souls, and then the old skin of narrowmindedness which had been large enough for him once began to crack and break, and he went to the passage then, and said, "I can understand it now; I do not know how it is consistent with such and such a doctrine, but it is very consistent with what I feel in my heart." And I feel just the same. I used to be puzzled by that passage where Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from God for his brethren's sake. Why, I have often felt the same, and now I understand how a man can say in the exuberance of his love to others, that he would be willing to perish himself if he might save them. Of course it never could be done, but such is the extravagance of a holy love for souls that it breaks through reason, and knows no bounds. Get the heart right and you get right upon many difficult points. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Heroic devotion*:—For an example of heroic devotion let us go, not to our own sacred book, but to a heathen story in the "Mahabharat." Have you read of Yodhishtera, the stainless king, who, on account of his pure life and tender pity for all that lives, is allowed to enter heaven without tasting death? But, arrived in the presence of the immortal gods, he misses the faces of brothers and friends whom he had loved and lost, and bliss is not blissful to him, and he cries, "Show me those souls; I cannot tarry where I have them not. Heaven is there where love and faith make heaven; let me go. I do desire," he said, "that region, be it of the blest, as this, or of the sorrowful, some other where, where my dear brothers are. So where they have gone there will I surely go." He quits the heaven he has gained, and hellwards turns. But while he traverses the place of dread, again the angels invite his return. He answers, "Go to those thou servest, tell them I come not thither; say I stand here, in the throat of hell, and here will abide, nay, even perish, if my well-beloved may win ease and peace by any

pain of mine." Are we going backward? Have we no passion for saving?—no sympathy with the "them also I must bring"?

"Heaven is not heaven to one alone;
Save thou one soul, and thou mayest save thine own."
(*Mrs. E. Campagnac.*)

A passion for souls:—All the great revivalists of the Church have had what has been called a passion for souls. John Smith, the mighty Wesleyan preacher, used to say, "I am a broken-hearted man; not for myself, but on account of others. God has given me such a sight of the value of precious souls, that I cannot live if souls are not saved. Oh, give me souls, or else I die!"

Vers. 4, 5. **Who are Israelites.**—*The literal and the true Israelites*:—I. The literal enjoyed the ADOPTION as God's people among whom God revealed Himself gloriously—the true enjoy the adoption of sons and the glorious indwelling of the Spirit. II. The literal were privileged with THE PATRIARCHAL COVENANTS AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW—the true are privileged with the New Testament covenant, and the dispensation of the Spirit. III. The literal rejoiced in THE LEVITICAL SERVICE, AND THE PROMISES of better things to come—the true worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in the hope of eternal life. IV. The literal could boast of THE FATHERS and anticipate the Messiah—the true have their apostles, martyrs, and confessors, and look for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Israelites and their privileges*:—The name Israelites was a most honourable one, and dear to them all. The relationship which it signalised was fitted to remind them that by the condescension of the Omnipotent One, there was something "princely" within their reach (Gen. xxxii. 28; Hos. xii. 3). I. THE ADOPTION. Under the Old Testament the Divine adoption realised itself specifically in the collective theocratic people as a people (Exod. iv. 22; *cf.* Jer. xxxi. 9; Hos. xi. 1). The collective people were for great theocratic purposes adopted into a relation of Divine sonship, and thus into a relation of peculiar Divine privilege; not, however, because of a feeling of partiality in the heart of God toward a section of His human family, but because His benignant Messianic purposes, widespreading to the ends of the earth, required some arrangement of the kind. Such was the Divine plan in Old Testament ages. The Israelites were God's "son," "daughter," or "daughter of His people." At times the representation tended anticipatively toward the grander principle of personal individuality; as when it is said, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me." But it was reserved for the New Testament age to give emphasis to the idea of personal individualism in relation to the Divine adoption (John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26; 1 John iii. 1). II. THE GLORY. The reference is to that peculiar symbol of the Divine presence which guided the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness, overshadowing them by day and illuminating them by night (Exod. xiii. 21, 22, xiv. 19). This was in some external respects God's glory *par excellence* (Exod. xxiv. 16). It was a magnificent symbol of Divine guidance and protection, and was denominated "the Shekinah." Wherever it was to be found, there God was to be found; not indeed as in His palace-home, the "house not made by hands," but as in His temporary tent beside His tented people in the period of their pilgrimage—a very present Helper and Defence. III. THE COVENANTS. These were engagements on the part of God to confer distinguishing privileges on the patriarchs and the Israelites in general, on condition of responsive appreciation on their part, and the observance, in all the affairs of life, of His regulative will (Gen. xv. 1–6, xvii. 1–8, 15–19; Exod. xix. 1–9). But these engagements, while thus involving, as is suggested by the Hebrew term *Berith*, a certain ineradicable conditionality, were at the same time in accordance with the Greek *suntheke*, spontaneous and unencumbered dispositions of goods and distributions of benefits, just as if they had been actually "willed" to them by testamentary deed. God "disposed" of certain portions of His means and goods for the benefit of His national son, though it was impossible that He could alienate the goods from Himself, or alienate Himself from both His present usufruct and His perpetual right of property. IV. THE GIVING OF THE LAW, *i.e.*, the Divine legislative enactments published from Sinai, and constituting in their sum the code which is known as the "moral law." It is incomparably the best of all bases for the innumerable details of practical jurisprudence. It goes back, indeed, in its form to that primitive era

when duty was, to a most preponderating extent, identified with moral self-restraint. Hence its injunctions are wisely set forth in negations. But when the detailed expanse of the decalogue is condensed into the summation of the duologue, the phase of representation is become affirmative; and nothing can excel the duological enactments in comprehensiveness, completeness, simplicity, and direct authority over the reason and the conscience. V. THE SERVICE, *i.e.*, the temple service—a grand ritual, here regarded as a Divine appointment or grant of grace. Being in its many and varied details instinct with practical significance, it was fitted to recall to the minds of the worshippers what was due to God on the one hand, and how much was graciously provided by Him on the other. VI. THE PROMISES—announcements of coming favours—*avant-couriers* of the favours themselves, and sent forth to stimulate expectation and support the heart. All the Old Testament dispensations were replete with Messianic promises. His coming was "the promise"—the one running promise made to the fathers (Acts xiii. 32), and involved all other Messianic blessings, such as the atonement, the kingdom of heaven, the reign to be continued "as long as the sun," the "new earth," the "inheritance of the world" (chap. iv. 13, 14). It involved peace, joy, hope, all of them unspeakable and full of glory (chap. v. 1–11). VII. THE FATHERS—the patriarch fathers, the band of whom Abraham was the leader and typical representative. They were far indeed from being men without blemish. But perhaps most of the sinister bars in their escutcheon were parcels of the heritage which they had received from their ancestors. But notwithstanding their blemishes they were at once childlike in faith and reverential in spirit. Their thoughts rose up on high. They "sought a heavenly country and looked for a city whose builder and architect was God" (Heb. xi. 10–14). It was no little advantage to be descended from such sires. VIII. THE CHRIST. The Messiah emerged from among the Hebrews, and thus "salvation was of the Jews." It was their crowning prerogative. Jesus was a Jew. But His own people knew not their privilege, and they perceived not that it was the time of tide in the day of their merciful visitation (John i. 11; *cf.* Matt. xxi. 39). When the apostle said "so far as His human nature was concerned," his mind was already mounting the infinite height which rose beyond. "Who is over all, God, to be blessed for ever." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Israelites and their privileges*:—To no nation under the sun does there belong so proud, so magnificent a heraldry. No minstrel of a country's fame was ever furnished so richly with topics; and the heart and fancy of our apostle seem to kindle at the enumeration of them. They were first Israelites, or descendants of a venerable patriarch—then, selected from among all the families of the earth, they were the adopted children of God, and to them belonged the glory of this high and heavenly relationship; and with their ancestors were those covenants made which enveloped the great spiritual destinies of the human race; and the dispensation of the Law from that mountain which smoked at the touch of the Divinity was theirs; and that solemn temple service where alone the true worship of the Eternal was kept up for ages was theirs; and as their history was noble from its commencement by the fathers from whom they sprung, so at its close did it gather upon it a nobility more wondrous still by the mighty and mysterious descendant in whom it may be said to have terminated—even Him who at once is the root and the offspring of David, and with the mention of whose name our apostle finishes this stately climax of their honours—"of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen." They are far the most illustrious people on the face of the world. There shines upon them a transcendental glory from on high; and all that the history whether of classical or heroic ages hath enrolled of other nations are but as the lesser lights of the firmament before it. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **The covenants.**—I. THE TERM ITSELF bears a special Messianic meaning, as always having in view the fidelity of God to the design of human redemption through the sacrifice of His Son. The Hebrew *Berith* almost always translated in the LXX. by *diatheke*, signifies, not a compact as between man and man, but the disposition or arrangement assumed by the one supreme purpose of grace. Unlike human compacts it is invariably connected with sacrifice. The Hebrew contains an allusion to the custom of cutting and passing between the parts of a divided animal on the ratification of a covenant. The first express revelation of the covenant to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18) gives the key to all its history. There all is based on a free Divine promise. The animals divided denoted the two parties to the great transaction; and the flame passing through was God, in His future Son, the Shekinah, uniting the parties alone, and thus ratifying His own covenant. The New Testa-

ment term *diathekē* does not preserve the original allusion; but it is never disconnected from the idea. The one covenant of grace has been ratified by an eternal sacrifice; which is at the same time the death of the Testator, who disposes the promise of eternal inheritance according to the counsel of His own will. II. THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION, OR OF GRACE, HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONNECTED WITH CHRIST, ITS UNREVEALED MEDIATOR. As its Mediator He is the medium through whom, or rather in whom, all its blessings are conveyed: that grace which is the one name and blessing of the covenant, the free bestowment of favour on sinful man, or "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. xiii. 14). Therefore the term, which has a wider meaning than its relation to a compact, may be applied to Christ as the yet unknown Redeemer who was at once the ground of the covenant, and its promise, and its virtual administrator. After He came and was revealed, it is the term surety that more precisely expresses His mediatorship in the order of grace: in His Divine-human atoning personality, He is the Pledge to man of the bestowment by God of all blessings procured through His atoning work, and the Pledge to God on behalf of mankind of compliance with all the conditions of the covenant. In the Old Testament the future Redeemer is not termed either the Mediator or the Surety; though He was in the profoundest sense both as the Angel or "Messenger of the covenant" (Mal. iii. 1), and Himself the embodied Covenant reserved for the future (Isa. xlix. 8). What was thus given to Him by promise becomes the heritage of His people through faith, who as "Christ's are heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 18, 19, 29). III. THIS ONE COVENANT HAS TAKEN THREE FORMS in the history of revelation. 1. As entered into with mankind, represented by Adam, its revelation began with the Fall, was ratified for the world with Noah, and was confirmed to Abraham as the representative of all believers to the end of time. 2. But the covenant with Abraham for the world in all ages also introduced the special compact with his descendants after the flesh. The latter was established through Moses, its mediator; and blended the covenant of grace with a covenant of works. The law was given by Moses; and as an appended form or condition of the original institute of grace, perpetually convicted the people of their sin and impotence, drove them to take refuge in the hope of a future grace, the ground of which was kept before them in the institute of sacrifice. 3. Finally the new covenant, established on better promises (Heb. viii. 6), was ratified in the death of Christ. It was at once the abrogation of the Mosaic, or later old covenant, so far as concerns its national relation and its legal condition, and the renewal unto perfection of the more ancient covenant, always in force and never superseded, with mankind. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

The giving of the law.—1. The act as described (Exod. xx. 18; Deut. iv. 32, &c.). 2. The law itself. System of laws given (Deut. iv. 5–8; Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20). A distinction exalting Israel above every other nation, served—(1) For instruction. (2) For restraint. (3) For conviction. Prepared the way for the promised Saviour (Gal. iii. 21). Its observance brought national blessings in its train. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

The service of God.—A technical term for Divine worship. The apostle is detailing the privileges which constituted Israel a peculiar people. This was one of the most conspicuous. For the service of Jehovah was distinguished from all heathen cults:—I. In its ORIGIN. This was Divine. God Himself arranged the whole Hebrew ritual down to its minutest details. Man was not left to his own blind instincts as to the manner in which his Maker was to be approached. No doubt all worship was Divine in its origin, and were we able to thread the labyrinths of heathen devotion we should arrive ultimately at a primitive revelation. But this is impossible; and the great mass of heathen worship is the offspring of irrational superstition when it was not the device of a fraudulent priesthood. II. In its NATURE. 1. It was spiritual. The forms were materialistic as all forms must necessarily be; but it was not mere form as heathen worship was. Time after time it was carefully explained that the sacrifices, &c., were symbolic, and that without the corresponding spiritual reality they were an abomination to Deity. To what an extent this was realised by the best spirits of the nation, the Psalms and prophets abundantly testify. 2. It was intelligent. The heathen worshipped "they knew not what." To worship all the objects presented to their devotion was an impossibility, and had it been possible, ineffectual, for prayers offered to one God would have been neutralised by those offered to another. And the intelligent heathen, while he conformed to the superstitions of his fellow-countrymen, knew the host of Olympus to be a myth. The Hebrews knew whom they worshipped. The Shekinah glory was a standing evidence of the Divine existence and presence, and the revelations of His character from time to time exhibited Him

as worthy of the homage of rational beings. III. In its EFFECTS. These were—1. Humbling. The whole system was calculated to reveal the Divine greatness and holiness on the one hand and human insignificance and sinfulness on the other, and thus was discouraging to pride and self-confidence. It was not the fault of the system if men thanked God that they were not as other men were. Heathen worship encouraged no such notions of God or man, and hence humility was never a heathen virtue. 2. Joyful. God was served with gladness; and the joy of the Lord was the people's strength for services. The great festivals are proofs of this. Heathenism had plenty of hilarity, but little joy. How could it have had when their worship brought no manifestation of the Divine presence and no consciousness of the Divine favour? 3. Moral. Holiness unto the Lord was the legitimate and only issue of the Mosaic system: whereas we know that many heathen gods were served with obscene rites, and that the whole tendency of idolatry was degrading to intellect, heart and life. Conclusion: The comparative value of heathen and Hebrew worship may be seen in their devotional manuals. To estimate this let the Book of Psalms be read side by side with the Vedas, Shasters, &c. (*J. W. Burn.*) **The promises.**—1. Of blessings in general (Levit. xxvi. 48; Deut. xxviii. 1-14). 2. Of the Messiah in particular. Given various times and in various ways (Heb. i. 1; Rom. i. 2). Some already fulfilled in Christ's first coming (Acts iii. 18, 22-26). Others yet to be fulfilled in Israel's experience (Ezek. xxxvii; Isa. lxvi.). All the promises of God, yea and amen in Christ (2 Cor. i. 20). Gentiles by faith made fellow-heirs of the promises (Eph. iii. 6; Gal. iii. 29). Promises all fulfilled at Christ's second appearing (chap. xi. 26; Acts i. 6, iii. 19-21). Mentioned last as the transition to Christ Himself. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.**—*The fact of facts in human history*:—Here is—I. THE CROWNING FACT IN JEWISH HISTORY. "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." In the preceding verses the apostle points to the most illustrious facts in the history, facts in which the Jews passionately gloried. They were "Israelites." No national appellation in their estimation was so distinguished as this; Greek and Roman were contemptible by its side. Theirs was the "adoption." To them pertained the "glory." They had the "covenants." The covenants with Abraham, with Jacob, and with Moses, were with them. To them pertained the "giving of the law." The best commentary on these words is to be found by Moses himself (Deut. iv. 32-36). To them also pertained the "service of God." He mentions these in order to prepare the way for the announcement of a fact before whose splendour all others pale their lustre, and that is this: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." This was the crowning fact of their history. He does not disparage the other facts; on the contrary, he is patriotically proud of them. When will the Jew come to see that Jesus of Nazareth is the glory of Israelitish history? Here is—II. THE GREATEST FACT IN HUMAN HISTORY. 1. There are many great facts in the history of the world. (1) Physical, such as deluges, earthquakes, wars, pestilences, &c. (2) Political, such as the rise and fall of empires. (3) Social, such as discoveries in science, inventions in art, reformations in customs and manners. (4) Religious, such as the birth, growth, and decay of theological systems and ceremonial observances. 2. But of all facts there is not one approaching the great one in the text, viz., that Christ Jesus came into the world. (1) No fact is better attested. (2) No fact is so central in the world's history as this. (3) No fact involves such vital influence to the world as this. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ* is—I. GOD. 1. Supreme. 2. Infinite. 3. Eternal. II. OVER ALL. 1. Nature. 2. The world. 3. Heaven. III. EVER BLESSED. 1. Self-sufficient. 2. Holy. 3. Good; hence—4. Happy. IV. ACKNOWLEDGED. 1. Conscience. 2. Gratitude. 3. Hope—say, Amen. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ over all*:—I. IN THE SUBLIMITY OF HIS ORIGIN. All others came into existence in the natural order of generation, received a bias to wrong from their parents, and never in the case of the best quite lost their earthliness. On the contrary, Christ came down from the pure heavens of God. He had a pre-incarnate existence (Prov. viii.; John i. 1-2). He was in the bosom of the Father, and while there was morally over all. II. IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS DOCTRINES. These were—1. Realities of which He Himself was conscious. They were not matters of speculation. All the forms and voices of eternal truth were matters of consciousness to Him. 2. Moral in their influence. They are so congruous with man's sense of right, consciousness of need, feeling of God, desire for immortality, that the believing soul sees them as Divine reality. 3. Pre-eminently Divine. They concerned God Himself, His words, thoughts,

feelings, purposes. Christ does not teach what men call sciences; but God Himself, the root, centre and circumference of all truth. III. IN THE AFFECTION OF THE FATHER. 1. No one shared the Divine love so much as He. God loves all. He is love. But Christ is His "well-beloved," and as such He loves Him with infinite complacency. 2. None ever deserved it as Christ did. He never offended the Father in His conduct, or misrepresented Him in His teaching. He always did those things which pleased Him. 3. None ever had such demonstrations of it. "All power is given unto Me." IV. IN THE EXTENT OF HIS ENDOWMENT. "God giveth not His Spirit by measure unto Him." "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." V. IN THE NECESSITY OF HIS MISSION. Faith in Him is essential to man's eternal well-being. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ over all, God blessed for ever*:—Let us in imagination pass the angel guardians of those gates where no error enters, and, entering that upper sanctuary which no discord divides, no heresy disturbs, let us find out who worship and who are worshipped there. The law, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," extends to heaven as well as to earth; so that if our Lord is only the highest of all creatures, we shall find Him on His knees—not the worshipped, but a worshipper; and from His lofty pinnacle, and lonely, and to other creatures unapproachable pinnacle, looking up to God, as does the highest of the snow-crowned Alps to the sun, that, shining above it, bathes its head in light. We have sought Him, I shall suppose, in that group where His mother sits with the other Marys, sought Him among the twelve apostles, or where the chief of the apostles reasons with angels over things profound, or where David, royal leader of the heavenly choir, strikes his harp, or where the beggar, enjoying the repose of Abraham's bosom, forgets his wrongs, or where martyrs and confessors and they which have come out of great tribulation, with robes of white and crowns of glory, swell the song of salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne. He is not there. Rising upwards, we seek Him where angels hover on wings of light, or, with feet and faces veiled, bend before a throne of dazzling glory. Nor is He there. He does not belong to their company. Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels. Eighteen hundred years ago Mary is rushing through the streets of Jerusalem, speed in her steps, wild anxiety in her look, one question to all on her eager lips, "Have you seen my Son?" Eighteen hundred years ago on those same streets, some Greeks accosted a Galilean fisherman, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Now, were we bent, like His mother on finding Him, like those Greeks on seeing Him, to stay a passing angel, and accost him in the words, "Sir, we would see Jesus," what would he do? How would his arm rise, and his finger point upward to the throne as he fell down to worship, and worshipping to swell that flood of song which in this one full stream mingles the name of the Father, and of the Son—Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever. Such a glorious vision, such worship, the voices that sounded on John's ear as the voice of many waters, the distant roar of the ocean, are in perfect harmony with the exalted honour and Divine dignity which Paul assigns to Him who is "over all, God blessed for ever." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Christ's supremacy*:—I. OVER SPIRITS (Matt. viii. 16). II. OVER NATURE (ver. 26; xvii. 27). III. OVER MAN (John ii. 14–16; xviii. 6). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Christ's supremacy*:—I. OVER WHAT. Over—1. The sublimest created intelligences (Heb. i.). 2. The greatest human potentates (Rev. xix. 16; Psa. cx. 1. *cf.* Matt. xxii. 43, xi. 42). 3. The most glorious of material edifices (Matt. xii. 46). 4. The universe of matter as its Creator (John i. 3). 5. The universe of mind as its Ruler and Judge (Matt. xxviii. 18; John v. 22, 25). 6. His Church as its Redeemer, Legislator, Sovereign (Col. i. 18, 19). 7. In a word—all things (Col. i. 16, 17; 1 Cor. xv. 27). II. WHY? Can there be any other answer but that in the text?—because He is God. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The Divine supremacy of Christ*:—Various constructions have been put on these words in order to set aside so clear an assertion of the Godhead of Jesus; but most of the highest authorities agree in regarding the present construction as most true to the original: and, if so, a more full and unmistakable declaration of Christ's Divinity it is almost impossible to conceive. Were it our intention to argue the point of our Redeemer's Godhead, we would look upon the question—1. In the light of general history, and develop three facts. (1) That the system of Jesus has become one of the most mighty powers in the human world, and is evidently tending to universal dominion. The Anglo-Saxon race is, in its literature, laws, customs, institutions and spirit, mightily influenced by it, and that race is rapidly advancing to the throne of the world. (2) That there was a period in the history

of the world when this mighty creed had no existence. When Homer sang, and Socrates reasoned; when Alexander fought his campaigns, and Demosthenes hurled his fulminations over Greece, Christianity was not. (3) There was everything in the external history of the Founder of Christianity, as well as in the spiritual purity of its doctrines and precepts, to have led one antecedently to suppose that it would never make any way in the world. Christ was born of a despised people; lived in the most obscure part of their country; and came of humble parents; and so thoroughly did His doctrines clash with the feelings, and prejudices, and habits of the people, that the proclamation of them ended in His being executed as a malefactor. These facts show that the power which Christianity has gained in the world is a phenomenon which cannot be explained on the hypothesis of His being nothing more than a mere man; and that gives a strong presumption in favour of His Divinity. 2. In the light of Divine revelation, we would also state three facts. (1) That whoever created the universe is our God, by whatever name you call the great originating agent. We cannot form an idea of a higher being than a Creator. (2) That the Bible unquestionably refers the work of creation to Christ (John i. 3; Col. i. 16). (3) As a necessary conclusion, that unless the Bible is false, Christ is God. But our object is to offer a few remarks concerning Christ's Divine supremacy, which is—I. CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE UNIVERSE. "Over all." How much is included in this "all!" The visible and invisible, the proximate and remote, the minute and vast, the material and the spiritual. The subjects of His dominion may be divided into four classes. Those which He governs—1. Without a will; all inanimate matter and vegetable life. Plants germinate, grow, and die; oceans ebb and flow; stars and systems revolve by His will entirely. They have no will. 2. With their will. All irrational existences have volition. By this they move. They cannot move contrary to their instinct. Whether they roam in the forest, wing the air, or sport in mighty oceans, they move with their will, and He controls them thus. 3. By their will. Holy intelligences He governs thus. He gives them laws, and supplies them with motive, and leaves them free. They move by their will, yet He governs them. 4. Against their will. These are wicked men and devils. He makes their "wrath to praise Him." He is "over all" these. II. EXERCISED WITH PERFECT HAPPINESS. "Blessed for ever. He is the blessed and only Potentate." Christ is happy on the throne. If so, we infer—1. That He can have no doubt of His capacity to meet every conceivable emergency. The sovereign who doubts his power can never be happy. How many monarchs, like Herod, are miserable from fear? "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Christ has "all power." He is not afraid of insurrections or rebellions. 2. That He can have no misgivings as to the rectitude of His position. The monarch who has got power by fraud or violence, by treading on the rights of others if he has conscience, can never be happy on his throne. But Christ has a consciousness that He has a right to the power He wields. His subjects are His creatures, His property, &c. 3. That He must be ever under the sway of benevolent affections. Envy, anger, revenge, ambition, are all the fruits of selfishness, and are elements of misery; and they cannot co-exist with benevolence. 4. That happiness is the law of the universe. He that is happy ever seeks to make others so. Misery is an accident; happiness is a necessity; for Christ's being is a necessity. Misery had a beginning; happiness is eternal. Misery is local; happiness is universal. The misery of the universe, as compared with the happiness, is only as one blighted leaf in an immeasurable forest. III. HEARTILY ACQUIESCED IN BY THE GOOD. "Amen"; *i.e.*, So be it—I would have it so. 1. Conscience says amen to Christ's supremacy. 2. Gratitude. What has He done for us! Recount His victories—His mercies. 3. Hope. What higher security can we have, either for the future well-being of our race or selves than this? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Deity of Christ*:—In defence of the received version of our text, we have to urge—I. THAT IT IS IN STRICT CONFORMITY WITH EVERY PRINCIPLE OF JUST INTERPRETATION. It violates no rule of construction; it infringes on no idiom of the Greek language; it deviates from no general usage of the sacred writers. There is no rude disjointure of the passage; no referring of the terms "who is" to a person afterwards to be named, instead of the person named before; no mutilation of the passage; no addition; but—so far as the English language will admit of it—the very order is preserved in which the passage stands in the original. II. THE QUALIFICATION OF THE STATEMENT, THAT THE MESSIAH WAS OF THE ISRAELITES ONLY "ACCORDING TO THE FLESH," STRONGLY COUNTENANCES, NOT TO SAY RENDERS NECESSARY, THIS READING; involving, as it does, the supposition that there was

something else, according to which He was not of them; and at least justifying the conclusion that if anything else be named before the final closing of the sentence by which the contrast can be completed, and according to which the Messiah was not of the Jews, it was intended to be so taken and applied. Now, in our text that something else is clearly pointed out—namely, His Deity. According to the flesh, He is of the Israelites; according to another, and a Divine nature, He is over all, God blessed for ever. Thus the contrast is complete; both parts of the antithesis are supplied, and our Emmanuel is seen to be precisely as St. John represented Him—truly man, and truly God. III. That this is the proper rendering of the text we argue FROM THE EXISTING ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THIS EPISTLE. The most ancient of the versions of the New Testament, and that which stands highest in critical authority, is the Old Syriac, made, some suppose, before the death of the apostle John, but certainly at the close of the first century, or the beginning of the second. This ancient version thus renders the passage:—"And from them was manifested Messiah in the flesh, who is God that is over all; whose are praises and blessings to the ages of ages. Amen." Nothing can be more clear than this; nothing more express. The version which stands next to the Syriac, and which may be said almost to rival it, is the Old Latin, denominated the Italic. This was executed, as is supposed, at the beginning of the second century, and is of no small importance in Biblical criticism. It renders our text thus:—"From whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen." The Ethiopic, translated in the fourth century, omits the words "over all," and reads—"Of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is God blessed for ever. Amen." And the Armenian, translated at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, reads—"Of whom the Christ came according to the flesh; who is also over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen." IV. ALL THE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN WRITERS WHO HAVE EITHER PROFESSEDLY CITED OR TRANSLATED THE PASSAGE, OR WHO HAVE REFERRED TO THE APOSTLE'S DESIGN IN WRITING IT, HAVE GIVEN THE CONSTRUCTION FOR WHICH WE ARE CONTENDING. Irenæus, who flourished in the second century, and who was the disciple of Polycarp, who had been personally acquainted with the apostle John, speaking of the generation of Jesus Christ, says—"He is called God with us, lest by any means one should conceive that He was only a man; for the Word was made flesh, not by the will of man, but by the will of God; nor should we, indeed, surmise Jesus to have been another, but know Him to be one and the same God. This very thing St. Paul has interpreted. Writing to the Romans, he said—'Whose are the fathers, and of whom Christ came according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever.'" Tertullian, about the year 211, writes thus:—"I will follow the apostle; so that if I have occasion to mention the Father and the Son together, I will use the appellations God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Lord. But when I am speaking of Christ alone, I will call Him God; as the apostle says, 'of whom is Christ, who is,' saith he, 'God over all things, blessed for ever.'" And in another passage Tertullian states:—"Paul also hath called Christ very God: 'Whose are the fathers, and of whom Christ came according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever.'" Cyprian, who wrote about the year 240, thus cites the passage, in a work written to prove that Christ is God:—"Of whom are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever." Novatian, about the year 251, thus expostulated with the opposers of the Saviour's Godhead:—"But if, when it belongs to God alone to know the secrets of the heart, Christ looks into the secrets of the heart; but if, when it belongs to God alone to forgive sins, Christ forgives sins; but if, when it is not the possible act of any man to come down from heaven, Christ in His advent descended from heaven; but if, when no man can utter this sentence, 'I and my Father are one,' Christ alone, from a consciousness of His Divinity, declared, 'I,' &c.; but if the apostle Paul, too, in his writings says, 'Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever,' it follows that Christ is God." Athanasius, about the year 326, states:—"Paul thus writes in his Epistle to the Romans: 'Of whom are the fathers, and of whom Christ came according to the flesh, who is over all, God.'" Here, by not adding the doxology, "blessed for ever," Athanasius has incontrovertibly proved that he understood the words as applying to Christ. Theodoret, Epiphanius, and Gregory of Nyssa have quoted them in the same manner. Hilary, who wrote A.D. 324, has left the following testimony:—"Paul was not ignorant that Christ is God, saying, 'Of whom are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is

over all things, God.'" And, now, what shall we say to this? If the consent of the whole professing Christian world—with the exception of a few individuals within the last three centuries—be not sufficient to prove the proper construction of a passage like this, on what authority are we to depend? But if it be sufficient, then an inspired apostle has assuredly written that "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever." (*Thos. Allin.*) *Blending of the human and Divine in Christ*:—The picture produced in the stereopticon is fuller, rounder, and more natural than the same picture seen without the use of that instrument. But to produce the stereoscopic picture there must be two pictures blended into one by the use of the stereopticon, and both the eyes of the observer are brought into requisition at the same time, looking each through a separate lens. Thus Christ is only seen in His true and proper light when the record of His human nature and the statement of His Divine are blended. It is a flat, unfinished Christ with either left out. But it is as seen in the Word, with the moral and mental powers of our being both engaged in the consideration, and thus only, that we get the full and true result. *Pre-eminence of Christ*:—We have seen in mountain lands one majestic peak soaring above all the rest of the hills which cut the azure of the horizon with their noble outline, burning with hues of richest gold in the light of the morning sun; and so should the doctrine of Christ incarnate, crucified, risen, and reigning, be pre-eminent above the whole chain of fact, doctrine, and sentiment which make up the sublime landscape—the magnificent panorama—which the Christian preacher (or teacher) unfolds, and makes to pass in clear form and brilliant colour before the eyes of his people's faith. (*Evangelical Magazine.*) *Christ's Divine human personality*:—I. Christ's HUMANITY. 1. Real flesh. 2. Of the seed of Abraham. 3. Compassed about with infirmities. II. Christ's DIVINITY. 1. Supreme. 2. Eternal. 3. Blessed for ever. Amen. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 6–13. **Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect.**—*God's faithfulness vindicated*:—The apostle's language is abrupt and broken, and fitly represents his feelings. He had felt his spirit drawn onward and upward as he proceeded with his enumeration of the high prerogatives of his countrymen, till at length he found himself climbing the ladder which Jacob saw, and which leads directly to "glory, honour, and immortality." He was, as it were, "caught up" in a rapture, and carried "off and away." Ere he was let down again, he had exclaimed, with fulness of heart, "Amen." But, unable for the present to proceed farther in that sublime rapture, he as it were recalls himself, and returns to the melancholy fact which is bewailed in vers. 2 and 3. The fact, however, as a fact is not expressly stated. The statement is semi-smothered under the intensity of the writer's feelings. Yet the enumeration of theocratic prerogatives finds a place in the writer's record just because there was oppressively present to his mind and heart the fact that his countrymen in general had, through their rejection of Jesus the Messiah, ousted themselves from the privileges of "the kingdom of heaven." They were refusing to be "Israelites indeed," and were virtually passing on themselves sentence of spiritual expatriation. Confronting that fact, he says, is a spirit of recoil. I. THE CASE IS NOT SUCH AS THAT THE WORD OF GOD HAS FALLEN OUT OF ITS DUE FULFILMENT. The melancholy fact referred to might and would occasion much embarrassment to multitudes of men, but it would and could not embarrass the Divine Moral Governor, nor frustrate His promises even in relation to Israel. Jewish disbelief and self-deposition, melancholy as they were, were yet within the sphere of the full overrulement of God. 1. The apostle specifies the Word of God, *i.e.*, the Word spoken by God through His prophets to Israel, and in substance preserved in "the volume of the book." On the one side it was simply predictive, on the other it was distinctly promissory; but in both respects a distinguished and distinguishing share of blessing was held out to the "peculiar people." 2. The Word of God has not failed of fulfilment, literally, has not fallen out. The idea is transfigured from a heavenly occurrence, as when from the back of some burden-bearer an article falls and is lost. II. FOR NOT ALL WHO ARE OF ISRAEL ARE ISRAEL. The apostle lays down a far-reaching principle. God had an ideal in view when He made choice of Israel to be His peculiar people. He had grand aims for future ages—aims that are yet to be realised in all peoples (Gen. xii. 3, &c.). The selected people could not all at once grasp the grand idea. It was not to be wondered at. Neither would God be exacting. Still, His idea must not be pushed aside or reversed, like an inverted pyramid; still less must it be trampled under foot. For God was not shut up to Israel. If needful, He could find in the evolution of the

ages an Israel beyond Israel, or an Israel within Israel. As regards the old Israel, if it should persist in misunderstanding its position and mission, fancying itself to be the indispensable centre of the whole human circle, it could be told, in that language of events which makes epochs in history, that its candlestick was removable, and would be removed for a lamp that would actually give light. There were Israelites *and* Israelites. There were those in full possession of the name, but entirely without the inward ideal that gave it significance, and there could be those without the name, but with the inward ideal, though yet only struggling like a star through the mists of ignorance and imperfection (chap. ii. 29). In this verse the two kinds of Israel are brought into juxtaposition. Not all who are the progeny of the patriarch Israel are truly and ideally the Israel "to whom pertaineth the adoption." God, therefore, will not break His promise, though He refuse to fulfil it to those who have forfeited, by their unbelief, all right and title to an illustrious position and name. He is free to oust those who have persistently abused their high prerogative, and to introduce in their room a people who would seek to rise to the level of their high calling. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The work of God's Word:*—God is the first cause of all things—sin excepted. All things were created by Him and for Him; but that which is effect to God, is often cause in other relations and connections. You Christians are God's workmanship, but at the same time you are causes. Oh, do not underrate your influence as Christians. You can scarcely rise to a correct estimate of it, so immense is it. Well, we say that the gospel, so far as its authorship is concerned, is an effect; but so far as its power in the world is concerned, it is a cause, and a glorious cause. 1. We may expect it to be a mighty cause if we look at its nature. "The Word of the truth of the gospel" is a direct revelation from God of a wonderful provision which He has made by His Son, and through the Holy Ghost for the salvation of men. It is like the planting of a new sun of twofold power in our firmament. 2. We may expect the gospel to be a mighty cause if we look at the commission issued respecting the preaching of it: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The preachers are mocked, cruelly mocked, by this commission, and the world is cruelly mocked by the preaching, if it be intended that the word of God's grace should take none effect. 3. We may expect the gospel to be a mighty cause if we connect with the promise of our Saviour's presence with the preachers, the extraordinary ministry of the Holy Ghost. Why is the Holy Ghost sent to reprove the word of sin? And why did the Son of God promise to be with the first preachers always, if this word is to be of none effect? 4. We may expect the gospel to be a powerful cause if we consider the representations which are given concerning it. It is said to be glorious and everlasting, and the power of God unto salvation. It is called incorruptible seed, and the sword of the Spirit. 5. And we may expect the gospel to continue to be a powerful cause if we notice its first effects as recorded in our New Testament, and its subsequent effects as chronicled in uninspired writings; or if we look at all which the gospel is doing now, and remember that the nature of the gospel is such that the application of it does not exhaust it, and that time does not impair it. We would direct every Christian to his own condition as a saved man, and upon this ground would plead with you never to think, or feel, or speak, or act as though the Word of God had taken none effect. One soul saved is a marvellous effect—an effect in some respects more wonderful than even creation itself. Now trace the effect of the word of the truth of the gospel upon a man's mind. What is it like? It is like opening eyes which had always been blind. The effect of the word of the truth of the gospel is like unstopping deaf ears. The man hears that which he had never heard before. He hears God speaking to him. The effect of the Word of God upon him who believes it is to loose the dumb tongue. The man has spoken before, but never to God, or, if before to God, then as Cain spake to Him, and not as a child speaks to a father, that is, to a good father. The man now confesses his sin to God, as he feels the burden of his sin to be unbearable. The effect of the word of the truth of the gospel upon a man—still keeping to this illustration—is to strengthen the arms, so that work and conflict which appeared impossible are now undertaken as an easy task. The word of the truth of the gospel cleanses the hands—yes, the hands of the murderer from blood, and the hands of the thief from dishonesty, and the hands of the slothful from indolence, and the hands of the covetous from the rust and the canker of hoarded gold and silver. The Word of God effects that which is like restoring sensation and motion to withered and exhausted nerves. It quickens and arouses all the sensibilities

and powers of soul and spirit—calling into life and activity godly love and godly hope, and godly joy, and all the moral and religious sensibilities—so that he who was as dead is now alive again, and God speaks to him as alive again. The Word of God—and perhaps we should have remarked this first—also changes the heart. Oh, brethren, do not think of the Word of God as though it had none effect; or if you be discouraged, just open your eyes, and see whether the ground of discouragement is not often to be found in the simple fact, that when Christians present the gospel to their fellow men they do not present it as God presents it. (*S. Martin.*) *The election of grace*:—1. IS INDEPENDENT OF EXTERNAL PREFERENCES AND HUMAN MERIT. 1. The phrase—(1) Implies the eternal purpose of God to save them that believe; (2) proceeds from free grace; (3) is determined by the reception or non-reception of the truth, which is an act of free-will. 2. The proof supplied by the history of the elect people. (1) By the difference in the moral condition of the Israelites (ver. 6; chap. ii. 28, 29). (2) By the different relations in which the immediate descendants of Abraham stood to God (ver. 7, 8; *cf.* Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 39). The same difference obtains in the Christian Church. II. IS DEPENDENT UPON DIVINE PROMISE. 1. The whole work of grace is matter of promise, and affords hope of a better life. 2. This is shown by the examples quoted (vers. 9, 13). 3. Hence it follows that we can only be partakers of the promise by a believing reception of it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The freedom of God's election*:—They had been so highly privileged, and were yet cast out. "Oh, what a fall was there!" But God's promise had not come to naught, for as the history of their ancestry showed, the purposed working out of God's plans for the salvation of the world—for which alone Israel had been chosen—was not committed rigidly to all Israel, but only to such of them as God should choose. And in this matter of choosing God was perfectly free. Note—I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD. A Creator's love must embrace His whole creation; a Father's, all His children. God is the Father of mankind, even though all have fallen from Him. Any purpose of salvation must therefore comprehend all men in its wide scope, and only the wilfulness of man can prevent the accomplishment of its purpose. God has purposed the redemption of the world in Christ (Eph. iii. 11), but by reason of man's debasement the accomplishment of the purpose must needs be gradual. One great central work shall be wrought—God's work through Christ; but up towards this the preparatory work must lead, and away from this the fulfilment must conduct. An education of the world; a great power of salvation; a world-wide application of the power. II. AN ELECT PEOPLE. The election dealt with in these chapters, which has no reference to the election of individuals to eternal salvation, was the election of a people who should conduct the world toward Christ by way of preparation, and afterwards conduct Christ's power to the world by way of application. In the matter of preparation the exclusion of this people from others was needful first, because of the abounding corruptions of the world. Sometimes this is the only safety: "Come out and be separate!" But a scattering was needful afterwards. So the captivities, overruled by God; so the dispersion in later times. For the subsequent evangelisation there must be concentration first, that the new power of life might be fully realised; a scattering afterwards, that the new power might touch the uttermost ends of the earth (Acts viii. 4). III. THE FREEDOM OF THE ELECTION. In such work God's hands cannot be tied, and surely He may choose whom He will; and the history of the past abundantly illustrates the freedom with which God has worked. First, God chose Abraham. The Jews would not complain of the freedom of election here. Again, of Abraham's sons He chose the later-born, showing that the matter of priority of natural claims could not weigh with Him; and of Isaac's twin sons before their birth He chose the later-born, showing that nothing done by the elected one constituted a claim on His electing grace. Neither Ishmaelites nor Edomites were rejected of God from personal salvation, but as regarded taking a special part in the work of the world's salvation, they were reprobate. So, then, God had acted freely in the choice of Abraham, and in narrowing down the election among Abraham's seed. Was it to be wondered at that in the fulness of time He should act freely still, and elect only a remnant of the people to the work of evangelisation of the world, this work so soon to be entrusted also to Gentile workers themselves? The same principle still holds good. God elects us according to His sovereign will for work in His kingdom. Let us learn, as a first lesson, absolute submission—nay, the unquestioning fealty of love. (*T. F. Lockyer, B.A.*) *The Word of God taking effect*:—I well remember a time when this truth was brought home to me by the

case of one to whom I was permitted to minister during the closing days of his life. He was one who had stood foremost among the thoughtful and wise of this world; but he did not feel the full power of the Word of life. I felt considerable anxiety. I thought that much depended on the way in which, in these closing scenes of life, I presented to him the vital and saving truths of Christianity. If presented in any over-confident way by one whom, perhaps, he would have considered less cultivated than himself, I felt—and I remember the anxiety with which I felt it—all ministrations might have done harm. I humbly conferred with my own poor heart, and I thus reasoned with my anxiety; "Let me read from God's Word some more than usually appropriate portion in such a case. But let me read God's Word alone, and leave that Word to work in this heart. My words, I am confident, will be as nothing. I will read alone the Word of Life." The portion I chose was that contained in the last seven or eight chapters of St. John's Gospel. I read perhaps about twenty verses at a time—not more; and I added only the very simplest comments where comments seemed to be necessary; and I remember well—it is a memory ever pleasant with me and that often encourages me—how the words seemed to find their way into the sick man's heart; how I saw shadows on the brow passing slowly away; how often the common human eye could observe the mystery of God's Word finding its way to the heart. I remember once or twice humbly testing whether it was so by staying away almost purposely, and found, on my return, that not I, but the reading of the Word of Life, had been sadly missed. I read onward and onward, and I am confident—I am speaking now with carefully chosen words—that those words of life brought that soul very close to our saving Lord. The incident produced a very great effect upon me; and I never hear any one speak lightly of what is called "the mere reading of the Word of God" without having this as a proof that there is in this blessed Book alone, without word or comment, a power and a force that no human language can describe. (*Bp. Ellicott.*)

The Word of God taking no effect:—I. IN SOME THE WORD OF GOD TAKES NO EFFECT. 1. They do not repent. 2. Do not believe. 3. Are not saved. II. THEIR UNBELIEF CANNOT IMPUGN THE EFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD. 1. It takes effect on others. 2. Would in them, but for their unbelief. 3. Must ultimately take effect in their final condemnation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For they are not all Israel which are of Israel**—Here is—I. A SOLEMN FACT—not all Israel, &c. Some possess the name, the form, but deny the power. II. THE REASON OF IT—not that the Word of God is without effect. Some realise its power, but others believe not, and to them the arm of the Lord is not revealed. (*Ibid.*) *The distinction between the external and the true Church*:—I. ITS ORIGIN (ver. 6). 1. Not in the purpose of God, for His promise respects all (2 Pet. iii. 19). 2. But in the conduct of men, who hold fast the form, and deny the power. II. ITS NATURE (ver. 7–13). 1. The external depends upon parentage, education, prejudice, &c.; the true upon the promise of God. 2. The external rests in works; the true in the grace of God. (*Ibid.*) **Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.**—*The true seed of Abraham* is called—1. Not in Ishmael, but in Isaac. 2. Not by a natural, but by a spiritual birth. 3. Not by the will of man, but by the purpose of God in Christ. (*Ibid.*) *The true children of Abraham*:—I. NOT BY A NATURAL, BUT BY A SPIRITUAL BIRTH. 1. The example of Abraham. 2. Its application—natural advantages avail nothing, but a new birth in Christ the true seed of promise. II. NOT OF WORKS, BUT OF GRACE. 1. The case of Esau and Jacob. 2. Election determined not by merit, but grace, and suspended on faith. (*Ibid.*) *The true heirs of grace*:—I. EXEMPLIFIED. Not all the children of Abraham. 1. Ishmael the child of nature, Isaac the child of promise. 2. Ishmael rejected, Isaac appointed heir. II. DEFINED. 1. Those who are born of the flesh are not the children of God, but those who are born of the Spirit. 2. According to the promise made in Christ. These are the true heirs of salvation. (*Ibid.*) **That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise.**—*Children*:—I. OF THE FLESH. Children by mere natural generation, viz.—1. Ishmael and his descendants. 2. Abraham's sons by Keturah, and their posterity. 3. The natural descendants of Abraham in general. Unbelieving Jews were children of the flesh as truly as was Ishmael. II. OF THE PROMISE. Born entirely in virtue of a promise, viz.—1. Isaac. 2. Believers whether Jews or Gentiles (chap. iv. 11, 16, 17; Gal. iii. 29). 3. Isaac a type of believers—(1) As born according to Divine promise. (2) By supernatural power (Gen. xvii. 5; Isa. liii. 10–12; John i. 13, v. 25, vi. 44, 45, 65). III. OF GOD. 1. Children in God's esteem, and by God's appointment. 2. Those to whom He will be a God as

He was to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7). Children of the flesh distinguished from the children of God (John i. 13). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Children of the flesh and of the promise*:—Within the family circle of Abraham there were children who should never have been. They were not really wanted in the world. Their existence was attributable to the unrefined manners of the age. Hence they might be called "children of the flesh." The designation was sufficiently explicit, and could stand appropriate antithesis to that of "the children of promise," and thus the Messianic children of God. Such were Isaac and then Jacob, and their legitimate descendants. God promised these to Abraham, and they were at once children of *the* promise, and the Messianic children of God. To the exclusion of all other descendants they were reckoned for the Messianic offspring by God. He had sovereign right to choose, and He exercised His right. The phrase "children of God" is susceptible of varied applications. All men are His offspring (Acts xvii. 28), and thus His children. The pure, the benevolent, and the unrevengeful, these in particular are His children (Matt. v. 45). And if from among the lapsed any rise up and earnestly urge their way toward purity, &c., then all these are emphatically "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Having received Christ they have "power to become the sons of God" (John i. 12). Jesus Himself is the Son of God in the highest sense. But in the passage before us the designation is restricted to those who were His Messianic children. Viewed in unity, they are His national sons, His firstborn (Exod. iv. 22). Viewed in individuality they are His theocratic sons and daughters. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The children of the promise*:—St. Paul as a Christian patriot was ready to sacrifice his everlasting fellowship with Christ if it could ensure the salvation of his fellow countrymen. But, alas! the fact of the rejection of Jesus and His gospel by many of the Jews must be accepted. And when the apostle turns to history, he finds that there has been no wholesale salvation of either the descendants of Abraham and Israel, but a certain proportion only became children of promise. How can these facts be dealt with under the Divine government? It is to this the apostle devotes himself in the present passage. I. GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON ANY MAN IS NOT DETERMINED BY THE QUALITIES OF HIS NATURAL DISPOSITION. 1. God did not elect to privilege either all the children of the patriarchs, or even those whom we would incline to elect. Abraham had eight children (Gen. xxv. 2), yet only one became the "child of promise." Isaac had two, but only the younger became the child of promise. Moreover, when we consider Ishmael and Esau, we are inclined to consider them the more manly and noble. They may have become "sons of the desert," but there is something in them that commands our admiration. Of course we see in them purely natural endowments. They live lives of sense rather than of faith, and are what we call now worldly men. Their natures are as interesting as pure worldliness of spirit will allow. 2. Now let us suppose that God's electing love had laid hold on these well-made "noblemen of nature," and had passed by their feebler brothers, the mediative Isaac, the cowardly Jacob; would not an outcry have resulted against a God who professed to be a Father, and yet could favour the strong and pass by the weak? But, as Dr. Leonard W. Bacon says, "God does not cast out His crippled and deformed children to perish. He holds to a stricter and sterner responsibility the sons that are nobly endowed. He is not the gentleman's God, nor the Redeemer of persons of fine culture and instincts, but the Saviour of the lost. And by many a story as strange as this of Jacob and Esau He has shown to the generous and highminded that there is a possible way of ruin for them; and to those who know in their own sorrowful consciences, and by the scorn of others, that they are not of noble strain, that there is a way by which they may find salvation." II. THE CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE HAVE BEEN LED TO PRIZE IT AND TO TRUST IN THE FAITHFUL PROMISER. Both Isaac and Jacob were children of the promise in this sense, that their mothers would never have borne them had not God sustained their hope of children by the promise of a seed. But Esau was included in this promise as well as Jacob. There was, however, another and better promise, about all the families of the earth being blessed through a particular seed. In other words, the promise of a Messiah was held before them as their highest hope. Now Ishmael and Esau despised this arrangement; they did not feel indebted to posterity, as many a worldly mind thinks still. But Isaac and Jacob got interested in the promised blessing, and were led to trust Him who uttered it. Their very weakness led them to lean on One mighty to save, and they were pardoned, accepted, and in due season sanctified. God's electing love thus moves along lines where there is the likelihood that poor, crippled, crushed souls will learn to trust God who is mighty to save. It is harder for a rich man,

e.g., to trust God than for a poor man; hence God has "chosen the poor, rich in faith," &c. (James ii. 5). It is harder to get able-bodied, healthy men to trust God than the sick and sorrowing; and hence we find that the Jobs and Asaphs are made, by God's grace, to show to the unbelieving world that they can serve God for nought, &c. (Job i. 9, xiii. 15; Psa. lxxiii.). And so, as Dr. Bacon again says, "Be of good comfort. You shall be saved not only in spite of your faults and infirmities, but from them. Faith in God is the vital air of all true nobleness. In this air the stunted germs of human virtue unfold and blossom. Without faith their fairest growths tend to shrivel and decay. For lack of faith in God, the noble gifts of Esau are of no avail. He shuts himself out a willing stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope, without God in the world. He moves, a wandering star, in a track without a centre, on towards blackness of darkness. By faith the low nature of that "worm Jacob" is by and by redeemed from the power of evil, and, transformed in character and name, becomes the prince that hath power with God." III. GOD'S ELECTING LOVE AND REPROBATING HATE CANNOT BE CHARGED WITH INJUSTICE. In analysing God's love for the children of promise Paul traces their election to God's good pleasure (ver. 15). And if mercy be undeserved favour, then He may justly give it to whomsoever He pleaseth. On the other hand, those who are passed by, having no claim to better treatment, simply receive the reward of their deeds. And here it may be well to guard against a false view of God's hatred of Esau. It is not to be inferred that God hated Esau before he was born and had any opportunity of doing evil. When we consult the passage (Mal. i. 2) here quoted by Paul we find it refers to the judgment of Edom in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, 996 years later. Without being blessed like his brother, Esau received his home "in the fastness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven." His indifference had cost him his right of primogeniture, and he could no more receive it back (Gen. xxv. 32, xxvii. 33–37; Heb. xii. 16, 17); yet the law prescribed "Thou shalt not have the Idumean in abomination, for he is thy brother," and God endured ten centuries of hardness of heart before He said "I have hated Esau." That is to say, God's reprobation of Esau is not to be confounded with His election of Jacob. The opposite of election is not reprobation, but non-election; and no human being has any evidence that he is not elected. The opposite of reprobation is approbation, and we are all reprobated by God so long as we do not accept Christ. Election rests on the good pleasure of God; reprobation on His holiness, which leads Him to antagonise what is unholy. (*R. M. Edgar, D.D.*) *Election not the ground of our faith*:—We are not to make election a ground for our faith, but our faith and calling a medium or argument to prove our election. Election, indeed, is first in the order of Divine acting—God chooseth before we believe—yet faith is first in our acting—we must believe before we can know we are elected; yea, by believing we know it. The husbandman knows it is spring by the sprouting of the grass, though he hath no astrology to know the position of the heavens: thou mayest know thou art elect, as surely by a work of grace in thee, as if thou hadst stood by God's elbow when He wrote thy name in the Book of Life. (*W. Gurnall.*) **For this is the word of promise.**—*God's word of promise*:—1. Is unmerited and free. 2. Surpasses human thought. 3. Removes every difficulty. 4. Is suspended on faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 10–12. **And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by . . . our Father Isaac.**—*The election of Jacob and the rejection of Esau*:—1. Not personal, but national. 2. Not to eternal salvation, but to earthly privileges. 3. Not determined by works, but by grace. 4. Not intended to establish the doctrine of unconditional election to eternal life and the predestination of others to eternal damnation, but the unconditional election of the Gentiles to the benefits of the gospel and the national rejection of the Jews. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Lessons from the case of Esau and Jacob*:—1. As in Rebecca's womb there was a striving between Esau and Jacob, so in every true Christian there is a combating between corruption and grace; and as Esau is the elder, so is corruption. 2. As in Isaac's family there was a profane Esau as well as a godly Jacob, so is the visible Church a mixed company, as our Saviour teaches by divers parables. Examine how thou standest in the Church, whether as an Esau or as a Jacob. 3. Esau is Isaac's eldest son, yet rejected. Birth, degrees, and blood are to be regarded, and are especial favours of God, yet they further not election. As it was rather a disgrace for Esau to come of virtuous parents, because he was no better, so do thou account of thyself; then is the blood of thy famous ancestors thy credit when thou art like them in virtue. Better the honour of our families should begin than end in us. 4. Esau is disin-

herited, and yet God gave a law that the firstborn should not be deprived of his birthright, namely, without just and weighty cause. (*Ebnathan Parr, B.D.*) **For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand not of works, but of Him that calleth.**—*God's sovereignty*:—1. He has the indisputable right to determine the conditions of individual life. 2. Exercises the right freely without reference to future conduct. 3. Does not thereby interfere with the possibility of personal salvation, but provides for it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Election: how to be regarded*:—The doctrine ought never to be a stumbling-block in the way of your entertaining the overtures of the gospel. Leave it to God Himself to harmonise those everlasting decrees, by which He hath distinguished between the elect and the reprobate, with His present declarations of goodwill to one and to all of the human family. Your business is to let the decrees alone, and to cast your joyful confidence upon the declarations. Should an earthly monarch send a message of friendship to your door, must you reject it either as unintelligible or unreal because you have not been instructed in all the mysteries of his government? Because you cannot comprehend the policy of his empire, must you therefore not receive the offered kindness which has come from him to your own dwelling-place? And ere you can appreciate the gift which he holds out for your single and specific acceptance, must you first be able to trace all the workings and all the ways of the vast, the varied, superintendence which belongs to him? It is truly so with God, who, although presiding over a management which embraces all worlds and reaches from everlasting to everlasting, has nevertheless sent to each individual amongst us the special intimation of His perfect willingness to admit us into favour; and must we, I ask, suspend our comfort and our confidence therein till we, the occupiers of one of the humblest tenements in creation, and only the creatures but of yesterday—till we shall have mastered the economy of this wondrous universe and scanned the counsels of eternity? (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The means and end of predestination*:—Upon the principles of Christian predestination, you are still not less inconsistent; because you go about to separate two things which are inseparably joined together, viz., the end and the means which lead to it; and then you fly to the old threadbare objection of Papists, Quakers, and Arminians—"if I am elected, I shall be saved, do what I will; if I am not elected, I must be damned, do what I can." Now, this is the abuse of the doctrine, but by no means the doctrine itself, holiness of heart and life being the middle link of that chain which connects God's eternal decree with the execution of that decree in the salvation of all His elect. And if you can cast your eyes upon the Christian world in general, you will find that real practical religion is more to be found among those who adopt the Scripture plan of predestination than among those who reject it. But let us have recourse to a familiar illustration of the point in hand. When Archbishop Chicheley founded All Souls' College, in Oxford, he made a decree that they who in future times were founder's kin should succeed to the fellowship of that college, in preference to all others. This decree is inviolable in the choice of the candidates; but I never heard of one that intended offering himself who reasoned after this manner: "If I am founder's kin, I must succeed, do what I will, or even whether I offer myself or not." No; but they all go about to prove their pedigree and relationship to the founder, and for this purpose they anxiously search the old book entitled "Stemmata Chiciliana," and apply themselves diligently to their probation exercises, in order that no requisite may be wanting on their parts. Now, my dear ——, produce your pedigree, and learn your exercise, and the thing is done. Take but the same pains (though surely you ought to take more) to prove your relationship to the great Founder of the universe, whose decree is that none shall partake of His spiritual blessings but those who bear a relationship to Him through faith in Jesus Christ; apply yourself to the study of that old book the Bible, from which alone you can trace your descent, and study your exercise as becomes a candidate for a heavenly fellowship with God and glorified spirits. Set about this in earnest, and I will venture my own soul upon the safety of yours; for though I cannot climb up into heaven to read God's decree, yet I shall be very certain, from that middle link of the chain which is let down upon earth, that it is in your favour. (*Sir Richard Hill, M.A., letter to a friend.*) *The Divine call*:—The word "calleth," when applied to moral agents, assumes the possession of free will. They are "called," not compelled or necessitated. According to the nature of the case, a "call" may assume the form either of a summons or an invitation. It may sometimes be allied to a commandment, sometimes to an entreaty. In the case

before us, where reference is to prerogative, which in its inner ethical content may be either welcomed and prized, or spurned and stamped under foot, the call may be essentially of the nature of a Divine invitation. Some of God's greatest blessings He simply provides and confers without sending forth an invitation. To the enjoyment of others, He gives invitation, and, as it were, says, "Ho, every one! come ye." Some such invitation is addressed to persons, some such to peoples. And in both cases invitation may pave the way for further and ulterior invitation. They who "have," in the sense of accepting what has been proffered, and of keeping and prizing what they have got, to them shall be given, and they shall "have" more abundantly. Invitation to them will follow invitation, till the highest blessing is reached; and they find in their delightful experience that blessed are they who are God's invited guests to the everlasting banquet of bliss. To all the highest blessings there is a Divine "call" or "invitation." "For whom He did foreknow, . . . them He also glorifies" (chap. viii. 29, 30). (*J. Morison, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. **Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.**—*Jacob loved, but Esau hated*:—It is evident that to the writer it was a mystery why God should "love" Jacob more than Esau. He even goes so far as to imply that, at first sight, it has the character of "unrighteousness" in God. But he instantly crushes the thought (ver. 14). St. Paul makes it the basis of some thoughts about "election." It would be impossible that there should be a God of infinite knowledge and no "election." But there are only two right uses of it—viz., to humble and leave God in His unapproachable greatness, and to comfort the tried and harassed believer. I. To A MERE SUPERFICIAL READER, IT SEEMS VERY STRANGE THAT GOD SHOULD LOVE JACOB AND HATE ESAU. 1. Esau's picture is well drawn. He "was a clever hunter, a man of the field"—what we should call "a man of the world." He loved pleasure, and had a clear eye for any present advantage. We could not call him immoral, and, by the side of Jacob, he stands up the better man. He was far more sinned against than sinning. He had some fine traits. He was irritable, even to the point of saying that he would kill his brother! But he was forgiving, and his passion quite passed away. He bought what he might, probably, have taken by force. He never once deceived his father and mother. He spoke to his father respectfully and reverently. If he thought lightly of "the birthright" at one time, he was very earnest about it at another. He showed consideration at least the second time, in the selection of his wives (Gen. xxviii. 8, 9). And Esau was most generous afterwards, at Peniel, *e.g.*, even at the moment when Jacob was treating him with suspicion, fear, and cunning (Gen. xxxiii.) He was unwilling to take anything at Jacob's hand, but, with great delicacy, when Jacob urged him to take it, he took it, and added, "Let us go, and I will go before thee." And when Jacob declined it, he said, "Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me." And the last thing we read of him is an act of modest thoughtfulness (Gen. xxxvi. 7). 2. The patient life of Jacob is a sad contrast. His besetting sin is deceitfulness. He takes advantage of his brother's hunger, and gets "the birthright" by what was almost cheating. To his apparently dying father, he tells, acts, asserts, and re-asserts a lie! And before he goes away he makes no confession or apology. He deceives his master and father-in-law, Laban, and runs away and outrages his feelings. And even to his generous brother he acts trickily. II. WHERE, THEN, IS THE SOLUTION OF THE VERDICT, "Jacob have I loved," &c.? We go down into the sanctuary of a man's real life. 1. Esau seems to have never cared for God at all. He had no crime; but he certainly had no grace. There is not a prayer, nor any recognition of the fatherhood or the sovereignty of the Almighty. His "birthright" is little or nothing to him; and a present gratification comes before any future advantage. He tries, even with "tears," to change his father's resolve that Jacob should have the property. But there is no repentance. The "birthright" is valuable to him in a secular point of view; but he is utterly indifferent to its spiritual nature. 2. Jacob seeks the blessing by wrong means; but he values it. He makes his peace with God the very night after. His life at Syria is such that Laban was constrained to say, "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." He traces everything he had to God. He wrestles all night in prayer. He goes up to Bethel, and renews his covenant when God bids him. He puts away all his wives' strange gods before he goes there. He secures God's permission and blessing before he ventures to go down into Egypt. He is careful when there to separate his family from idolators, and he makes good confession before Pharaoh. In his last act he

talks to his children with grandeur, and most piously, and shows his faith by charging his sons to bury him in the land of promise. Conclusion: 1. Jacob had great sins, but they were falls! He rose; he repented; and he was forgiven. The child of God comes out, and grace prevails. 2. Esau was, in a worldly sense, moral, but godless. Not very wrong with man, but never right with God. 3. Suppose you had two sons. The one lived a perfectly correct life; but you were nothing to him. The other often grieved you; but he loved you, and was sorry when he hurt you. Which would be the one you loved? 4. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. Then how is it with ourselves? The world is very much made up of "Esaus" and "Jacobs." Some lead very correct lives. What is God? A cypher. Where is God? Nowhere. Others are really religious. They love God. But they do many, many inconsistent and very bad things. They repent; they are forgiven. And the correct, moral people of the world see the sins of the religious people, and suspect and despise them. And the religious people scarcely remember how very inferior they are in many things to the world. 5. Then what will be to the Jacobs? They will be punished, as Jacob was, by a retributive justice. They will go through several ordeals of purification. They will suffer even to the fire! But they will be saved! And what to the Esaus who live and die Esaus? A retributive justice too. No God *in* them; then no God *for* them! No birthright! No blessing! No repentance! (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Jacob loved and Esau hated*:—I. IN WHAT SENSE. 1. Comparatively, not absolutely. 2. As representatives of a race, not as individuals. 3. In reference to earthly, not heavenly privileges. II. HOW IS GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY VINDICATED IN THIS ORDINATION? He is the Supreme Sovereign, who specially privileges some, but blesses all. III. WHAT HAS THIS EXAMPLE TO DO WITH THE QUESTION OF INDIVIDUAL SALVATION? 1. Nothing as to its possibility, for all may be saved. 2. Nothing as to its conditions, for all must be saved by grace through faith. 3. Yet much as to special privilege and increased responsibility. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Esau hated and Jacob loved*:—Some light is thrown on the strong verb "hated" by other passages in which it is employed (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xiv. 26; John xii. 25). In these statements there is certainly no intention of conveying an idea of malice. There is in them, just as in the Saviour's remark regarding the camel and the needle's eye, something of bold hyperbolism. Such hyperbolisms are common and rife enough, in the language both of literature and every-day life. They give piquancy to speech, and are relished by "all the world." So "Esau I hated" is comparative, not absolute; and there is really more in the representation than in the reality, just because a phrascological foil was wanted. The idea is, that in the treatment accorded to the Edomites there was a conspicuous absence of that favour which distinguished the Divine treatment of the Hebrews and vindicated the expression, "Jacob I loved." In truth, there was now no room for national forgiveness to Edom. The cup of their iniquity they had filled to the brim, and it was now time that they should be compelled to drain to its dregs the cup of merited retribution. It was otherwise with Jacob in the days of Malachi (chap. i.). God, although greatly provoked, had not dealt with that people according to their desert. In wrath, He had remembered mercy. Through the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah over the kings of Babylon, many families were encouraged to return to the desolated city. The streets were restored. The walls were rebuilt. The temple was reconstructed, and an appreciable amount of prosperity once more rolled over the land. "God loved Jacob"; for with all the waywardness and faithlessness of the peculiar people, they were still, in virtue of their Messianic destination, like a peculiar treasure to God. They were the casket which contained the heavenly jewel; and, for the jewel's sake, the casket was carefully kept and guarded. It was otherwise with Edom. Like many surrounding peoples, they had a time of merciful visitation. Their local habitation had many advantages; they were blessed in "the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven," and were sheltered within the munition of rocks; and, had they been willing to be good, they might have had a constant flow of prosperity. But they became highminded, aggressive, selfish, morally rank to heaven with rottenness, and were involved at last in the overflow of Babylonian devastation (Mal. i. 4, *cf.* in contrast the case of Israel, ver. 5). We have additional evidence in these statements of the prophet's reference to peoples as distinguished from individuals in the plural "we," "ye," &c. The apostle's argument is irrefragable. Pure patriarchal descent on the part of Israel was insufficient to ensure everlasting Messianic blessings; for it was utterly insufficient on the part of Edom to secure those temporal advantages which

were conferred on the Hebrews till the fulness of time. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Esau hated and Jacob loved:*—Note that—1. In speaking of Jacob or Esau, either as men or as nations, neither Genesis nor Malachi nor St. Paul have eternal salvation in view; the matter in question is the part they play regarded from the theocratic standpoint, as is proved by the words "to serve." 2. Esau, though deprived of the promise and the inheritance, nevertheless obtained a blessing and an inheritance for his descendants. 3. The national character inherited from the father of the race is not so impressed on his descendants that they cannot escape it. As there were in Israel many Edomites, profane hearts, there may also have been many Israelites, spiritual hearts in Edom. Compare what is said of the wise men of Teman (Jer. xlix. 7), and the very respectable personage Eliphaz (notwithstanding his error) in the book of Job. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Jacob loved:*—This is seen all through his history. 1. In the promise made before his birth. 2. The vision of Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 12, &c.). 3. The blessing in Padanaram (Gen. xxxi. 5, 9). 4. The vision there (ver. 11–13). 5. The command given to Laban concerning him (ver. 24). 6. The blessing given him at Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 28, 29). 7. The command to go to Bethel and the vision there (Gen. xxxv. 1, 9, 11). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Jacob and Esau:*—Why was it that God loved Jacob and hated Esau? I. THIS IS A FACT. Ask an Arminian about election, and at once he begins to sharpen the knife of controversy. But say to him, "Ah, brother! was it not Divine grace that made you to differ? Was it not the Lord who called you out of your natural state and made you what you are? "Oh, yes," he says, "I quite agree with you there." Well, then, why is it that one man has been converted, and not another? "Oh, the Spirit of God has been at work in this man," that God does treat one man better than another is not very wonderful. It is a fact we recognise every day. There is a man that, work as hard as he likes, he cannot earn more than fifteen shillings a week; and here is another that gets a thousand a year? One is born in a palace, while another draws his first breath in a hovel. Here is a man whose head cannot hold two thoughts together; here is another who can dive into the deepest of questions; what is the reason of it? God has done it. He has made some eagles, and some worms; some He has made lions, and some creeping lizards; He has made some men kings, and some are born beggars. Do you murmur at God for it? No. What is the use of kicking against facts? God does in matters of religion give to one man more than to another. He gives to me opportunities of hearing the Word which He does not give to the Hottentot. He gives to me parents who trained me in the fear of the Lord. He does not give that to many of you. He places me afterwards in situations where I am restrained from sin. Other men are cast into places where their sinful passions are developed. Again, He brings one man under the sound of a powerful ministry, while another sits and listens to a preacher whose drowsiness is only exceeded by that of his hearers. And even when they are hearing the gospel the fact is God works in one heart when He does not in another. 1. Look at Jacob's life. You are compelled to say that from the first hour that he left his father's house God loved him. Why, he has not gone far before he has the Bethel experience. Laban tries to cheat him and God suffers it not, but multiplies the cattle that Laban gives him. When he fled God charges Laban not to speak to Jacob either good or bad. When his sons had committed murder in Shechem, and Jacob is afraid that he will be destroyed, God puts a fear upon the people, and says to them, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophet no harm." And when a famine comes over the land, God has sent Joseph into Egypt to provide for him and his brethren. And see the happy end of Jacob. It was that of "a man that God loved." 2. On the other hand, God did not love Esau. He permitted him to become the father of princes, but He had not blessed his generation. Where is the house of Esau now? Edom has perished. II. WHY IS THIS? 1. Why did God love Jacob? There was nothing in Jacob that could make God love him, but much that might have made God hate him. It was because God was infinitely gracious, and because He was sovereign in His dispensation of this grace. Let us look at Jacob's character. As a natural man he was always a bargain-maker. Read what he says after the glorious experience and promise at Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 20, 22). While he lived with Laban what miserable work it was! He had got into the hands of a man of the world, and whenever a covetous Christian gets into such company, a terrible scene ensues. The whole way through we are ashamed of Jacob; we cannot help it. Now, if the character of Jacob be all this there could have been nothing in him that made God love him, and the only reason why God loved him

must have been because "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy." 2. Why did God hate Esau? The two questions are entirely distinct, so one answer will not do for both. Why does God hate any man? Because that man deserves it; no reply but that can ever be true. There are some who answer Divine sovereignty; but I challenge them to look that doctrine in the face. Do you believe that God created man and arbitrarily, and for no other reason than that of destroying him for ever? Well, if you can believe it, I pity you that you should think so meanly of God, whose mercy endureth for ever. Sovereignty holds the scale of love, it is justice holds the other scale. Who can put that into the hand of sovereignty? That were to libel God. Did Esau deserve that God should cast him away? Yes, what we know of Esau's character clearly proves it. Esau lost his birthright; but he sold it himself and for a mess of pottage. Oh, Esau, it is in vain for thee to say, "I lost my birthright by decree." God is not the author of sin. And the doctrine is that every man who loses heaven gives it up himself. God denies it not to him. He will not come that he may have life. But, says one, "Esau repented." Yes, but what sort of a repentance was it? As soon as he found that his brother had got the birthright he sought it again with tears, but he did not get it back. He sold it for a mess of pottage, and he thought he would buy it back by giving his father a mess of pottage. So sinners say, "I have lost heaven by my evil works; I will easily get it again by reforming." No, you may sell heaven for carnal pleasures, but you cannot buy heaven by merely giving them up. You can get heaven only on another ground, viz: the ground of free grace. You think that Esau was a sincere penitent; but when he failed to get the blessing, what did he say? "I will slay my brother Jacob." That is not the repentance that comes from the Holy Spirit. But there are some men like that. They say they are very sorry and then they go and do the same that they did before. On this whole matter read ver. 22. Observe that God had nothing to do with fitting men for destruction. They do that. God only fits men for salvation. At the last day the righteous shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them; but the wicked shall go "into everlasting fire, prepared"—not for you but—"for the devil and his angels." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The mystery of God's love*:—A gentleman who thought Christianity was merely a heap of puzzling problems, said to an old minister, "That is a very strange statement 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'" "Very strange" replied the minister; "but what is it that you see most strange about it?" "Oh, that part of course about hating Esau." "Well, sir," said the minister, "how wonderfully are we made and how differently constituted. The strangest part of all to me is that He could ever have loved Jacob. There is no mystery so glorious as the mystery of God's love." (*N. T. Anecdotes.*) **What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.**—*The unimpeachable righteousness of God in the dispensations of His mercy and justice*:—I. HE ACTS ON IMMUTABLE PRINCIPLES. 1. These principles are fixed (ver. 15). 2. Are independent of human will and action (ver. 16). 3. Respect both mercy and justice (ver. 17). 4. Are the same in application to all. He has mercy on the penitent, withdraws His Spirit from the impenitent (ver. 18). II. HE HAS A PERFECT RIGHT TO DETERMINE THOSE PRINCIPLES AND DIRECT THE APPLICATION OF THEM. 1. Men are apt to complain (ver. 19). 2. But unreasonably, because God is the Supreme Sovereign (ver. 20). He can mould as He pleases, whether to honour or dishonour. III. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE ALWAYS APPLIED IN MERCY. 1. Even vessels fitted for wrath are endured with much long-suffering, affording ample room for repentance. 2. While the riches of His glory are displayed in the vessels of mercy. 3. And there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for the righteousness of faith is unto and upon all that believe. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Unrighteousness with God is a thing*—I. ABHORRENT TO HUMAN SENSE. 1. We could then have no confidence in Him. 2. There would be no security for moral order and happiness. 3. No hope in the future. II. INCONCEIVABLE. Because opposed to all our notions of Divine perfection, whether derived from revelation, conscience, or reason. III. IMPOSSIBLE. 1. Either in the dispensations of His mercy or justice. 2. Because contrary to His nature. 3. Hence seeming injustice, wherever it occurs, must be referred to human ignorance. (*Ibid.*) *Righteousness of the Divine administration*:—All the unutterable woes of the depraved residuums of our great cities are taking place under the administration of a God of kindness and love. There is provision in New York for food and raiment, and thousands there are that wander through the streets hungry and naked. There is provision in New York for health and strength, and thousands there are that writhe in anguish on

beds of sickness. There is provision also in the heart of God for every miserable creature that has erred, and thousands there are that curse and blaspheme with remorse in hospitals or in lazar-houses, or in the midst of the vermin and filth at the bottom of society. All that takes place, though God, who is God of love and benevolence sees it; all this takes place though nature is ordained to promote happiness; all this takes place, though the structure of society and the structure of individual men are designed to promote happiness; all this takes place, though God's government is for the promotion of happiness; all this takes place, though the interior nature of God and His everlasting decree aim at happiness. And yet, men are found who, with these facts staring them in the face, rise up and say, "God is too good to punish men!" Why, there never was an assertion so flung in the face of facts. The administration of God is full of goodness; but goodness in the Divine administration is employed according to law. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God righteous in all His ways:*—Going up among the White Mountains some years ago, I thought of that passage in the Bible that speaks of God as weighing mountains in a balance. As I looked at those great mountains, I thought: Can it be possible that God can put those great mountains in scales? It was an idea too great for me to grasp; but when I saw a bluebell down by the mule's foot on my way up Mount Washington, then I understood the kindness and goodness of God. It is not so much of God in great things I can understand, but of God in little things. Here is a man who says: "That doctrine cannot be true, because things do go so very wrong." I reply: "It is no inconsistency on the part of God, but a lack of understanding on our part." I hear that men are making very fine shawls in some factory. I go in on the first floor and see only the raw material, and I ask: "Are these the shawls I hear about?" "No," says the manufacturer, "go up to the next floor"; and I go up, and there I begin to see the design. But the man says: "Do not stop here, go to the top floor of the factory, and you will see the idea fully carried out." I do so, and having come to the top, see the complete pattern of an exquisite shawl. So in our life, standing down on a low level of Christian experience, we do not understand God's dealings. He tells us to go up higher if we would know. We go up higher and higher until we begin to understand the Divine meaning with respect to us. God says, Go up higher, and we advance until we stand at the very gate of heaven, and there see God's idea all wrought out—a perfect idea of mercy, of love, of kindness, and we say: "Just and true are all Thy ways." It is all right at the top; all right at the bottom. Remember, there is no inconsistency on the part of God, but it is only our mental and spiritual incapacity. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) **For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.**—*Moses and Pharaoh:*—I. MOSES an example of God's mercy and grace. II. PHARAOH an example of God's justice. III. BOTH examples of God's righteousness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Mercy* is—I. AN ACT OF SOVEREIGN WILL. II. A DISPLAY OF UNMERITED GRACE. III. CONSISTS WITH INFINITE JUSTICE. IV. IS DISPENSED WITH CONSUMMATE WISDOM. (*Ibid.*) *Mercy abused:*—To sin because mercy abounds is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy is like one that wounds his head because he hath a plaster: he that sins because of God's mercy shall have judgment without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury. Nothing sweeter than mercy when it is improved, nothing fiercer when it is abused; nothing colder than lead when it is taken out of the mine, nothing more scalding than lead when it is heated; nothing blunter than iron, nothing sharper when it is whetted. "The mercy of the Lord is upon them that fear Him." Mercy is not for them that sin, and fear not; but for them that fear, and sin not. (*T. Watson.*) *Mercy, alternative of:*—When the Romans attacked a city it was sometimes their custom to set up a white flag at the city gate. If the garrison surrendered while the white flag was up, their lives were spared; after that the black flag was run up, and every man was put to the sword. Sinner, to-day the white flag of mercy is out. Surrender to Christ and live before the black flag of death and doom takes its place. *Mercy, importance of:*—Mercy is in the air we breathe, the daily light which shines upon us, the gracious rain of God's inheritance. It is the public spring for all the thirsty, the common hospital for all the needy. It is mercy that takes us out of the womb, feeds us in the days of our pilgrimage, furnishes us with spiritual provision, closes our eyes in peace, and translates us to a secure resting-place. It is the first petitioner's suit, and the first believer's article, the contemplation of Enoch, the confidence of Abraham, the burden of the prophetic songs, and the glory of all the apostles, the plea of the penitent, the ecstasies of the reconciled, the believer's hosanna, the angel's halle-

lujah. Ordinances, oracles, altars, pulpits, the gates of the grave, and the gates of heaven, do all depend upon mercy. It is the load-star of the wandering, the ransom of the captive, the antidote of the tempted, the prophet of the living, and the effectual comfort of the dying: there would not be one regenerate saint upon earth, nor one glorified saint in heaven, if it were not for mercy. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Mercy, manifold*:—As John Bunyan says, all the flowers in God's garden are double; there is no single mercy: nay, they are not only double flowers, but they are manifold flowers. There are many flowers upon one stalk, and many flowers in one flower. You shall think you have but one mercy; but you shall find it to be a whole flock of mercies. Our beloved is unto us a bundle of myrrh, a cluster of camphor. When you lay hold upon one golden link of the chain of grace, you pull, pull, pull; but lo! as long as your hand can draw there are fresh "linked sweetnesses" of love still to come. Manifold mercies! Like the drops of a lustre, which reflect a rainbow of colours when the sun is glittering upon them, and each one, when turned in different ways, from its prismatic form shows all the varieties of colour; so the mercy of God is one and yet many; the same, yet ever changing; a combination of all the beauties of love blended harmoniously together. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sovereignty of Divine mercy*:—Observe—I. THE TEXT DOES NOT MEAN that God is not merciful to all—1. Favours some to the disadvantage of others. 2. Is not disposed to save all. 3. Distributes His favours capriciously. 4. Saves any without the co-operation of their own will. II. IT MEANS that God's purpose in redemption is independent of man. 1. That its conditions are fixed without the will of man. 2. That the will or efforts of man cannot supersede these conditions. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Divine sovereignty*:—When it is affirmed that the sovereignty of God is absolute, it is simply meant that He is a Being who *can* do whatever He pleases. "None *can* stay His hand, or say to Him, what doest Thou?" He is not accountable for His deeds to any superior. "He giveth not account of any of His matters" But as He can do whatever He pleases, so He *will* fulfil His pleasure. He "does according to His will in the army of heaven," &c. "My counsel shall stand," &c. But while God is thus absolute sovereign, this absolute sovereignty does not determine for Him what it is right that He should please to do. Something else is indispensable, viz., His peculiar intelligence. In it, and in it alone, does God find the idea of right, an idea without which there could be no ethical imperative uttering itself in the affirmative "I ought." It is the highest glory of God, that He should, and that He always does please, to do only what is right. In Him is no darkness at all. He exercises His sovereignty in doing only what is "holy and just and good." His sovereignty is itself "holy and just and good." The apostle's adduction of the oracle addressed to Moses is a decided argumentative success. Men, without exception, are the subjects of God's sovereign sway. It cannot be disputed. So therefore are the Jews in particular; universally so. And yet "all have come short of the glory of God"; so that there is unless there supervene some great change or new creation, overhanging all, both Gentiles and Jews, a lurid thundercloud of doom. Is there room for hope? The asseverations, "I shall have mercy," &c., seem to assume that there is forgiveness with God, that He may be had in reverence (Psa. cxxx. 4). But there are limits to His pardoning grace. He "keeps mercy indeed for thousands" (Exod. xxxiv. 7), but He will by no means clear those whose guilt has deepened into impenitence. There is a sin that never hath forgiveness (Mark iii. 29). Who then shall be pardoned? Just those whom it pleases God to pardon —"He will have pardoning mercy on whomsoever," &c. And who are these? Under the Old Testament the category of the pardonable was not clearly revealed. Under the new none need walk in uncertainty. Those who put their trust in Christ shall be pardoned. And as regards those who are destitute of this revelation, see chap. ii. 13–15. Their responsibility is measured by their opportunity. And it lies entirely with God's sovereignty to determine who shall be the recipients of His bounty. In the statements "On whomsoever I have," or am having, "mercy," &c., there seems to be the conveyance of the idea that God was already in absolute spontaneity at work forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. The favourite work of Divine grace, however, is so great, august, and far-reaching in its ethical influence that none but the Highest could reasonably undertake it, or carry it through. "There is none who can forgive sins but God only." There is hence, on the part of God, the well-grounded assumption of a very lofty prerogative, which is tantamount to an assertion that He will not suffer any one, not even Moses, to interfere with the administration of His bounty. He is resolved to dispense His

bounty to whomsoever He pleases. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The Divine sovereignty: its infinite graciousness:*—As God's throne is a throne of holiness, so it is a throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16). A throne encircled with a rainbow, "in sight, like an emerald" (Rev. iv. 3); an emblem of the covenant, betokening mercy. Though His nature be infinitely excellent above us, and His power infinitely transcendent over us, yet the majesty of His government is tempered with an unspeakable goodness. He acts not so much as an absolute lord as a gracious sovereign and obliging benefactor. He delights not to make His subjects slaves; exacts not of them any servile or fearful, but a generous and cheerful obedience. He requires them not to fear or worship Him so much for His power as His goodness. He requires not of a rational creature anything repugnant to the honour, dignity, and principles of such a nature; nor anything that may make it weary of its own being, or of the service it owes its sovereign. He draws it by the cords of a man; His goodness renders His laws as sweet as honey and the honeycomb to an unvitiated palate and a renewed mind. And though it be granted He hath full disposal of His creature as the potter of His vessel, yet His goodness will never permit Him to use this sovereign right to the hurt of a creature that deserves it not. As not to punish the sinner would be a denial of His justice, so to torment the innocent would be a denial of His goodness. It is as much against the nature of God to punish one eternally who hath not deserved it as it is to deny Himself and act anything foolishly, and unbecoming His other perfections which render Him majestical and adorable. (*S. Charnock, B.D.*) *The Divine sovereignty: real and merciful:*—Conspiracies have at various times sprung up to deprive the Supreme of this peculiar glory—to deny Him a will. Men would fain substitute a law of nature for the living God. They conceive of an unthinkable principle like gravitation; they think of a power like the sea, lashing itself and raging and advancing without a purpose or a plan, floating a ship and sinking a stone with equal indifference, and continuing afterwards its unmeaning roar. I love this chapter; it is a sublime protest against an atheistic human philosophy. I can have no communion with a mere mechanical omnipotence—a sort of infinite ocean that heaves eternally by laws to which it is subject; saving me if I continue to make myself sufficiently buoyant before I am cast on its cold, uncaring bosom; and swallowing me up with the same relentless regularity if I make the leap before I be light enough. This omnipotent principle is not my Saviour; I need as my Saviour the living God who loves me, and whom I may love in return—the God who looked on me when I was lost, and loved me when I was worthless—who saved me from hell and made me His child. I need from my God not merely a general aspect of benevolence towards the world, under which some of the most vigorous agonisers may struggle into heaven; I need not only permission to save myself, but a hope that the Infinite sees me, knows me, pities me, loves me, grasps me, and holds me in the hollow of His hand, safe against all dangers, until He bring me safe to His eternal rest. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Justification by free grace vindicated:*—"For He saith to Moses, I will," &c. As if He should have said, "My doctrine of justification, by the free grace and pleasure of God through believing, is so far from rendering Him unrighteous, that Himself plainly asserteth the substance of it in saying thus unto Moses. Meaning that inasmuch as all men having sinned are become obnoxious unto Me, I am resolved to use my prerogative, and to show mercy unto whom I please, not upon such who shall be obtruded upon Me by men, or who shall judge themselves worthy. The repetitions are very emphatical, and import in the highest degree a resolvedness in God to dispense His favour according to His own pleasure, and not according to the thoughts of men. When the clouds pour out rain in abundance it is a sign they were full of water. In like manner, when a man reiterates any purpose, it argueth a fulness of that which is thus uttered, and that the heart could not discharge itself by one expression. Now we know who those are on whom God is everlastingly resolved to show mercy, viz., those who believe in His Son (2 Cor. i. 19, 20). And upon this account the gospel, which asserteth this purpose of God, is termed the everlasting gospel (Rev. xiv. 6), *i.e.*, one the tenor and contents whereof shall never be altered. Here God fully declares who they are on whom He will have mercy, viz., believers. Neither are all the angels in heaven nor men upon earth able to take Him off from this His purpose. For that is to be considered by the way that the apostle clearly speaketh here of that grace or mercy of God which relateth to the salvation of men. But whereas the Scripture speaks of two sorts or degrees of grace, one which precedes faith, and consists partly in the gift of His Son, partly in calling them by the

gospel, and vouchsafing means and opportunities unto them for repenting and believing; and another, which is subsequent. The question may be, of which the apostle speaks. I answer of the latter. 1. God makes no such difference or distinction of men in His preventing grace as the words before us manifestly imply (Heb. ii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Acts xvii. 30; Matt. xx. 16, &c.). 2. The whole discourse of the apostle in the context is not concerning preventing grace or mercy, but subsequent, as, viz., concerning justification, adoption, &c. 3. And evident it is that the apostle's intent is to declare the Jews to be excluded from that grace and mercy, as in telling them that the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise (ver. 8), that "the elder should serve the younger," and that the "purpose of God stands not of works," &c. Certain it is that these Jews were not excluded from preventing grace, for they were called of God by the apostles, yea, and by Christ Himself, and this by means so efficacious that our Saviour affirmeth that even the men of Tyre and Sidon might or would have been converted by them (Matt. xi. 21). Therefore the grace or mercy spoken of in the words in hand must needs be subsequent. And if so it cannot be understood of any such mercy in God towards men by which men, yet unregenerate, are enabled, much less necessitated, to repent or believe, but of that mercy which is vouchsafed unto them who do now repent and believe. So that the meaning of the words, "I will have mercy on whom," &c., is as if God should have said, I will justify, adopt, and glorify persons under what qualifications soever I Myself please, and will not be ordered or taught by men what I have to do, or what becometh Me to do, in this kind. As regards what God actually said to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 19), it appears that Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 13, 16) had desired of God that He would consider that the Jews were His people, and that He would please lead them that so it might be known in the world that both he and his people had found grace in His sight. This God grants. Upon this Moses makes a further request, viz., that God would show him His glory (Exod. xxxiii. 18). To this God answers, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee," &c., giving the reason hereof in the words cited by the apostle, "Let no man take offence that I should do that in a way of favour for thee, which I neither shall do to any of the people besides, nor ever did to any of thy fathers, nor to any man after thee; nor do thou imagine that I am anyways a debtor unto thee of that grace which I deny unto others, for I am a debtor unto no man, and will dispense My favours, and so My mercies, only unto such persons as I please." Now many of those whom God decreed upon their believing from eternity to justify, and adopt, apostatise from, and make shipwreck of their faith (as the Scripture in many places testifieth), from whom He hath peremptorily threatened to take away the grace of justification which before He had conferred upon them. Therefore the emphatical import of the apostle's expression, "I will have mercy on whom I have" (now or at present) "mercy," respects the same species, not the same persons of men; being as if He had said, To that sort or kind of men to whom at this day I show mercy (viz., in pardoning their sin and justifying their persons, meaning believers), I will show the like mercy at all times hereafter to the world's end. Or rather thus, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy," *i.e.*, I will not be taken off by men or by angels from showing the grace or mercy of justification and adoption unto those (*i.e.*, that kind of men) to whom I at this day show this grace or mercy, and these are such who believe. (*John Goodwin.*) *Arrogance of arraigning God*:—They say the head of the great river Nilus could never yet be found. It has been sought for, and many have travelled possibly some thousands of miles, but yet it cannot be found. But the head of Nilus will be found before men find any cause of Divine love beyond the Divine will. It speaketh a wonderful arrogance in men to make God accountable for His acts of Divine grace; what greater arrogance and vanity can be imagined than this? When a poor creature will not himself be brought to an account why he gives one beggar money and not another, or why he giveth to one child a greater portion than to another (though they both be the acknowledged fruit of his body), that yet this worm should dream that God must be accountable to his reason, why He showeth mercy to this man and not to another, when they are both the work of His hands. It is certainly enough to say, "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy; and extend compassion to whom He will extend compassion." What pride, what arrogance is this, not to allow to God, whom we confess to be the supreme and most free agent, the liberty which we will yet claim and challenge for another! This is flat rebellion against the Lord of all, whose sovereignty it dares to question. (*John Collinges.*) **So then it is not of him that**

willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.—*Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*:—For ages this chapter has been a battle-ground for theological dispute. Doctrines have been raised here most degrading to man—most derogatory to God. The first thing, therefore, is to brush away the clouds of false opinions with which theological polemics have enveloped it. The verse is not meant to express the idea—1. That the Great Father does not show mercy to all mankind. This would be contrary to facts. Reason, consciousness, and the Bible unite in declaring that it is "of the Lord's mercy that we have not been consumed." Man's existence is to be traced to the fact that he lives every moment by mercy, and mercy bears him up from hell. 2. That God gives to some men favours that He withholds from others, which is a truth too obvious for debate. You see this unequal distribution of the Divine favour—(1) In natural endowments. No two men are alike in natural endowment. (2) In our secular condition. (3) In the means of spiritual improvement. Some are born heathens, &c. So that however humbling to our pride it may be, yet God does bestow favours on some which He withholds from others. But here Paul would not argue a point so palpable to his opponents. 3. That the Infinite Father is not disposed to save all. This is opposed to His own most positive and frequent declarations. "I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner." "Let the wicked forsake his way," &c. This is also contrary to the universality of His remedial provisions. "God so loved the world," &c. "He is a propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world." 4. That the Infinite Father distributes His favours capriciously. We are unable to discover them, but that He has the highest reasons for His conduct we are bound to believe. The Infinite intellect never acts without reason, and Infinite love never acts unkindly. His mighty operations are under the sway of intellect; His intellect is under the sway of love. 5. That willing and running, or human efforts, are not essential to salvation. (1) There are blessings bestowed upon us independent of our willing and running. This is the case, *e.g.*, with natural endowments. If we have inferior powers the blame is not with us; if we are above the average the credit is not ours. It is sometimes the case too with our temporal condition. Sometimes riches come to a man without any effort or will of his own, and with poverty the same, but not always. (2) It is ever true, however, of mental and moral excellence. We do not say that God cannot make a man intelligent and virtuous irrespective of his own conduct, but we have never heard of such cases. God's regular method to enlighten the ignorant, to reform the depraved, &c., is by the earnest use of their own faculties. The Bible gives us to understand—(*a*) That without my willing and running I cannot be saved. The work of a man in obtaining his salvation is compared to husbandry, building, battle, racing; all laborious occupations. In one word, so far from willing and running not being required, we must agonise to enter in. (*b*) That when there are the right running and willing, salvation is sure to be obtained. "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened." "He that cometh to Him He will on no account cast out." Running and willing therefore cannot be dispensed with. What then does it mean? Simply this—that the original reason of salvation is in God and not in man. A truth this which is no sooner propounded than adopted by universal intelligence as an axiom. If there be a God He must be the primordial cause not only of all existence, but of all good throughout His vast and ever-extending universe. Then "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth"—I. THAT GOD'S DETERMINATION TO SAVE MANKIND CAME. Human effort had nothing to do in starting the eternal idea. "Who being His counsellor hath taught Him?" God's ideas are as old as Himself. There is no succession of thought in the Eternal Mind. One all-seeing, all-embracing, infinite thought is His. "Known unto God are all His works, redemption included, from the beginning of the world." We are saved, then, "not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace," &c. Had He not determined to save humanity we never could have been saved, and His determination is entirely independent of all "willing and running." II. THAT GOD'S CONDITION OF SALVATION WAS FORMED. 1. It is God's plan to work by means. The principle of mediation fills and rules the universe. (1) It is so in the material world. God acts upon one thing through the instrumentality of another. One body is moved, one life is produced, one creature is supported by another. (2) It is so in the mental world. One mind guides, educates, moulds another. (3) In the moral world God's method here is to save the world by Christ. He is in Christ "reconciling the world unto Himself." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son," &c. "What the law could not do," &c.

This is a settled condition. "There is no other name," &c. 2. Now what has human "willing or running" to do with this plan of salvation? Nothing. (1) The plan is eternal, and therefore no creature could have had an influence in its formation. "The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world." (2) The plan transcends all finite thought. It could not have "entered into the heart of man to conceive" of such a thing. III. TO SUPERSEDE GOD'S ESTABLISHED METHOD OF SALVATION. Perhaps this passage especially refers to the Jew, who had an idea that he should be saved on the ground of patriarchal descent. And Paul wishes to impress him with the fact that no amount of effort on that condition would save him. He might will and run intensely and for ever, but it would be of no service. There is a Divine way to reach Divine results. There is a Divine way to cultivate the soil, to navigate the ocean, to build houses, to get a well-informed and well-disciplined intellect, and if these are not observed labour will be lost. It is so in man's salvation. There is a Divine way, which, if not observed, all the willing and the running will go for nothing. The heathen, the Mahometan, the Jew, the Deist, may will and run, but their labour must prove futile, since they observe not the way. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*:—Abraham willed that the blessing should be given to Ishmael; Isaac willed that it should be given to Esau; and Esau ran to hunt for venison that it might be regularly conveyed to him. But they were all disappointed; for it was God's will that it should be given to Isaac and Jacob. (*B. Field.*) *God's will and man's will* (Text and Rev. xxii. 17):—1. The great controversy which has divided the Church upon the question of "the will" has been fraught with incalculable usefulness, for it has thrust forward the two great doctrines of human responsibility and Divine sovereignty. 2. In this controversy, however, mistakes have arisen from two reasons. Some have altogether forgotten one order of truths. Like Nelson they have put the telescope to the blind eye, and then protested that they could not see. On the other hand, others have pushed a truth too far. You know how often things are injured by over-praise; how a good medicine comes to be despised because a quack has advertised it as an universal cure. So puffery in doctrine leads to its dishonour. You have seen those crystal globes, in which, as you walk up to them, your head is ten times as large as your body, and in another position your feet are monstrous and the rest of your body small. Many go to work with God's truth upon the model of this toy; they magnify one capital truth till it becomes monstrous; they minify another till it becomes forgotten. Let us note that—I. SALVATION HINGES UPON THE WILL OF GOD, AND NOT UPON THE WILL OF MAN. "It is not of him that willeth," &c. 1. This may be argued from analogy. There is a certain likeness between all God's works. If a painter shall paint three pictures, or an author write three books, there will be certain qualities running through the whole which will lead you to see that they are the same man's "work." Now turn your thoughts—(1) To the works of creation. There was a time when these works had no existence. With whom did God then take counsel? Did it not rest with His own will whether He would make or not? And when He willed to create, did He not still use His own discretion as to what and how He would make? You see running through creation, from the tiny animalculæ up to the tall archangel, this working of God's own will. Well, then, does He reign in creation and not in grace? (2) The works of Providence (Dan. iv. 35). From the first moment of human history to the last God's will shall be done. And as surely as God's will is the axle of the universe and the great heart of Providence, so in grace, despite man's hardness of heart, His own purposes will be fulfilled. 2. The difficulties which surround the opposite theory are tremendous. The theory that salvation depends upon our own will—(1) Makes the purpose of God contingent. Christ may die, but it is not certain that He will redeem any, since the efficacy of the redemption rests not in its own intrinsic power, but in the will of man accepting it. (2) Makes man, practically, the supreme being. The Lord intends good, but He must wait on His own creature to know what his intention is. 3. Ponder the known condition of man. On the theory that man comes to Christ of his own will, what do you with texts which say that he is dead? 4. It is consistent with the universal experience of all God's people that salvation is of God's will. I have never yet met with a man even professing to be a Christian who ever said that his coming to God was the result of his unassisted nature. Universally the people of God will say it was the Holy Spirit that made them what they are. 5. To the law and to the testimony. Each part of the whole process of salvation is attributed to God's will. (1) The

preparation (Eph. i. 3, 9, 11). (2) Regeneration (John i. 13; James i. 18). (3) Sanctification (1 Thess. iv. 3). (4) Preservation, perseverance, resurrection, and eternal glory (John vi. 39). II. MAN'S WILL HAS ITS PROPER PLACE IN THE MATTER OF SALVATION (Rev. xxii. 17). 1. According to this and many other texts it is clear that men are not saved by compulsion. When a man receives the grace of Christ he does not receive it against his will. 2. Nor is the will taken away, for God does not come and convert the intelligent free-agent into a machine. We are as free under grace as ever we were under sin; nay, we were slaves when we were under sin, and when the Son makes us free we are free indeed. 3. But though the will of man is not ignored, the work of the Spirit, which is the effect of the will of God, is to change the human will, and so make men willing in the day of God's power, working in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure. The work of the Spirit is consistent with the original laws and constitution of human nature. Now, how is the heart changed in any matter? Generally by persuasion. A friend sets before us a certain truth in a new light, pleads with us, and our hearts are changed towards it. So the Spirit makes a revelation of truth to the soul, whereby it seeth things in a different light, and then the will cheerfully bows that neck which once was stiff as iron. 4. This gives the renewed soul a most blessed sign of grace. If thou art willing, depend upon it that God is willing. 5. Then, when a man has any willingness given to him, he has a special promise. Before he had that willingness he had an invitation. My text is a special call to some of you. Are you willing to be saved? Then the Lord says to you, "Whosoever will, let him come." You cannot say this does not mean you. You are willing, then come and take the water of life freely. "Had not I better pray?" It does not say so; it says, take the water of life. "But had not I better go home and get better?" No, take the water of life, and take it now. God says, "Here is a special invitation for you; you are willing; come and drink." Don't say, "I must go home and wash my pitcher." No preparation is wanted. When the crusaders heard Peter the hermit, they cried out at once, "*Deus vult!*" and every man plucked his sword from its scabbard, and set out to reach the holy sepulchre. So come and drink, sinner; God wills it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 17, 18. **For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up.**—*Pharaoh*:—1. How can we reconcile it with the Divine justice and mercy that a man should be brought upon the stage of life to illustrate the powerlessness of the creature who presumes to measure himself against the will of the Creator? The truth is, that such passages of Holy Scripture state only one side of the complete truth, viz., God's sovereignty. They do not notice, as other passages, man's persistent free-will and entire responsibility. God raises up men like Pharaoh to be what he became by their own resolve and rejection of the light which might have saved them. 2. Pharaoh was not without means of shrewdly suspecting something of the true character and mission of Israel. His bearing before Moses implies this, and it may be gathered from independent considerations. The earliest religion of Egypt had belief in one supreme power, and this had only become degraded into idolatry in the course of long ages. The secret of the ancient truth was still preserved by the priestly colleges attached to the temples, and each monarch could, if he wished, be initiated into it. This was the wisdom of the Egyptians in which Moses was learned. Then in the dynasty which immediately preceded, the king had actually endeavoured to restore the worship of one God under the crude form of devotion to the sun's disc. When Moses stood before Pharaoh, he therefore touched a chord, if not of sympathy, at least of apprehension, in the conscience of his royal hearer, and the conduct of Pharaoh was of a man who wishes not only to awe an opponent, but to crush his personal misgiving. Thus it was that he was by turns obdurate and yielding, until at last he engaged in the enterprise which led to the triumph of Israel. The event, indeed, is not mentioned in the inscriptions on the monuments—no national disasters ever are, but its effects are written on the face of history, and Pharaoh's name is remembered as that of one whose destiny it was to show forth the power of Him whose will he resisted. Note:—I. THE PATHETIC AND AWFUL SPECTACLE OF THE GROWTH OF A HUMAN BEING INTO AN ATTITUDE OF FIXED OPPOSITION TO THE ALL-HOLY AND ALMIGHTY GOD. 1. No man becomes utterly evil all at once; he is only, perhaps, half conscious of the change which is slowly but surely going on within him. There was a time, no doubt, when Pharaoh was a bright, thoughtless boy, with a kind mother, and, as he grew up, he was probably, at first, and generally,

well-meaning according to his lights, and his actions might have been at any rate first shaped in part by the traditions of his family, or the necessities of his position. But these were not irresistible, and at last the work of hardening was complete, and by a well-known licence of language God is said to have done that which He permitted—to have hardened Pharaoh's heart. 2. Throughout the ages of Jewish history no name more represents emphatic hostility to the honour of God, or the discomfiture which, sooner or later, awaits that hostility, than that of Pharaoh. As the Jew passed in review the names of the enemies of his people, none seemed to loom so large. And as the Christian looks back, he, too, sees in the enemies of God's people that which the Jews saw. But with his clearer faith he knows that they are dark shadows on earth of that invisible spirit who can mould man into being his instrument. Isaiah's description of the descent of the King of Babylon into the world of the dead melts insensibly into the more awful picture of the fall of Satan. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" And in the same way the words which Moses addressed to Pharaoh are less true of mortal man than the fallen archangel. Satan had his time of trial, he was not forced to be the Prince of Evil, he became it in the abuse of his free will. But having chosen to be the first-born of rebellion, he was not simply a disturbing force: the evil which God could not have created He might control; in the vast universe there was a function assigned to the apostle of universal revolt. "For that cause have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee," &c., a power exhibited when our Lord by His Cross spoiled principalities and powers, and destroyed him that had the power of death. 3. And Satan is only an instance of that which takes place in human experience. And the gradual growth of the spirit of resistance culminates at last, not in the triumph of the rebel, but in his being assigned an awful place in the plans of the Divine providence, in which he is to illustrate the justice of the Omnipotent. II. SOME GOOD NATURAL QUALITIES MAY EXIST IN A MAN WHO, NEVERTHELESS, PERHAPS, DIES AS AN OPPONENT TO THE WILL OF GOD. 1. There is a bust of Pharaoh in the museum at Cairo, and as we stand before the grave, but by no means unkindly Coptic face, it is difficult to think that it represents a human being to whom these stern words were addressed in the name of the All-Merciful. And yet that this is possible is a matter of experience. A man may be respectable, and even interesting, and yet throughout his life opposed to God through some warp in the will or lack of sensitiveness in the conscience. And this is much more dreadful than when a thoroughly bad man is opposed to God. That Nero should burn the Christians in order to amuse the Roman populace and divert public attention from his own wrong-doing, seems to be quite natural, considering who Nero was. But contrast Nero with Julian. Julian was a man whom to know was to respect. It is true that he had advantages which were unknown to Nero; he knew what the Christian life was, and what it could be, and yet he devoted his great powers to uprooting Christianity and restoring Paganism. But he died, owning that the Galilean had been too strong for him. If he had been an idle, profligate sensualist, his case would have been less pathetic. Julian seems like Pharaoh to have been raised up, that the crucified and risen Redeemer might show in him His power, and His name might be declared in all the earth. 2. These examples apply on a smaller scale. Good natural qualities—industry, justice, temperance, kindliness, &c.—are consistent with a general drift of life which is opposed to God's will; they are no guarantee that a man has that tenderness and sensitiveness of conscience which will enable him to see the line of duty in difficult circumstances, which will save him from the misery of finding himself at the last among those who have fought against God. Have we not, perhaps, reason to fear lest we ourselves should be of the number of petty Pharaohs who will illustrate God's power rather than His mercy on the Day of Judgment? III. HOW EASILY THOSE WHO ARE IN SUPERIOR AND ENGROSSING POSITIONS MAY BE FATALLY BLINDED TO THE HIGHEST AND BEST INTERESTS OF OTHERS WHO ARE DEPENDENT UPON THEM. Pharaoh, no doubt, had his head and hands full of great affairs of state—too full, he may have thought, to give much time to the complaints of a troublesome tribe of Asiatic bondsmen. He closed his eyes, ears, and heart when he ought to have kept them wide open to all the indications of God's will and human needs round him, and so he drifted on to his ruin. May not something of the same kind occur to any who are entrusted by Providence with the care of others—not only the rulers of nations and churches, but the great employers of labour, and the heads of educational institutions, and the fathers and mothers of families? An Israel may be close round them, to whose real wants they

are insensible, but of which they have had ample warning, and meanwhile time is passing, and they are approaching some catastrophe: the ruin of families, societies, institutions may be due to some fatal insensibility on the part of those who direct them, some inability to enter into their moral and spiritual requirements. IV. THERE IS HERE GREAT COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE TO SERVE GOD IN THE CONVICTION THAT IN THE END HE WILL TRIUMPH OVER ALL HIS OPPONENTS, HOWEVER LONG THE TRIUMPH BE DELAYED. Pharaoh was sitting on his throne in all the pride of the Egyptian monarchy's brightest days when Moses dared to tell him that he was raised up to set forth the power of God. God allows much evil to exist. This is a distress and perplexity to His servants. Wait, and you will see. If God is patient, it is because He is eternal. Pharaoh for a while was borne with, remonstrated with, before the Red Sea closed upon him and his army. Still more sure of this should we Christians be who can gaze into the empty sepulchre, and who know that He who has left it holds the keys of hell and of death. Sin may still be strong, death may still be terrible, Satan still a standing menace, but these enemies will only illustrate our Redeemer's power. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The case of Pharaoh:*—The subject in question is not the wicked disposition which animates Pharaoh, but the entire situation in which he finds himself providentially placed. God might have caused Pharaoh to be born in a cabin, where his proud obstinacy would have been displayed with no less self-will, but without any notable historical consequence; on the other hand, He might have placed on the throne of Egypt at that time a weak, easy-going man, who would have yielded at the first shock. What would have happened? Pharaoh in his obscure position would not have been less arrogant and perverse; but Israel would have gone forth from Egypt without *éclat*. No plagues one upon another, no Red Sea miraculously crossed, no Egyptian army destroyed; nothing of all that made so deep a furrow in the Israelitish conscience, and which remained for the elect people the immovable foundation of their relation to Jehovah. And thereafter also no influence pronounced on the surrounding nations. The entire history would have taken another direction. God did not therefore create the indomitable pride of Pharaoh, as it were, to gain a point of resistance and reflect His glory; He was content to use it for this purpose. This is what is expressed by the following words: "that thus," not simply "that" (*cf.* Exod. xv. 14, 15; Josh. ii. 9, 10, ix. 9). What is meant by the term "hardening," and what leads the apostle to use the expression in ver. 18? It signifies to take from a man the sense of the true, the just, and even the useful, so that he is no longer open to the wise admonitions and significant circumstances which should turn him aside from the evil way on which he has entered. The word cannot signify in Exod. iv.–xiv. anything else, as God's act, than it signifies as the act of Pharaoh, when it is said that he hardened himself. Note carefully that Pharaoh's hardening was at first his own act. Five times it is said of him that he himself hardened or made heavy his heart (vii. 13, 14, 22, viii. 32, ix. 7; we do not speak here of iv. 21 and vii. 3, which are a prophecy), before the time when it is at last said that God hardened him (ix. 12); and even after that, as if a remnant of liberty still remained to him, it is said for a last time that he hardened himself (ix. 34, 35). It was a parallel act to that of Judas closing his heart to the last appeal. Then, at length, as if by way of a terrible retribution, God hardened him five times (x. 1 and 20, x. 27, xi. 10, and xiv.). Thus he at first closed his heart obstinately against the influence exercised on him by the summonses of Moses and the first chastisements which overtook him; that was his sin. And thereafter, but still within limits, God rendered him deaf not merely to the voice of justice, but to that of sound sense and simple prudence: that was his punishment. Far, then, from its having been God who urged him to evil, God punished him with the most terrible chastisements for the evil to which he voluntarily gave himself up. In this expression we find the same idea as in *παραδιδόναι* (God gave them up), by which the apostle expressed God's judgment on the Gentiles for their refusal to welcome the revelation which He gave of Himself in nature and conscience (i. 24, 26, 28). When man has wilfully quenched the light he has received and the first rebukes of Divine mercy, and when he persists in giving himself up to his evil instincts, there comes a time when God withdraws from him the beneficent actions of His grace. Then man becomes insensible even to the counsels of prudence. He is thenceforth like a horse with the bit in his teeth, running blindly to his destruction. He has rejected salvation for himself; he was free to do so; but he cannot prevent God from now making use of him and of his ruin to advance the salvation of others. From being an *end*, he is degraded to the rank of *means*. Such was the lot of

Pharaoh. Everybody in Egypt saw clearly whither his mad resistance tended. His magicians told him, "This is the finger of God" (Exod. viii. 19). His servants told him, "Let these people go" (Exod. x. 7). He himself, after every plague, felt his heart relent. He once went the length of crying out, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous" (ix. 27). Now was the decisive instant; for the last time, after his moment of softening, he hardened himself (ix. 33). Then the righteousness of God took hold of him. He had refused to glorify God actively, he must glorify Him passively. The Jews did not at all disapprove of this conduct on God's part as long as it concerned only Pharaoh or the Gentiles; but what they affirmed, in virtue of their Divine election, was, that never, and on no condition, could they themselves be the objects of such a judgment. They restricted the liberty of Divine judgment on themselves, as they restricted the liberty of grace toward the Gentiles. Paul in our verse re-establishes both liberties, vindicating God's sole right to judge whether this or that man possesses the conditions on which He will think fit to show him favour, or those which will make it suitable for Him to punish by hardening him. Thus understood—and we do not think that either the context of the apostle or that of Exodus allows it to be understood otherwise—it offers nothing to shock the conscience; it is entirely to the glory of the Divine character. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The case of Pharaoh*:—Note the present tense, "the Scripture *says*." It is not a thing of the past; there is an element of timelessness in the utterance. If the Scripture ever spoke at all, it continues to speak. It speaks to the autocrat of Egypt in no faltering tone. Greater than He was at work, who indeed had raised him up—not merely to the throne of Egypt, nor from the sickness of boils and blains; for no mention is made of illness but (see also Zech. xi. 16; Matt. xi. 11; John vii. 52) in the sense of among men, on the stage of the world. God said, "Let him be, and he was." He became a man and a monarch. He had a place in the Divine plan—to display the Divine power. In those idolatrous days the minds of thoughtful men were perplexed by the "gods many" whose reality was assumed by less considerate minds. Pharaoh scorned the authority of the God of the Hebrews (Exod. v. 2), who now appealed to various demonstrations of His peerless power—a kind of proof readiest for argument, and most adapted to the spirit of the age and that of the tyrant. It requires, in some measure, a wise mind or a benevolent heart to appreciate exhibitions of wisdom or benevolence; but it requires little more than a capacity for terror to appreciate exhibitions of power. Pharaoh was compelled time after time to pause and reflect, but continued unsubdued, and the voice of retribution is first heard in the words, "that I may display," &c., pointing ultimately to the catastrophe of the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 9–11). But the Hebrew says, "That I might *show thee*"—conveying the idea of mercifulness which goes before retribution which is to be reluctantly resorted to only in the sad event of mercy being spurned. The LXX., however, "show *in* thee," uses a liberty in harmony with the acknowledged principles of the Divine government, and so Paul held himself justified in adopting it. The display of peerless power was in the first place for the instruction of Pharaoh; and it was only when that was repelled that the Lord turned to the dread alternative which runs onward, "and that My name might be published in all the earth," *i.e.*, "failing thy repentance." The intervenience of latent conditional clauses is common in both promises and threatenings—*e.g.*, in "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," there is a latent condition, "and if thou persevere in thy faith." In the reverse threat, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," there is a corresponding intervenience, "and persisteth in his unbelief." Jonah's message to the Ninevites is a case in point; and on this principle we are to interpret this solemn warning to Pharaoh. "I raised thee up that I might *show thee* (Heb.) My power, and failing thine improvement of this instruction that by thy overthrow My name may be magnified, all the world over, above all the gods." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The character and history of Pharaoh*:—However clearly we may perceive the correctness and force of any abstract truth, it will usually make a more deep and definite impression when illustrated by some example. We are assured, for instance, of the omnipotence of God; but who does not find his own conceptions of it more definite and impressive when he turns to its illustrations in his own frame or in the wonders of creation? It is as adapted to this tendency that the Scriptures supply us with so many illustrative examples of their sentiments and requirements. This observation will be found applicable to the present subject—the sovereignty of God in dispensing the blessings of His saving grace. He tells us that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He illustrates this by the cases of Saul of

Tarsus and the dying thief. He tells us that "whom He will He hardeneth," and illustrates it in the case of the proud Egyptian monarch. Note—I. SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT AND INSTRUCTIVE POINTS CONNECTED WITH PHARAOH'S CHARACTER AND HISTORY. 1. His bold and impious defiance of Divine authority. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go?" This spirit is too often evinced still in those who meet the appeals of God with, "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?" "Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" 2. The severe and repeated discipline to which he was subjected in order to humble and subdue this feeling. It is needless to repeat the ten plagues. These were not only most afflictive in themselves, but marked in the mode of their occurrence, a line of separation being so strikingly drawn between the Israelites and the Egyptians. How frequent are the instances in which God, to humble the sinner's pride, subjects him to providential visitation! 3. The powerful but still defective impressions of which he was the subject. Of this the narrative supplies repeated evidence in the various compromises into which he seeks to enter, which were revoked as soon as the visitation was withdrawn. And so sinners, while Divine judgments press upon them, what sorrow will they express, and what salutary purposes they will form; and though, like Herod, they would do many things, yet, like him, they refuse compliance on some, and fail to give up the heart to God. 4. The persevering hostility he continued to discover. If his heart somewhat relented under suffering, it seemed in every quiet interval to become increasingly determined (Exod. x. 10–28). All this does but illustrate what is still going on in many a sinner, who having been for a time alarmed, discovers, as the sense of danger gradually subsides, a mind rendered only the more callous. 5. The striking but awful visitation by which Pharaoh was at last overthrown. None hath hardened himself against God and prospered. II. THE VINDICATION OF THE DIVINE CONDUCT TOWARD PHARAOH. 1. God placed him in a situation adapted to develop the peculiar tendency of his sinful disposition, which appears to have been proud superiority. God afforded scope for the special display of this feeling by placing him on a despotic throne. God may still act toward some on the same principle, but it should be remembered that the very circumstances which expose to greater danger will only render superiority to them the more striking and honourable: and that where, as in the case of Pharaoh, an individual fails, he does so by his own act. 2. God afforded to him the most ample evidence of the folly and danger of his continued resistance. (1) He had the plainest proof that Moses and Aaron were the accredited messengers of God. (2) The displays of the Divine power were such as must have forced on his mind the consciousness of his own impotence. (3) He was made to perceive how plainly all these exercises of Divine wrath were entirely and only in consequence of his own determined obduracy. 3. God designed in this case to exhibit an impressible example of the fearful danger of a proud and impious defiance of Divine authority. Conclusion: 1. How proper and important the prayer which Christ has taught us—"Lead us not into temptation." 2. How fatally defective and delusive those religious impressions and purposes which are founded on present alarming apprehensions of danger, while the heart remains unhumbled and in love with sin. 3. How vain and hopeless ultimate resistance to Divine authority. 4. How earnestly should we deprecate the thought of being abandoned to a hardened state of mind. 5. Let no humble and penitent sinner be discouraged by this illustration of God's righteous justice. (*H. Bromley.*) *Lessons from the case of Pharaoh*:—I. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IS A GREAT FACT. Deity is the one primal cause, of which all secondary causes are but effects. All things owe their existence to Him. What are called laws of nature, are but the modes by which God works. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground without His permission. God rules among men as certainly as among suns and stars. The destinies of nations as surely obey His will as the revolutions of planets. II. GOD'S DECREES ARE IRRESPECTIVE OF THE ACTIONS OF MEN (vers. 10–13). The strong Hebraistic expression means, Jacob have I chosen, and Esau have I rejected, which was contrary to the usual law of primogeniture. There is no injustice in this. Our Lord has told us that "Offences must needs come, but woe to the man by whom they come." The crucifixion of Christ was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," brought about: yet it was "by wicked hands" that Christ was "crucified and slain." Happy are we if we do God's will; but the work will be done whether we do it or not. God is independent of human agency, though He employs it to accomplish His purposes. III. GOD'S DOINGS MUST ALWAYS BE CHARACTERISED BY JUSTICE, TRUTH, MERCY, AND LOVE.

If Pharaoh was created only to be damned, and if God all along intended he should not let the people go, such conduct would be—1. Unjust and cruel on the part of God. To turn the heart of any one to hate is a dreadful act, even in a man, where the influence may be resisted. How much more so where an Omnipotent Being is operating! Upon this principle all the plagues of Egypt were shocking cruelties. The doctrine that some men are predestinated to eternal life and others to damnation, regardless of the actions of either, is monstrously unjust. 2. Not in harmony with His truth. For upon this principle God deliberately deceived the Egyptians. The message was, "Let My people go," &c. On the Calvinistic theory, Moses was either aware of God's purpose or he was not. If he knew that Pharaoh was secretly influenced by God, so that he could not let the Israelites go, then the whole thing is a solemn mockery, the leading characteristic of which is deception. But if he did not know, then he was himself deceived by God, an idea which is too shocking to be thought of. A God of truth could not thus act. 3. Opposed to God's mercy and love. "The Lord is good to all, and His mercy is over all His works." Here, however, we should have a terrible exception. IV. IN ELECTION AND THE HARDENING OF MEN'S HEARTS GOD DOES NOT DESTROY THEIR FREEDOM. This hardening is of different kinds, and has reference to various subjects. 1. Great national events. The whole of this chapter refers to the state of the Jews. Paul expresses great sorrow for his people, that they were in danger of being cut off from their long enjoyed blessings. He then goes on to show that their privileges no longer specially appertained to them. God had now determined to elect a Church for Himself out of all nations. The Jews prided themselves greatly on being the seed of Abraham. Paul shows them from their own history that only a portion of that seed had enjoyed the boasted privileges (vers. 6, 7, 10, &c.). And even in the case of these all had not equally shared the blessing. "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel." A great part of the ten tribes who had been carried into captivity had never returned. There are therefore three exclusions, and the argument is that there might be yet another. The whole affair is one of peoples, not individuals. The election of Isaac and Jacob and the rejection of Ishmael and Esau had nothing to do personally with any one of them. A reference, in the case of the elder serving the younger, is made to Gen. xxv. 23, but Esau never did serve Jacob personally. The other quotation is from Mal. i. 2, 3, and certainly refers to the Edomites. Was there then unrighteousness, *i.e.*, unfaithfulness, with God? By no means, because it was a general principle laid down in the Mosaic law, and one which consequently they were bound to acknowledge, "I will have mercy," &c. These words are from Exod. xxxiii. 19, a reference to which will show that they have no relation whatever to the pardon of sin, but applying to the granting of special privileges. And how true they are! In our time we see one nation or people favoured with blessings which are denied to another. "So then it is not of him that willeth," &c. 2. The position of individuals in society. God gives to us all different places and work. One man rolls in wealth, another has to struggle with poverty. This man is endowed with a genius which shall cause his name to ride down the ages; and that, just the necessary brain power to play his lowly part on life's stage. In this there is no injustice. God dispenses His favours as He will. Our business is to play the part allotted to us, consistently, conscientiously, and energetically. 3. Life and death. These also are in the hands of the Lord. The infant dies almost before it has begun to live. The youth full of promise passes away in "life's green spring." Men die in the prime of life, and in the decrepitude of age. Is this unjust? No. Death is no respecter of persons or of ages. And He who was dead and liveth for evermore, holds the keys of Hades and of death. We shall each live our appointed time, and then no power on earth can save us. 4. Salvation. In some places it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and in others that God hardened it. Both are strictly correct. The rejection of truth and the abuse of our privileges ever tend to harden the heart. This is a spiritual law as certain in its operation as the law of gravitation. As soon as Pharaoh saw a respite from his afflictions, his heart was hardened. And how often do men make all kinds of promises, but no sooner does relief come than we fall back again into a state worse than the first. "The sun," says Theodoret, "by the force of its heat, moistens the wax and dries the clay, softening the one and hardening the other; and as this produces opposite effects by the same power, so through the long-suffering of God, which reaches to all, some receive good and others evil; some are softened and others hardened." V. MAN IS THEREFORE RESPONSIBLE, AND IS LEFT WITHOUT

EXCUSE. The freedom of the will is a fact testified to by the consciousness of every man. When, in accordance with this freedom, we depart from God, the fact is a terrible one. And the difficulty of returning becomes greater day by day. The remorse that we experience testifies to the fact that we feel our responsibility. Necessitarians at every moment of their lives give the lie to their faith. As we are free, then, our business is to use our freedom aright. Our duty is to love God and keep His commandments. "Father Eternal! Thine is to decree; mine, both in heaven and earth, to do Thy will." (*G. Sexton, LL.D.*) *Pharaoh no unconditional reprobate:*—I. THE BENEFIT OR INDULGENCE OFFERED BY GOD UNTO PHARAOH time after time, UPON CONDITION OF HIS REPENTANCE and dismission of his people, as. viz., his immunity from further plagues or judgments from God, SHOW THAT THE MEANS VOUCHSAFED WERE EFFECTUAL, AND SUFFICIENT TO HAVE WROUGHT HIM TO REPENTANCE. The proffer or promise of a benefit upon the performance of such or such a condition supposeth a sufficiency of power to perform this condition. To promise anything upon other terms is rather an insultation over the weakness of him to whom the promise is made, than any matter of kindness which the nature of a promise still imports. The promise of a reward of a thousand pounds made unto a cripple upon condition he will run twenty miles within an hour's space, is merely to deride such a man in his misery. Therefore certainly Pharaoh, God by many promissory intimations signifying that upon his repentance the judgments threatened should not come upon him, is hereby shown to have had power to fulfil the condition. II. PHARAOH, BY THE MEANS VOUCHSAFED, DID SEVERAL TIMES TRULY REPENT of his obstinancy, and gave order for the dismission of the people (Exod. x. 16, 17; xii. 31, 32, &c.). Therefore he was—questionless—in a sufficient capacity to have repented and dismissed the people. That afterwards he repented of this repentance, and returned to his former obdurateness, is no argument that his former repentance was not true. Yea, if this repentance had been hollow or counterfeit, his repenting of it had been no sin. And besides, if the tree—as our Saviour saith—be known by the fruit, that repentance of Pharaoh, which produced—1. Confession of sin committed both against God and men (Exod. x. 16). 2. Application by way of entreaty unto the saints to pray unto God for him (Exod. x. 16). 3. An express order with encouragement unto Moses and Aaron, to expedite the departure of their people according to the commandment of God, and this in as ample manner as themselves desired it (Exod. xii. 31, 32); that repentance must needs be conceived to have been a true repentance. And, doubtless, had Pharaoh persisted in that repentance, and not relapsed into his former provocation—which he was no ways necessitated unto—he had escaped that dreadful stroke from Heaven, which he met with in the Red Sea. (*John Goodwin.*) *An impenitent sinner in relation to God's mercy:*—Powerfully does Paul, in this chapter, argue down the narrow predestinarianism of the Jews. They concluded that, being the lineal descendants of Abraham, they were predestinated to the mercy of God. The apostle's method of combating this dogma may be briefly stated:—1. He assures them of the deep interest he felt in them, and of the high estimation which he had formed of their privileges. 2. He affirms that God did not dispense His mercy on the principle of patriarchal descent. 3. That God's mercy is ever bestowed on the principle of sovereignty alone. This he illustrates—(1) By God's declaration to Moses (ver. 15). This language does not mean—(*a*) That He does not show mercy to all men; this would be contrary to fact. (*b*) Nor that He gives to some favours which He does not bestow on others. This is true, but this is not the truth here. (*c*) Nor that He bestows all His mercies irrespective of conduct. This is always true of existence, with all its native attributes and talents, sometimes true of temporal circumstances, but never true of mental and spiritual excellence. (*d*) Nor that He is not disposed to save all. This would be contrary both to His positive assurances and remedial measures. (*e*) But it means simply that the reason of mercy is ever in Himself, and not in the creature (ver. 16). (2) By God's declaration to Pharaoh. The passage leads us to consider an impenitent sinner:—I. AS RAISED UP FROM AFFLICTION BY THE MERCY OF GOD. Pharaoh and his people had just been visited with the distressing plague of "the boils." Jehovah condescends to restore the monarch to health. It is in relation to this recovery that these words were spoken. It was mercy that was dealing with this man. Why else was his probationary day lengthened out after the first warning had been delivered? Why else were there so many and varied influences employed to subdue his rebellious will? With one volition of the Almighty mind he would have ceased to be. What hindered that volition? Nothing but mercy. This is

but a striking example of God's ordinary dealing with all sinners here. Mercy afflicts and restores. This fact is testified—(1) By the Scriptures. (2) By every sinner's consciousness. II. As morally impressed by the mercy of God. There are two kinds of power—physical and moral. These differ not in source; each has its source in mind. But their objects differ: the one acts on matter, and the other on intelligent natures. Which did Jehovah purpose showing forth in Pharaoh? Undoubtedly the moral. His physical power could be seen far more gloriously in earthquakes and storms, &c., than in alternately afflicting and restoring the body of Pharaoh, or in any of the plagues. Besides, a man does not require a higher manifestation of physical power than he has everywhere around him. It was moral power—power over the monarch's mind and heart—that the Almighty sought now to exercise. "In thee." It was everywhere out of him. But why show this power in him? It must have been either to promote holiness in him, or sin, and who will dare say it was the latter? It was to turn Pharaoh from the error of his ways that this power was employed; and this is ever God's aim with the impenitent sinner. There were two things connected with this power in Pharaoh which always characterise its operations—(1) It was sin-convicting. Several times, when this power was working in him, did he exclaim, "I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." Cain, Belshazzar, Felix, Judas, and others, have felt the same. The great aim of God in thus making His power bear on the sinful world is to "convince it of sin, of righteousness," &c. (2) It was resistible. Pharaoh resisted it: it would not be moral, and man would not be responsible were it otherwise. We cannot resist the physical power of God, but we can His moral. The Jews did always resist the Holy Ghost. III. As strikingly manifesting the mercy of God. "That My name might be declared," &c. The name of God is frequently employed as expressive of His goodness. God's dealing with Pharaoh declares throughout all times that it is—1. Longsuffering. How long the Almighty condescended to strive with this man! 2. Earnest. See how numerous and varied the means employed. 3. Terminable. Mercy at last took her wing, delivered him up to justice, and you know his fate. I know no more impressive commentary than God's dealing with Pharaoh on "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner," &c. IV. As incidentally hardened by the mercy of God. Ver. 18 is Paul's conclusion from God's declaration. It is nothing more than a strong method of reasserting the principle that the reason of mercy is not in the creature, but in the Creator. How did God harden Pharaoh's heart? 1. Not by intention. This is contrary to the purpose stated, which was to "show" His sin-convicting and soul-saving power in him; and this, too, is repugnant to all our highest and most truthful notions of God's purity and benevolence. 2. Not by fitness of instrumentality. Examine the means employed, and you will discover a wonderful adaptation to an opposite end. 3. Not by any positive agency for the purpose. This is unnecessary. The sinner is hardened, and harder he will become, if he be left alone. Divine agency is required not to harden, but refine—not to destroy, but to save. 4. How, then? In the same way as He hardens the heart of that man who year after year listens to the most powerful sermons, and still remains in his sin. Pharaoh's hardening is a typal fact. The ministry of the prophets had its Pharaohs; so had that of Christ, and of the apostles. The gospel proves the savour of death unto death, as well as of life unto life. Conclusion: This solemn fact is suggestive of two things: 1. The native energy of soul. It can get good out of evil, and evil out of good; transmute food into poison, and poison into food. It is made to be not the servant, but the sovereign of circumstances. 2. The moral perverseness of soul. Instead of using this power to subordinate evil to good, it does so to subordinate good to evil—makes mercy a destroyer. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Divine sovereignty and human responsibility*:—First to the right, then to the left, the road was ever ascending but always twisting, and thus, by easy marches, we were able to reach the summit of the pass; a straight line would have been shorter for the eagle's wing, but no human foot could have followed it. Nobody called us inconsistent for thus facing about; we kept the road, and no one could complain. If we honestly desire to gain the heights of Divine truth, we shall find many zigzags in the road: here our face will front Divine sovereignty with all its lofty grandeur, and anon we shall turn in the opposite direction, towards the frowning peaks of human responsibility. What matters it if we appear to be inconsistent, so long as we keep the highway of Scripture, which is our only safe road to knowledge! Angels may, perhaps, be systematic divines; for men it should be enough

to follow the Word of God, let its teachings wind as they may. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.**—*God's sovereignty*:—I. ITS DISPLAY in the exercise of—1. Mercy. 2. Justice. II. ITS HARMONY WITH THE DOCTRINE OF FREE GRACE. III. ITS USE. 1. For conviction and conversion. 2. He might have hardened you—may yet do it if you repent not. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Pardon or harden*:—Since God is not baffled by men's infatuation, but can turn to account even obdurate Pharaohs, we may rest assured that He will either pardon or harden. The English "on whom He will" is fitted to bring out a volitional idea, but this is not quite so prominent in the Greek. It is "wish" rather than "will" that is expressed (see 2 Cor. xi. 12, 32, xii. 6; Gal. iv. 9, vi. 12, iv. 20). God has mercy on whom He "desires" to have (vers. 15, 16) pardoning mercy. The great alternative is "and whom He desires He hardens." There is a sphere of things in which God does not desire to have any recourse to this dread alternative (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9). In that sphere judgment is "His strange act," but there are assuredly circumstances which make it right for God to desire to brand with His hardest stigma persisted-in iniquity. Paul speaks of "hardness" manifestly because his mind had been brooding over the career of Pharaoh. Hardness when predicated of the neck denotes unyieldingness, but when predicated of the heart, as here, insensibility. This insensibility might be predicated either in respect of the duty of permitting Israel to depart; or in respect of the danger that was impending over him in case of his refusal; or of an interblending of both. Which is the insensibility affirmed of Pharaoh? Before determining the answer it may be noted that whichever it was there can be no real difficulty as to God's action on the monarch's heart. It is psychologically impossible that such determined impenitence as his can be cherished, and yet produce no effect on the sensibilities of the heart. Faith and penitence always work; so do unbelief and disbelief. In such necessary working God's hand must needs be imminent, but all the blame must be attached to the man himself. He alone furnished the reason why God hardened him, and hence he is sometimes said to have hardened his own heart, just as believers are said to purify theirs. Whether the induration, then, was such a penal condition as consisted of insensibility to duty, or to danger, or to the two intertwined there is no difficulty in supposing it to be by the hand of God. 1. But there is a critical reason why we give the preference to insensibility to danger. There are three words in Hebrew employed in this case. One is employed twice (Exod. vii. 3; xiii. 15), another seven times (Exod. viii. 15, 32[28], ix. 7, 34, x. 1; 1 Sam. xi. 6; see also Exod. vii. 14). The third occurs twelve times (Exod. iv. 21; vii. 13, 22; viii. 19; ix. 12, 35; x. 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 4, 8, 17). Now the latter is a term that naturally suggests insensibility to danger, for in its intransitive form it properly means to be strong, and is translated (Josh. xxiii. 6; 2 Sam. x. 12, xiii. 28; 1 Chron. xix. 13; Ezra x. 4; Psa. xxvii. 14, xxxi. 24 [25]; Isa. xli. 6) to be of good courage, to be courageous; while in its transitive form, it properly means to make strong, and is actually translated (Deut. i. 38, iii. 28; 2 Sam. xi. 25; 2 Chron. xxxv. 2; Psa. lxiv. 5 [6]; Isa. xli. 7) to encourage. When such a term is used to denote penal induration, it is natural to suppose that the hardness will be somewhat allied to a spirit of courage, and consequently that it will consist of a kind of dreadnaught spirit. There will be something of hardiness in it; indeed some strong accentuation of foolhardiness. 2. Exegesis warrants the same conclusion. The passages which deal with the monarch's obduracy are more easily explicable on the hypothesis that his hardness was infatuated hardness and insensibility to danger. Look, *e.g.*, at Exod. xiv. 2–9, 16, 17. Pharaoh was intoxicated with his own high sufficiency. A penal blight had fallen on his reason. Rushing onward in daring recklessness, he and his chivalry were penally swept into destruction. And thus the Lord, by inflicting on them, first the most insensitive obduracy, and secondly the most tragical termination of their career, got Him honour upon Pharaoh and upon all his host. "Pharaoh," says Fry, "had not, in immediate consequence of his hardiness, any more sinfulness in his heart than he had previously; but he dared to do more." In selecting the word "hardens" the apostle suggests a parallel between Pharaoh and the Israelites. There was something ominously Pharaonic in the spirit of the unbelieving Jews. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *St. Paul's theology* (text, vers. 19–21, and chap. v. 5–8):—1. The former of these two passages read by itself, without anything to qualify it, sounds like a naked assertion of the sovereignty of God; and as based on mere power. It seems as if St. Paul were saying that the might of God is the measure of His right; that, having made us, He is perfectly at liberty to do what He pleases with us. I say,

"It seems so"; because we know that St. Paul cannot mean to assert this, for otherwise he must have forgotten what he had written in our second text. 2. In a passage like this a great deal depends upon the tone which one reads into it, and the feeling with which one reads it. Now this ninth chapter must not be separated from the tenth and the eleventh, which together form one indivisible section, and ought to be, and must be read together, if we are to understand them at all. The tone of the whole is then easily discoverable from its commencement in chap. ix. 1–5, and from its conclusion in chap. xi. 30–33. 3. The commentators seem generally to take it for granted that, in my first text, St. Paul is arguing with captious objectors and presumptuous cavillers, whom he is putting down with a high hand. But it is, to say the least, worth our while to consider whether St. Paul is not stating frankly his own difficulties and solving them as best he can, and really working his own way, painfully and laboriously, through the darkness into the light. Viewed in this aspect the passage becomes infinitely more interesting, instructive, and pathetic. We should be sorry to think that St. Paul had set an example of that high-handed dealing with doubts and difficulties which has always proved so disastrous. But if he knew, as he seems to have known, what it was not to stifle, but to face and fight, his doubts; then his example may be of the greatest possible service to us, even though his difficulties were not ours. 4. Yet are they not ours? If God's will acts in this sovereign, arbitrary way—hardening this heart, softening that, as chance or caprice may direct—what then? Is not the ground of human responsibility cut from beneath us? What room is there, then, for moral disapproval, and for retributive justice? Nor do we evade the difficulty by throwing the difficulty back one step, and saying, "It is by the operation of a law of man's nature as God created it, that he who will not turn at last cannot. And God, who established that law of man's nature, is said in Scripture to do that which occurs under it, or results from it. He has framed at His pleasure the moral constitution of man, according to which the rebellious sinner is at last obdurate." This is the old, old puzzle, which has haunted men's minds from the very first—now by one name, now by another: liberty and necessity. The moment we begin to reason upon this problem, we are lost in perplexity. The interplay of the Divine will and the human can never have its path determined by any calculus yet discovered. As soon as it is attempted, one or other of the two forces is sure to be omitted from the calculation, and to disappear altogether. We are left either with a naked sovereignty on the Divine side, accompanied by an absolute bondage on the human side; or else we are left with a Divine will which is no will at all. 5. At this point we feel what a difference it makes in our text, whether we regard it as an endeavour to put down objectors, or whether we regard it as a debate in Paul's mind with doubts and difficulties. In the first case we can all see that it only removes the difficulty to a point at which it ceases to press against the reason only to press more vehemently against the conscience and the moral sense. For it may well be asked, "Is, then, man, with all his capacity of suffering, and his sense of right and wrong, merely as the passionless clay in the potter's hand. If so, what are we to think of the Creator? Does the fact of creation invest the Creator with unlimited rights, unaccompanied by any corresponding responsibilities? Or does it answer most nearly to that earthly relation of parent and child which, whilst establishing the parents' claim to the obedience of the child, establishes also the child's claim to the love and care of the parents?" St. Paul's reply is very different, if we regard it as a caution, addressed to himself, as he goes sounding on his dim and perilous way, through problems which human reason is all incompetent to solve. It is, then, tantamount to saying, "What am I, that I should dare to exercise my speculation upon such a theme as this—I, who am but a finite being in the hands of Infinite power?" 6. Now, this attitude of mind is the true philosophic attitude, for "The foundation of all true philosophy is humility." And this is the attitude which St. Paul is most careful to inculcate elsewhere, *e.g.*, "Now we see through a mirror"; the reflection only, not the object itself—"darkly"; more exactly, "in a riddle"—"but then, face to face." And this is the attitude which our Lord inculcates, bidding us "humble ourselves, and become as little children." And this, indeed, is the attitude which, the more earnestly and seriously we inquire into questions of all kinds, the more do we find ourselves compelled to adopt. The more the circle of our knowledge enlarges, the larger becomes the circumference, at every point of which we feel our ignorance, and have the sense of vastness and mystery forced upon us. 7. St. Paul, however, does not leave the matter so. We can leave many problems unsolved—this of the relation of the human will to the Divine amongst others—when we have settled

it clearly in our own minds, how we shall think of God—of His character, of His purpose and feeling towards his human creation: not till then. As we read chaps. ix.–xi., carefully and as a whole, we feel that St. Paul makes little or no progress towards a solution of his doubts, until we reach xi. 32, 33. He rises above his own efforts to reason the thing out, in the strength of a fresh perception of that unsearchable glory of God, which may be safely trusted to do nothing but what is wise, just, and loving. This perception does not come through any process of reasoning, but breaks upon his soul like light. He escapes at one bound from the trammels of his own logic, in the sense of that grace and love of God in Christ, of which he writes in our second text. 8. Very few of us will be able to follow the course of St. Paul's argument in these three chapters. But all of us can seize that point of view of his, which enables him to trust the future of his beloved Israel—to the unsearchable grace and wisdom of God. Where had he learned that trust? Not at the feet of Gamaliel; not through all his vast stores of Greek and Rabbinical learning; not through any exercise of his own quick intelligence and acute reasoning powers; but at the foot of the Cross. It was there and thence that he had learned the boundless charity of God; had learned to trust himself to that charity; had learned (harder lesson!) to trust his loved ones to that charity. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Vers. 19, 20. **Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth He yet find fault?**—*The proper attitude of man towards Divine mysteries*:—The full spirit of this part of Paul's reply may be brought out by considering it as addressed to the objector—I. As a man. Considering the appeal in this light, it impresses a lesson of great practical importance, namely, to beware of arraigning, with irreverent rashness and self-sufficiency, the procedure of the Divine Being, as represented to us by Himself. Nothing, surely, can be more unbecoming in any creature. Nothing can more strikingly display the sad predominance in the human heart of that aspiring pride which was originally infused by the tempting assurance, "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." The folly, indeed, of refusing to admit whatever does not come within the limit of our comprehension, can be equalled only by its impiety. There must be parts of the Divine procedure whose principles and reasons are beyond the depth of even archangelic intellects. It is a maxim of essential importance, on all such subjects, that we should not allow that which we do know to be displaced from our confidence by that which we do not know. We have the fullest assurance of the righteousness of the Supreme Ruler. Surely, then, we ought not to allow ourselves to be startled into scepticism because, in His revealed procedure, we may find particulars, the secret of which we are unable fully to penetrate. Shall we, then, on the one hand, question the prescience of God, because we may be at a loss fully to discern its consistency with the freedom and accountableness of man?—or, on the other hand, shall we loose men from their moral responsibility, and convert them into mere irresponsible pieces of machinery, because we may not perfectly discern the link of harmony between man's accountableness and God's foreknowledge? And especially when we recollect that the mystery of mysteries is not a doctrine, but a fact—not a discovery of revelation, but an event independent of revelation altogether—which revelation does not originate, but which it finds, and on which it proceeds—the existence of moral evil itself under the government of the infinitely Holy and Good! There is no denying the fact; but the mystery of the fact has baffled the wits of the wisest from the beginning till now. Shall we, then, refuse the remedy, because we cannot fully explain why the evil itself was permitted to exist? II. As a sinner. "Who art thou?"—not only a creature, short-sighted, and ignorant, but a guilty, condemned creature. How unspeakably unreasonable and presumptuous is the language of the objector when regarded in this light? And here we might introduce anew, with augmented force, the proper terms for such a creature in presenting himself before "the God with whom he has to do." Of whom ought he, then, to think? Should it not be of himself? Of what ought he to think? Should it not be of his own transgressions and his own deserts? He has an account of his own—what to him are the accounts of others? Is he to stand out against the justice of God in his own sentence, till he sees whether God deals with others exactly as He does with him? What has he to do with others? As a sinner, he stands at the bar of heaven, charged with his own guilt, and has to answer for himself. If there be any ground on which he can impeach the righteousness of the Judge in his own sentence, let him advance his plea. But if he himself, as a sinner, is justly condemned, is not the posture that becomes him that of a suppliant for mercy? Oh, if instead of "replying against

God," by presuming to pick faults in His general administration, each sinner would but "look to himself"—ponder his own guilt—and in the name of the one Divine Mediator, cast himself at the feet of his Judge with the brief petition of the publican, all then would be well. He should find mercy, as sure as God "delighteth in it"; and, because He delighteth in it, has provided for its honourable exercise. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Truth not to be tampered with*:—No man has any right to make that which he believes to be the truth of God any less exacting, less sharp or clear, because he thinks his fellow-men will not accept it if he states it in its blankest and baldest form. I read an incident in a newspaper the other day that seems to illustrate this point. A tired and dusty traveller was leaning against a lamp-post in the city of Rochester, and he turned and looked around him and said, "How far is it to Farmington?" and a boy in the crowd said, "Eight miles." "Do you think it is so far as that?" said the poor tired traveller. "Well, seeing that you are so tired, I will call it seven miles." The boy, with his heart overflowing with the milk of human kindness, pitied the exhausted traveller, and chose to call it seven miles. I know that I have seen statements of the truth that have dictated the same answer. Never make the road from Rochester to Farmington seven miles when you know it is eight. Do not do a wrong to truth out of regard for men. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?**—*Presumption rebuked*:—Observe—I. THE TEMERITY OF MAN. He arraigns—1. God's perfections. 2. Procedure. 3. Government. II. ITS MERITED REPROOF. Such conduct is—1. Impertinent. 2. Wicked. 3. Foolish. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Pride—in dictating to God*:—The petty sovereign of an insignificant tribe in North America every morning stalks out of his hovel, bids the sun good-morrow, and points out to him with his finger the course he is to take for the day. Is this arrogance more contemptible than ours when we would dictate to God the course of His providence, and summon Him to our bar for His dealings with us? How ridiculous does man appear when he attempts to argue with his God! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God does not reason*:—A gentleman examining some deaf and dumb children wrote up the question, "Does God reason?" One of the children immediately wrote underneath. "God knows and sees everything. Reasoning implies doubt and uncertainty; therefore God does not reason."

Vers. 21–23. **Hath not the potter power over the clay?**—*The potter and the clay*:—I. THE MATERIAL OF WHICH HUMANITY IS COMPOSED. Represented by clay. 1. Mean. 2. Powerless. 3. Plastic. II. THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF GOD TO MOULD IT TO HIS WILL. A vessel to—1. Honour. 2. Dishonour. III. THE CONSISTENCY OF THIS DOCTRINE WITH HUMAN FREE AGENCY. 1. God determines our physical and temporal conditions. 2. Not our eternal doom. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The potter and his clay*:—"Hath he not power?" Yes, he has, is the answer the apostle expects, and he is right, and God the Almighty Potter has unchallengeable power over His clay. Let it be noticed—I. THAT PAUL DOES NOT REFER TO PHYSICAL FORCE, *i.e.*, that God, in virtue of His almightiness, is able out of the same lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. The word is not, δύναμις—ability to do, but ἐξουσία—authority, prerogative right. God is not under any obligation to confer equal honour or dishonour upon all. He will be doing no wrong, although He make a difference. II. WE ARE NOT TO LOOK UPON GOD'S PREROGATIVE AS UNCONDITIONAL. 1. True, the prerogative of the literal potter is absolute. He may do with his clay what he pleases, although it may be ridiculous, and ultimately ruinous to him. He may add inappropriate ingredients and spoil his clay: stupidly attempt to make fine vessels out of coarse clay; he may misshape his vessels, mar them, or when the whole batch is fashioned take an iron rod and dash them into shivers. If the clay, wheel, time, rod, be his own, he may act as absurdly as he pleases. 2. But then this absolute right will not shield him from the criticism of his fellows. They may not say "No, this won't be permitted; you are ill-using your clay." But they will be at perfect liberty to say what Jonathan Edwards said of the devil, "that he is one of the greatest fools and blockheads in the world." 3. Again, men are not like clay in *all* respects, *e.g.*, they are possessed of rights. Man has a right to be treated with justice; to be furnished with ability to do his duty, if he is to be held responsible for not doing it; to have the gate of heaven opened to him if he is to be blamed for not entering in. Man must have some power of formative self-control "unto honour," if he is to be blamed for being fashioned into a vessel "unto dishonour." 4. All this being the case, God's power over the human clay is not utterly unconditional. His right to do

with it as He pleases is, by His own benevolent arrangement, modified by rights which He has conferred on His creatures. He has not reserved the right to do wrong. It cannot be the case, then, that God has reserved the right to deal tyrannically with His poor human creatures. If they are held responsible to Him for the shape their character assumes, then something is due to them as the basis of their accountability. III. THE STATEMENT CANNOT BE QUOTED IN FAVOUR OF UNCONDITIONAL REPROBATION. There are, indeed, beings who deserve universal reprobation, and, therefore, Divine; and there is future reprobation; but is it right to so magnify the Divine sovereignty as to exclude from the circle of Divinity, justice, righteousness, goodness, wisdom, mercy, and love? Such inversion of theology would be akin in monstrosity to the wild political aphorism that monarchs reign by Divine right and can do no wrong. IV. WHAT, THEN, WAS THE APOSTLE'S AIM IN PROPOUNDING HIS QUERY? Why should he be solicitous to show that God has a right to turn some of the race into a condition of dishonour, and others into a state of glory? The reason is that in chaps. ix.–xi. he is discussing the relation of his countrymen to the gospel. Alas! the great mass were unbelieving. What then? Would they, notwithstanding, be all turned on the Divine wheel into vessels of honour? The Jews contended that they would. It was the Gentiles only who were to be fashioned into vessels unto dishonour. "No," says the apostle, "you are wrong, my countrymen. It is with intensest sorrow that I say it. It is the penitent and believing only who shall be saved. And the Almighty Potter, who has us all on His wheel, has right, out of the same lump of Jews and Gentiles, to turn one man, even though he be a Gentile, provided he be penitent and believing, into a vessel of glory, and *vice versâ*." The apostle had evidently the representation of Jer. xviii. in his eye. If a vessel becomes marred in the hands of the potter, then, instead of proceeding with it, he crushes the clay together and fashions it into another kind of vessel. God desired to fashion the Jews into a glorious vessel, when, lo! it became marred in His hand, and He had to make it into another—unto dishonour. The vessel was marred, not because of any imperfection in the Potter's manipulation, for He is not liable to mistakes. Some bad and coarse ingredient had been by some enemy flung in, so that only a coarser vessel than what was desired could be made of it. Application: God is not willing that any should perish, *i.e.*, He does not wish to have any vessels fashioned unto dishonour. He would have all to be beautiful and honourably serviceable, *i.e.*, all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Jesus, speaking to the impenitent, says, "I would, but ye would not," and just because men will not they spoil the clay that is in the Almighty Potter's hand. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The potter and the clay*:—I. THE QUESTION PROPOSED. 1. A seemingly needless one. 2. Proposed as an argument for conviction. II. THE ANSWER IMPLIED. That God is—1. The Creator of all things. 2. The arbitrator of the destiny of everything. 3. That He has, as such, a right to create and plan out as He thinks fit. Application: 1. Do not question God's authority. 2. Submit to all His decrees with humility. (*J. H. Tasson.*) *The potter and the clay*:—Against the hard absolutism of the parable of the potter and the clay the righteous instincts of the heart have often protested. Responsibility without freedom strikes us as despotic and unjust. If we are whirled about on the potter's wheel of an inflexible fate, it seems intolerable that we should be denounced for taking the shape it has given us. And what maddens us the more is that not being free, we should yet be called into account and held responsible. No effort of ours, it seems, can alter our destiny; yet the stain of demerit clings to us if we fail to shape it. It is like charging the rivers with guilt for their inability to run up a hill when God's decree of gravitation forbids it. All this we find, or think we find, in the image of the potter and the clay. And no doubt, read in its connection with the rest of the passage, it seems a vindication of the right of God to do what He likes—of His right to be arbitrary, to make selections on principles of favouritism. An image or argument, however, that lands us in such a conclusion—that issues in a disproof of the righteousness of God, carries in it its own condemnation. As the impersonation of eternal justice, He must choose and do what is fair—what commends itself to our pure moral instincts. He must reverence the laws He has stamped on our nature. He must live out from the perceptions of the right He has given us to live by. The image of the potter and the clay, of the vessels made to honour and the vessels made to dishonour, are emblematic of certain inequalities that prevail among men. You have these two inequalities: first, as to our sphere in life; secondly, as to our moral constitution.

Now, let us look at this question a little more closely. First, one man's lot is favourable to the cultivation of the Christian temper, while another's is not. That, I suppose, is inevitable. As there are some races who seem to exist only to be the serfs of the world, delvers in the field, toilers in the mine, so there are individuals elected by Divine decree, fashioned of dull and lethargic temper, to whom all life in the higher human interests has been denied. They cannot rise to the far empyrean, fanned by the wing of the albatross and the eagle; but must be content to skim with heavy flight near the earth's surface. Well, if the Potter has made them so, let them so accept the destiny and the doom assigned. Let them do that in the strong conviction that the great Judge will take into account the conditions of life in which He placed them, and ask only if their achievements were equal to their opportunities. To them, little having been committed, from them little shall be required. Your sphere, your work in life, then, is the element given you in which to work out whatever greatness of character is possible within it. It defines your opportunities. These may be few, narrow, unpoetic. But there they are: and faithfulness within them will secure for you the same cordial greeting given by God to him who, having ten times your chances, gives back to the great Householder no more in proportion than you. Secondly, there are diversities of nature among men. You have one man with a sweet nature in him, perfectly and rightly disposed towards goodness and God. You have another, with whom life is a ceaseless struggle, who cannot put the victor's foot on his frailties, and who at the end will die, having redeemed little of the wilderness within from its waste and wildness to the peaceful fruitfulness of the garden of God. It strikes you as unfair to ask these men to live in equal nearness to God. It is like asking the vessel made of common earth to have the glitter and beauty of Etruscan ware. Now, what are we to say to those hapless souls to whom fate has denied the moral materials of which the saintly character is formed—whom the Potter has made of common clay? That they will be condemned for not being the richest porcelain? for not attaining the moral beauty which the rigorous necessity of destiny and providence forbid? Surely not? A fine nature is a communicated blessing. It is not the acquisition of one's own will—not the fruit of one's own endeavour. No merit is ascribed to a man who is what he is because of something given him, not acquired by him. If much has been given in a man's moral endowments, much will be required of him; but to whom little has been given, of him little shall be asked. The ideal man of angel temper is different from the ideal man of a dull and sluggish soul. Both may be perfect after their kind. The injustice will not come in till God expects from both vessels the same finish and beauty. The clay vessel may be perfect as a bit of delf; it has its own perfection: the vessel made to be a bit of alabaster or Etruscan ware cannot have more. In conclusion, then, our lot and our nature—whatever these are, tractable or intractable—are given us as the element and the materials out of which we are to evolve a certain ideal character. The lot and the nature are our fate—for them we are not responsible. The character is the product of our own freewill—for it we shall answer. (*Jas. Forfar.*) **To make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour.**—*Honour and dishonour; or, the work of the sinner and the work of God:*—Note—I. THAT ALL MEN ARE MADE OF ONE COMMON NATURE. "We," as the old prophet has it, "are the clay, and Thou our Potter, and we are all the work of Thy hand." Notwithstanding the vast variety in colour, conformation, habit, &c., there is such a correspondence, both in the physical and spiritual structure of all the races as to corroborate the declaration that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men." Let us not be satisfied in admitting the truth of this doctrine, but—1. Reverence the rights of all. Nothing can justify us in offering the slightest indignity to that right which belongs to man as man. 2. Sympathise with the woes of all. If we love not our brother "whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?" 3. Diffuse that gospel which is the great want of all. Man, the world over, is a brother; out from the deeps of his heart there rises a cry for the help the gospel offers. II. THAT OF MEN MADE OF THE SAME NATURE, PART IS BEING "FITTED FOR DESTRUCTION," AND PART FOR GLORY. The word destruction does not refer to existence, but to happiness. It is here put it antithesis to glory, *i.e.*, all that is blissful in being. Now, it is here implied that there are certain men being framed for the destruction of all happiness, and others for all that is glorious. There are three things which show the truth of this. 1. The inevitable tendency of the two great principles that rule mankind—selfishness and love, or sin and holiness. The one tends to the

decrease of happiness, and the other to its increase; the one fits for destruction, and the other prepares for glory. A man under the influence of selfishness is one whose nature is undergoing a rapid process of deterioration. There is a blight in his atmosphere that shall leave his spiritual territory barren. There is a disease in his system that shall bring on death. 2. The actual experience of mankind. Take two men as types. (1) One shall be Saul. He had, undoubtedly, a good mental, as well as a "goodly" corporeal constitution, and on him the "Spirit of the Lord" once moved. But the man was selfish; and this selfishness continued to fit him for "destruction," until, in the cave of Endor, he exclaims, "God is departed from me." (2) The other shall be David. He was but a shepherd boy, having nothing peculiarly great either in bodily or mental make, but his soul developed itself under the reign of Divine love, which led him to "serve his generation." And you see this youth, in almost every step of his life, getting into new power and rising into new glory. Now, all this is abundantly confirmed by Scripture, which represents all men as pursuing two paths, the one to destruction, and the other to glory—some sowing to the flesh, and reaping corruption, and some to the Spirit, and reaping everlasting life. III. THAT WHILST GOD COULD HAVE "FITTED" MEN FOR DESTRUCTION, HIS WORK IS TO "PREPARE" THEM FOR GLORY. We are not ignorant of the objection that God is represented as blinding men's eyes, making their hearts fat, and their ears heavy, and as hardening the heart of Pharaoh. True. But when such works are referred to God they must be referred to Him in an occasional, not in a causal—an incidental, not an intentional—a permissive, not a predestinating sense. Otherwise, indeed, moral evil is a Divine institution. Observe—1. That the apostle does not affirm that God has ever fitted any being for destruction; and there are reasons to believe that He has never done so. (1) There is analogy. Ask the astronomer or the microscopist if they have found one living thing formed for dishonour, or made for torture? (2) There is the human constitution. Whether you look at it—(*a*) Physically, with its varied members and organs, so exquisitely formed and put together, walking erectly, fronting the world with eyes on heaven, and lord of all that lives beneath the stars, or—(*b*) Psychologically, with an intellect to reduce the universe to truth, and bear it along triumphantly in its path of thought, and a soul to mingle in the worship of seraphs, and delight in God,"—can you affirm that man was made for dishonour? (3) There is the conscience. Does the conscience ever testify to the ruined sinner that he was made for destruction? No. Were this the case there could be no remorse—no moral hell. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." 2. The apostle does affirm that God prepares men for glory; and there are abundant reasons to believe the fact. (1) There is the spiritual influence of nature. This influence you may call beauty in the flowery fields, sublimity in the surging main, glory in the "terrible crystal," or divinity in all; but whatever you call it, there is nothing in it to fit "for destruction," but everything to prepare for glory. I often wonder how men can sin abroad, in the bright fields of holy nature. (2) There is the special system of mediation, including the communications of God to humanity during the first four thousand years, the mission of Christ, the ministry of the gospel, and the agency of the Spirit. In view of all this, who can maintain, for a moment, the notion that God fits men for destruction? IV. THAT THE HISTORY OF ALL MEN, WHATEVER THEIR DESTINY, ILLUSTRATES THE CHARACTER OF GOD. In relation to the destroyed, there is the manifestation of "long-suffering," "power," "wrath"; and in relation to the saved, there is the manifestation of the "riches of His glory." Conclusion: Learn—1. That the most solemn attribute of thy nature is the power to misappropriate the blessings of God. Yonder are two plants side by side, rooted in the same soil, visited by the same showers, and shone on by the same sun; the one transmutes all into what will poison life, and the other into that which will sustain it. So the very elements that are preparing the men by thy side for glory—by the perverse use of thy moral freedom—may be fitting thee for destruction. 2. That the most momentous work in the world is the formation of character. It is either a soul-saving or a soul-destroying process. What wouldst thou think of a man who stood casting portions of his property into the bosom of the rolling river? But if thou art forming an ungodly character, thou art doing worse folly than this, thou art wasting thy spiritual self. That vessel which the architect, either from recklessness or ignorance, is constructing on a principle which necessarily unfits her to stand the swelling surges and the hostile gale, you would say, is "fitted for destruction," so, in very truth, is thy character if built on the principle of selfish-

ness. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Vessels of honour and dishonour*:—Who can say of himself, or of his fellow, whether his is a life of honour or of dishonour? I have seen side by side, amid the heirlooms of a great historic English house, a goblet of massive gold, rich with costly gems, and beside it a common earthern vessel, with broken handle and with battered edge. Which of these is a vessel made unto honour, and which to dishonour? The one has stood amid the blaze of light and the flash of jewels, filled with rare wine, at the banquet table of a king, where mistresses laughed, and where libertines blasphemed; and the other has borne water to the parched lips of dying soldiers, amid the smoke and dust of battle. Which, now, is the vessel made to honour, and which to dishonour? (*T. T. Shore, M.A.*) **What if God, willing to show His wrath . . . endured . . . vessels of wrath . . . and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy.**—*Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy*:—The sentence is elliptical. Supposing God to have done so, and for certain ends—what then? The apostle does not fill up the sentence himself, but leaves it to be filled up by his readers agreeably to the principles he had been laying down. Would there be unrighteousness with God? I. THE PARTIES SPOKEN OF. 1. "The vessels of wrath," *i.e.*, the "vessels to dishonour" of ver. 21. (1) The wrath of God is invariably pointed against sin (chap. i. 18; Eph. ii. 1–3). It is judicial, not personal; righteousness demanding the punishment of iniquity—"angry with the wicked," and insisting on the execution of the law. Sovereign wrath is a contradiction. Sovereign mercy is not. It expresses the unalienable right of the Supreme Ruler to show favour freely to the undeserving. The very word "mercy" implies "desert of evil" in its objects. But from the idea of the right of God to inflict suffering on the undeserving, we shrink with horror, for it would ascribe to God the right to do wrong. All punitive infliction presupposes desert. The bestowment of good does not. The latter, then, belongs to sovereignty; the former, to equity. (2) The sins of men are freely committed. They are done with the choice of their wills. Otherwise there could be no such thing as sin. If a man were used as a mere machine, he could not be a sinner. Every sinner is sensible that neither, on the one hand, is he constrained to evil, nor, on the other, restrained from good. To say that man cannot will what is good is to employ terms most inconsiderate and misleading. What hinders him from willing? Only the absence of right dispositions. But the indisposition is just the want of will; and, there being no other inability in man than this, to say he cannot will resolves itself ultimately into the will not to will; inasmuch as he is kept from willing good by nothing but his aversion to good. (3) These are truths sufficiently plain, and they serve to show the meaning of the expression "fitted to destruction." (*a*) More is meant than mere destination or appointment. "Fitted" includes particularly the idea of congruity between the character and the destruction. The question, then, comes to be—how are they thus "fitted" and by whom? In findiug an answer to this question, observe the marked difference between the expressions on both sides of the alternative. God fits the "vessels of mercy," but the vessels of wrath are only fitted for destruction," *i.e.*, self-fitted, fitted by their impenitent and obdurate sinfulness. The blessed God cannot be regarded as directly "fitting men for destruction" by any influence from Him (James i. 13–16; Ezek. xv. 6–8). (*b*) And, as God cannot make men wicked, neither should He be considered as appointing men to sin—unless it be in the simple sense of leaving them, in punitive abandonment, to the hardening influence of its wilful perpetration (Jude 4). 2. "The vessels of mercy." (1) The very idea of mercy excludes all desert on their part, and all obligation on the part of God. "Vessels of mercy" implies that whatever there may be of good in them, that good is something which they do not deserve, and which God is, in no respect, bound to bestow. (2) This being the case, their previous "preparation to glory" is an act of pure sovereignty. "Making them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Eph. ii. 1–10). II. THE CONDUCT OF GOD TOWARDS THEM. 1. It is the same to both. The expression "Enduring them with much long-suffering" is used, it is true, only in reference to the former; but it is necessary, to complete the sense, that it be, as it were, carried forward, and considered as if repeated, in regard to the latter. 2. The loug-suffering of God is one of the most wonderful facts in the history of our apostate race. It was manifested in His dealings with the antediluvian world, and in the whole course of His procedure toward the Jewish people. It has been manifested all along, and continues to be, in the experience of the race at large, and in the life of every individual. Who is there, of all the children of men, that is not the subject of it? 3. The idea implies the existence of a tendency in a contrary direction. The

holiness of God is infinitely opposed to all sin, and while His holiness abhors it, His justice calls for its punishment. In proportion, then, to the strength of these principles of the Divine character, is the difficulty of forbearance with the workers of iniquity. 4. By this long-suffering, the great majority of men, alas! are only encouraged in evil (Eccles. viii. 11). They thus criminally, because wilfully, abuse the Divine goodness; and thus "fit themselves for destruction" (chap. ii. 4, 5). But others dealt with in the same "long-suffering," after very protracted and obstinate resistance of the means of grace, relent, believe, and are saved. Toward both there has been shown "much long-suffering." To many a believer—especially to such as have been converted later in life than others—might I make an appeal for the truth of this. III. THE DESIGN OR OBJECT OF THIS CONDUCT here supposed by the apostle. Suppose God does as the potter does: "what if" this were the case? It is evident that the question is intended to involve another question: Would there be any ground of complaint? Who, with any just cause, could say a single word against the procedure? Remember that men are not here spoken of as creatures, but as sinners—guilty subjects of God's moral government, breakers of His law—all alike obnoxious to the visitation of His punitive justice. The general principle, then, is this—that God, the Supreme Ruler, so orders His rectoral procedure towards sinful men, as that He may most effectually secure the glory of His own character and government. Let us look at both sides of the alternative. 1. In God's long-suffering towards those who ultimately perish, what is His course? He lengthens out their period of trial. He applies every mode of treatment, in itself, as a moral means, fitted to bring them to repentance. In doing this, He provides for a satisfactory display of righteousness in their final condemnation; so that none can say that they perished unwarned, untried, uninvited. In the forbearance of God, they have found opportunity for repentance, and they have guiltily misimproved it; converting it into an opportunity of further and further showing the evil principles and dispositions by which they are actuated, and which are the grounds of their sentence of death in the judgment. As an exemplification of our meaning, take the case of the flood (*cf.* 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; 2 Pet. iii. 9). And as it was with the antediluvian sinners, so was it with the Jews. God's judgments on them were not only deserved, but by His whole procedure toward them shown to be deserved ere they were inflicted. Their "mouths were stopped." And thus it will be at last. God the Judge has determined that He will not only be just in His sentences of condemnation, but show Himself just. Who will venture to find fault with this? 2. Of the other side of the alternative the import is sufficiently obvious. The "riches of His glory" evidently signifies here "His glorious riches"—and that means, as evidently, the riches of His mercy. The glorious riches of God's mercy are made known by salvation in general having been provided; by the means of its provision; and by every individual instance of salvation bestowed. But "the riches of His mercy" are more signally displayed in some cases of salvation than in others. In particular cases, by His "forbearance and long-suffering," He prepares wonderful exemplifications of the exuberant abundance and untrammelled freeness of this grace. Let this apostle himself tell us of his own case, as an instance in point (1 Tim. i. 12–16). Conclusion: 1. There is a tendency at present to dwell too exclusively on the Divine love, and to make too little of the other attributes of the Divine character. Because the atonement is universal, and the gift of Christ is the highest expression of love, therefore Divine love must be love without distinctions. As if, because the atonement has been made for all, in order to there being a consistent ground on which all might be invited to pardon, therefore there can be and must be no distinctions in the saving application of the atonement. God says, "A new heart also will I give you," &c. Does He do this alike to all? 2. While it is right for us to look at both sides of the alternative, it is especially delightful for us to contemplate Him "preparing for glory the vessels of mercy." His time of preparing them is very various. He can fit them in a moment: while sometimes the preparation extends through many a year. He spares them sometimes as instruments for His use in preparing other "vessels of mercy" for the same glory with themselves. And then, when He takes them to the inheritance of the glory for which He has prepared them, and which He has prepared for them—how delightful our emotions in looking after them. He has taken these vessels where He may put them to uses more glorifying to Him, and more honourable to themselves, than any use He could make of them in their imperfect state below! (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy*:—I. VESSELS OF WRATH. 1. Whom does this phrase describe? Not persons

pre-ordained to wrath, but deserving of wrath. 2. How are they fitted for destruction? Not by Divine operation, but by their own wilful impertinence. 3. How does God use them? For the display of His justice and power. 4. How is the righteousness of the Divine procedure vindicated? (1) By His patient forbearance. (2) By the opportunity afforded for repentance. (3) By the offers of His grace. II. VESSELS OF MERCY. 1. Their determination. (1) Not by unconditional election. (2) But by the reception of mercy and belief of the truth. 2. Their preparation—(1) In life. (2) By grace. (3) Through the sanctification of the Spirit. 3. Their use. To display the riches of God's glory—His wisdom, love and power in their salvation. 4. Their destiny—glory. (1) In the perfection of their nature and happiness. (2) In the presence of God. (3) For ever. 5. The foundation of all their happiness. The sovereign grace of God in Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy*:—A certain minister, having changed his views on certain points of Divine Truth, was waited upon by an old acquaintance, who wished to reclaim him to his former creed. Finding he could not succeed in his object, he became warm, and told his friend that God had "given him up to strong delusion," and that he was "a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction." "I think, brother," was the response, "you have mistaken the sense of the passage you last referred to. Vessels are denominated according to their contents. A chemist, in conducting a stranger through his laboratory would say, 'This is a vessel of turpentine, that of vitriol,' &c., always giving to the vessel the name of the article it contains. Now when I see a man full of the holy and lovely spirit of Christ, devoted to His service and imitating His example, I say that man is a vessel of mercy, whom God hath aforetime prepared unto glory; but when I see a man full of everything but the spirit of the Bible—opposed to God's moral government, seeking his own things rather than the things of Christ, and filled with malice, wrath, and all uncharitableness, I am compelled to consider him 'a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction.'" (*Biblical Museum.*) *The vessels of wrath*:—The doctrine of reprobation is a malicious libel on mercy. It is an attempt of Satan to graft his own character upon the Lord; and to make Him whose name is "Love" like him whose nature is hatred. Consider—I. THE CHARACTERS HERE DESCRIBED. 1. Wrath means far more than anger—and it becomes a stronger word as the capacity for wrath increases. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion." (1) Now measuring upwards in this way, what must God's wrath be, whose every attribute is illimitable? and the very infinitude of His mercy proves what must be the extent of His wrath. (2) And are there any creatures exposed to this? Yes, it must be so where sin is. It is far more anomalous to suppose moral guilt existing and God not angry, than it is to imagine rebels and a king unmoved, or children fiends in human shape and the father indifferent. The wrath of God must come, in the very nature of things, upon the children of disobedience. He that committeth sin must be a vessel of wrath by nature, and if that nature be not changed, a double portion of wrath abideth on him. 2. Mark the term which expresses the reception of this anger—"vessels"; not leaves, which hold the storm-drop for an instant and then allow it to trickle off, but vessels retaining it. You may say, "Such a load as God's wrath must crush me"; and in one sense it will; but in another it will not; you will have powers of endurance as great as the saint's power of enjoyment. Hard and impenitent hearts are "treasuring up wrath against the day of the wrath." Wrath shall come upon them, as Paul says, "to the uttermost." 3. And moreover the sinner is a vessel "fitted for destruction." What by? Sin. He who wills not the death of the sinner is not likely to fit him for dying. We prepare ourselves for destruction; "Oh, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." II. GOD'S CONDUCT TOWARDS THEM. He endures them with much long-suffering. How much let your unnumbered sins declare. Why! any forbearance in your case were much long-suffering. All the day long has God been stretching forth His hand to "a disobedient and gainsaying people." He gives you mercies, and you take them as your right: He gives you privileges, and you abuse them; He gives you a Saviour, and you "crucify Him afresh"; He offers you His Spirit, and you "do despite to that Spirit of grace." Now is not a moment's forbearance, in such a case, long-suffering? III. THE REASONS FOR SUCH CONDUCT. 1. "To show His wrath." Yet how could He show His wrath by long-suffering towards sinners? It appears that such a course would hide and not show it. Now the word translated "show," means to point out as with the finger; and in this way God throws into the strongest relief His wrath. (1) He develops His own character of love; He opens out His plans of mercy for years. Well! some may say, "This tolerance of guilt speaks an indifference to it." You are wrong; the Lord's long-

suffering is but a blue sky on which you see in fearful and distinct outline the massive storm-cloud as it rolls over the sinner's head and then bursts; it is but the sweet and natural beamings of the Lord's countenance which gives His frown a doubly appalling blackness; it does not lessen His anger; it does not qualify His abhorrence of sin; it does not subtract from, but it adds to, the final display of His just indignation. (2) And in another sense it shows it, for it clearly explains its real character. It is not the wrath of man, or he had struck at once. But the Lord is "slow to anger"; He wills not the death of the sinner; and when at last His wrath is seen, it is that of a Judge who punishes, not "con amore" but "ex officio." The Lord delights in mercy, not in punishment. Wrath must come at last, but it comes with a slow foot. Mercy flies; anger creeps. Patience lingers and lingers at the threshold, keeping punishment knocking at the door. God's endurance is indeed the interpreter of His wrath; it shows that His final destruction of "the vessels of wrath" is not that of an enemy gloating over the fall and death of his foe, but it is that of a father slowly, solemnly, and necessarily banishing a base and incorrigible son for ever from His presence. 2. "To make known His power." But how can power be made known by a refusal to exert that power? Forbearance is often a more splendid achievement than all the labours of Hercules put together. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." The Lord's endurance is one of the most signal displays of His omnipotence. When I gaze upon the scene around Calvary, I look upon a more stupendous proof of power than when I behold the hundred and eighty-five thousand corpses of Assyrian warriors, all smitten by the angel of the Lord in one night. And when I look around upon this congregation, and necessarily think of many among you as vessels of wrath endured, enemies of God treated with much long-suffering, I see in each one of you a monument of the Lord's power as notable as in the case of that weeping, wailing, and lost soul. But, lastly, God's long-suffering makes known His power, by giving greater prominence at last to His power of punishing. It is like the stillness before a storm: you may hear a whisper; the rustle of a leaf is noticed; and when the first roll of thunder comes pealing throughout the hushed air, making the ground shake and the rocks resound, its fearful voice is the better articulated owing to the previous stillness; the thunder, like God's power, is made known by the calm which preceded. And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? First of all, by the light of God's Word, and by the aid of prayer, inquire whether you are vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy? Are you united to Christ by a living faith, or alienated from God by wicked works? And if the result of this inquiry be a conviction that you are still a vessel of wrath, oh! tremble over the fact. That vessel becomes more capacious every day; every mercy and long-suffering despised is an enlargement. What will it hold at last if you go on and on increasing its size, and making it fitter and fitter to hold more of that wrath which shall fill but never burst it. Stop and pray for grace to arrest this self-fitting for destruction. Pray that the Lord's Spirit may transform you from a vessel of wrath into a vessel of mercy. Pray that His much long-suffering may melt your hard heart, and make you long to have His love instead of His wrath shed abroad in your soul. Pray that the blood of Christ may, as it were, rinse out the polluted vessel, wash away all the wrath, and fill to the brim with mercy—fill it now; and for ever and ever fill it, as throughout eternity that vessel grows larger. (*D. F. Jarman, B.A.*) *Vessels of mercy*:—I. THE VESSELS. 1. They are made of the same lump as the vessels of wrath. Thou who hast hope of heaven look back to the miry clay whence thou wast drawn! There was nothing in thee by nature better than that which is found in any other man. Had He left thee to thyself, thou hadst been as base and vile as others. If there be a difference in thee, the difference is of grace and not of nature. 2. They are as much as any other portion of the clay, entirely in the potter's hand. Had the potter willed to leave that mass of clay alone, we should have been vessels of wrath most surely. Hell's thistles grow self-sown, but God's wheat needs a husbandman. Vessels of mercy fit themselves for destruction, but grace alone can prepare a soul for glory. If the Lord had permitted the whole human race to perish He would have been infinitely just. If He had chosen to spare a few, that would have been an act of surprising mercy. Inasmuch, however, as He hath taken so much of the clayey mass, as to make vessels of mercy innumerable as the stars of heaven, unto His name be all the glory. 3. God's chosen ones are—(1) "Vessels." A vessel is not a fountain, not a creator of the water, but a container. So the redeemed are not fountains by nature, out of whom there springeth up anything that is good. At one time they are full of themselves, but

grace empties them, and then as empty vessels they are set in the way of God's goodness, God fills them to the brim with His loving-kindness, and so are they proved to be the vessels of His mercy. Remember all that God asks of thee in order to thy salvation is, not to do anything, but to hold out thine empty hand and take all thou wantest. The elect of God are vessels only. They may afterwards give out to others, but they can only give out what God has put in them. They may run over with gratitude, but it is only because God has filled them with grace; they may stream forth with holiness, but it is only because the Lord keeps the supply overflowing. (2) "Vessels of mercy." In order that they may be such it is necessary that they should be sinful and miserable. Pity may be given to the miserable, but mercy must be bestowed upon the sinful. For a judge to talk of mercy to the innocent would be to insult them; and for the philanthropist to offer pity to the happy would be but to mock them. The redeemed are not vessels of merit but vessels of mercy. II. THE POTTER AT HIS WORK. When a potter is about to make a vessel he does not take up the clay and put it on the wheel and then leave it to chance. No—1. He has his plan. So it is with our Divine Potter. He takes the poor sinner; He puts him on the wheel, and as that wheel revolves the potter looks and sees in that clay a future something which does not appear to the vessel. "It does not yet appear what we shall be"; but the Potter knows, "He will present us without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." 2. He makes the outlines in the clay. You may have seen the man at work. Perhaps at the very first moment you may form a rough guess of what the whole thing is to be, though the elaboration you cannot yet discover. Certain it is, that the moment a man begins to be separated for heaven by the grace of God in his soul, you may see the outlines of what he is to be. There is—(1) Faith in Christ. (2) Love to Christ. (3) A hope that maketh not ashamed, and a joy which makes glad his countenance. It is but the bare outline, for the glory which excelleth is not there. The vase is only in its embryo, but yet sufficiently developed to give a prophecy of its finished form. 3. The gradual completion of the article. There will not always be in you the bare outline, but as time goes on there will be some of the beautiful lines and filling-up. The Christian will be getting more and more like his Master. And if we can see here on earth vessels getting ready for perfection, and if those vessels have so much beauty in them, what must they be when at last they shall be finished. If this world be fair, how much fairer shall the new world be. III. THE POTTER'S MARK UPON HIS VESSELS. In all manufactories there is always some trade-mark which is not to be imitated, and without which no vessel is the genuine production of the professed maker. You may know to-day whether you are a vessel of mercy by the Master's mark upon you. 1. That mark is—calling. Has Divine grace called you out of darkness into marvellous light? for if so, it is not a matter of question as to whether you are ordained to eternal life. 2. That is a mark which no man can put upon you. The earnest minister may cry aloud and spare not, but it is in vain calling to deaf ears. The Lord alone can so speak, that the deaf, nay, the dead, must hear. Hast thou ever, then, felt a calling which is not of man, neither by man? Has the voice of mercy so said, "Come to Jesus," that thy heart has said, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek"? Has He said to thee, "Mary," and hast thou said, "Raboni"? Has He cried to thee, "Zaccheus make haste and come down," and hast thou come down and received Him in thine house. Hast thou had that call, for if so, thou hast the mark of the Potter upon thee. 3. As this is a mark which no man can put upon you, so it is one which no man can take away from you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Vessels of mercy*:—I. WHY BELIEVERS ARE COMPARED TO VESSELS. The figure suggests the idea of—1. Capacity. Capable of being filled. Their value is in their emptiness (2 Kings iv. 3–6). Sense of need. 2. Reception. The first thing needed, when emptied, is to receive. Mercy (Rom. ix. 23; 1 Tim. i. 16). Pardon (Acts xxvi. 18). The engrafted word (Jas. i. 21). Christ (Col. ii. 6). Power (Acts i. 8). 3. Possession. To hold what is put into them. The Word of God (Col. iii. 16; John xv. 7). Not leaky (Heb. ii. 1). II. THE HONOUR CONFERRED ON THESE VESSELS. 1. They bear God's Name (Acts ix. 15). Character (Deut. xxviii. 10). Service (Deut. x. 8). 2. They contain God's treasure (2 Cor. iv. 7). The vessel—frail and worthless. The treasure—all powerful and priceless. 3. They are used in God's service (2 Tim. ii. 21). Their meetness consists in being set apart—cleansed—filled. (*E. H. Hopkins.*) *Vessels of mercy*:—They are such in their—I. FORMATION. II. POSITION. III. CONDITION. Mercy—1. Pervades their thoughts. 2. Is uttered in their words. 3. Is expressed in their actions. 4. Beams in their looks. 5. Glows in their prayers. IV. PROGRESSION. V. PRESERVATION. VI. GLORIFICATION.

Application: 1. If thou be a vessel of mercy, let love and gratitude prompt thee to commend that mercy to others which thou hast received. 2. If a vessel of wrath, let nothing divert you from earnestly seeking mercy at the Cross of Christ. (*Evangelical Preacher.*) *The mystery of God in human history*:—I. HIS DESIGN. To display His—1. Glory. 2. Power. 3. Mercy. 4. Wrath. II. HIS PROCEDURE. 1. He endures patiently with sinners. 2. Allows them to work out their own ruin. 3. Confers the riches of His grace on them that believe. 4. Prepares them for glory. III. HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. He calls all men to repentance. 2. Offers them His mercy in Christ. 3. Both Jews and Gentiles. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Even us whom He hath called.**—*The called*:—I. WHO ARE CALLED. 1. Not the righteous. 2. But sinners—both of the Jews and the Gentiles. II. HOW ARE THEY CALLED. 1. By the gospel. 2. By the ministration of the Word. 3. By the Spirit of God. III. UNTO WHAT ARE THEY CALLED? To the enjoyment of—1. Pardon. 2. Holiness. 3. Heaven. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 25–33. **As He saith also in Osee, I will call them My people, which were not My people.**—*The calling of the Gentiles*:—I. THEIR FORMER CONDITION. 1. Not My people. 2. Not beloved. II. THEIR GRACIOUS CALL—an act of—1. Sovereign will. 2. Unmerited. 3. Effected by the gospel. III. THEIR LOFTY PRIVILEGE—called to be the sons of the living God—1. Through faith. 2. In Jesus Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *A people who were no people* (text and Hos. ii. 23):—1. We accept the supreme authority of Holy Scripture: every word of it is truth to us. 2. Yet we attach special weight to words which are the personal utterances of the Lord, as here. 3. Still more are we impressed when a Divine message is repeated, as here. 4. "God saith" still what He said long ago. Come, then, anxious souls, and hear the story of God's grace to His chosen, in the hope that He may do the like for you. Observe concerning the Lord's people—1. THEIR ORIGINAL STATE. 1. They not only were not "beloved," but they were expressly disowned. Their claim, if they made any, was negatived. This is the worst case that can be; worse than to be left alone. This conscience, providence, and God's Word all appear to say to men who persist in sin. 2. They had no approval of God. They were not numbered with His people, and were not "beloved" in the sense of complacency. 3. They had not in the highest sense obtained mercy. For—(1) They were under providential judgment. (2) That judgment had not become a blessing to them. (3) They had not even sought for mercy. 4. They were types of a people who as yet have—(1) Felt no application of the blood of Jesus. (2) Known no renewing work of the Spirit. (3) Obtained no relief by prayer; perhaps have not prayed. (4) Enjoyed no comfort of the promises. (5) Known no communion with God. (6) No hope of heaven or preparation for it. It is a terrible description, including all the unsaved. It is concerning such that the promise is made—"I will call them My people." Who these are shall be seen in due time by their repentance and faith, which shall be wrought in them by the Spirit of God. There are such people, and this fact is our encouragement in preaching the gospel, for we perceive that our labour will not be in vain. II. THEIR NEW CONDITION. 1. Mercy is promised. 2. A Divine revelation is pronounced. "I will say, Thou art My people." This is—(1) Done by the Spirit of God in the heart. (2) Supported by gracious dealings in the life. 3. A hearty response shall be given. "They shall say, Thou art my God." The Spirit will lead them to this free acceptance. (1) As a whole, they will say this with one voice. (2) Each individual will say it for himself in the singular. "Thou." 4. A declaration of love shall be made. "I will call her beloved," &c. Love shall be enjoyed. 5. This shall be perceived by others. "They shall be called," &c. Their likeness to God shall make them to be called the children of God, even as the peacemakers in Matt. v. 9. Thus every blessing shall be theirs, surely, personally, everlastingly. Reflections: 1. We must give up none as hopeless; even though they be marked out by terrible evidence to be not the people of God. 2. None may give up themselves in despair. 3. Sovereign grace is the ultimate hope of the fallen. Let them trust in a God so freely gracious, so mighty to save, so determined to bring in those whom it seemed that even He Himself had disowned, whom everybody had abandoned as not the people of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A great reversal*:—Whether the original reference of the prophet is to the ten tribes or to the Gentile world is immaterial, since St. Paul employs the quotation to illustrate his contention that it is the purpose of Him who is Eternal Wisdom and Unchanging Righteousness to transfer privilege and blessing from those who pretended

to an ancestral claim to them, unto those who had usually been regarded as aliens and reprobates—even the "sinners of the Gentiles." If this phase of Divine action has to some extent lost its interest, the principle it illustrates is ever important. I. THE HIGHLY FAVOURED MAY ABUSE THEIR ADVANTAGES AND LOSE THEM. Consider the case of the Hebrews. 1. Their special prerogatives in religious knowledge and means of spiritual improvement. 2. Their rebellion and apostasy in yielding to idolatry. 3. Their frequent chastisements, especially in the captivity, and their subsequent humiliations. 4. The repetition of their insensibility and disobedience in the rejection of the Christ. 5. The final catastrophe which overtook the nation in the destruction of Jerusalem and the final dispersion. II. THE LESS FAVOURED MAY BE, IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE, EXALTED TO PRIVILEGE. Consider the case of the Gentiles. 1. The publication of the gospel to them by Paul upon its rejection by the Jews. 2. The acceptance by many of the glad tidings intended for the enlightenment and salvation of men. 3. The position taken by Gentile converts in the diffusion of Christianity. 4. The subsequent conversion of the Roman empire. 5. The course of Christian history which may all be traced to the operation of this wonderful principle. Application: 1. They act foolishly who rely on their privileges. 2. They are wise who, grateful for their privileges, are concerned so to use them that they may become the vehicles of the highest blessing to themselves, and to those over whom their influence may extend. 3. They who are cast down because their circumstances seem unfavourable should not forget that those who were "not God's people" became "His people," "His beloved," "the children of God." (*Prof. Thomson.*) *The character and privileges of the saints*:—I. WHAT THEY WERE. 1. "Not My people." Who's then? Men do not occupy neutral territory, nor are they an independent republic. God's people own and serve Him as their Sovereign and Master—dread alternative then, those who throw off this allegiance become the slaves and subjects of the prince of this world, doing homage to him in their sentiments, and serving Him in their lives. And such were some of you. 2. "Not beloved." (1) Because unlovely and unloving. "Alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works." How could God love in the sense here mentioned those who defied His authority, broke His commandments, and made bad that which He pronounced "very good." (2) Therefore—(*a*) The wrath of God abideth on them—rests as long as the provoking cause remains. (*b*) The coming wrath menaces them. II. WHAT THEY ARE. 1. "My people." (1) They belong to God. He has bought them; He has taken them to be His peculiar possession; they gladly acquiesce in the Divine proprietorship. How safe and happy this makes them! "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (2) They are God's people. (*a*) A homogeneous people. They are not His as so many scattered units, but His as a body, a Church. United to Him they are bound to one another for mutual protection, edification, comfort and general usefulness. (*b*) A royal people. A kingdom. The Church is not a mere school of thought, but a kingdom of priests unto God. God's people are royal in their birth, bearing, privileges, duties, and hopes. (*c*) A people with a destiny. While some peoples have fulfilled their destiny, and others have theirs trembling in the balance, and others yet again all uncertain of theirs that of the people of God is sure. They and only they are to inherit the earth. That destiny is being fulfilled every day, and will be perfectly fulfilled when "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," &c. 2. "Beloved." (1) God's anger is passed away from them. What then? What happens when the clouds roll away at noon-day? So when the clouds of our rebellion and sinfulness pass away from before His countenance we bask in His smile. So—(2) They are the objects of His complacency. He sees in them that which fills Him with delight—His beloved Son's purchase and image. Hence—(3) They are the subjects of His special care (chap. viii. 39). And—(4) They await the highest manifestations of His favour. 3. "Children of God." (1) They are born from above, and become partakers of the Divine nature. (2) They are adopted into the Divine family. (3) They are heirs of Divine possessions. III. HOW THEY BECOME WHAT THEY ARE. 1. By sovereign grace. There was no merit in them, but every demerit. Had not God chosen them they had never chosen God. 2. By compliance with the conditions laid down by sovereign grace. Repentance and faith. (*J. W. Burn.*) **And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people.**—*Hope for the outcasts*:—I. THEIR CONDITION—"Not My people." 1. Without God. 2. Without knowledge of the truth. 3. Without hope. II. THEIR HAPPY CHANGE. 1. Adopted. 2. Transformed. 3. Admitted to fellowship with God—the true source of life and happiness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The sovereignty of God*:—I. THE

MISERABLE CONDITION OF "THIS PEOPLE" AT THE FIRST—"Not My people." What an awful position is that of nations, families, or men where they are *not* God's people. What privileges they lose! What anticipations they are without! How empty their existence! How fearful their prospects! It is evident that nations have been under this denomination. There was not a country, except the Jewish, in ancient times that knew anything about the living God. And at the present day there are those nations which revel in their ignorance of Divine truth. Besides which, even in Christian lands, only a small proportion truly serve the Lord God. II. THE BLESSED CONDITION OF "THIS PEOPLE" AT THE LAST. There is a remarkable contrast. They are the same people. But their condition is changed. They are to become not only God's people, but God's children, not only His servants, but His heirs. The change is a remarkable one, for it—1. Involves a change of nature, disposition, heart, character, and it manifests the power of Divine grace which can so transform "stones" into children. 2. Alters the condition and future of those who are its subjects. They look forward to a period of blessedness in a Father's house. (*J. J. S. Bird, M.A.*) **Though the number of . . . Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.** — *The example of Israel a warning to the world:*—I. JUDGMENT BEGINS AT THE HOUSE OF GOD. II. CANNOT BE ARRESTED BY NUMBERS OR FORCE. III. IS EXCEEDINGLY TERRIBLE—only a remnant saved. IV. WILL BE COMPLETE. V. WILL BE EXECUTED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. VI. WILL BE SUDDEN AND SUMMARY. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The rejection of the Jews:*—I. PREDICTED. II. NATIONAL. III. JUDICIAL—in righteousness. IV. TERRIBLY FULFILLED—only a remnant saved. V. MIXED WITH MERCY. VI. ALLEVIATED BY HOPE—a seed left. (*Ibid.*) *The remnant saved:*—Our text is a quotation from Isaiah, and is intended to show the great disparity, in point of number, between the believing and the unbelieving Israelites. I. THOUGH MULTITUDES APPEAR TO BE THE PEOPLE OF GOD, YET THOSE WHO ARE SO IN REALITY ARE COMPARATIVELY FEW. 1. The children of Israel according to the flesh were numerous "as the sand of the sea." The promise of Gen. xxii. 17 was in great measure fulfilled in Moses's time (Numb. xxiii. 9, 10). When they went down into Egypt they were only seventy-five persons; but when they came out from thence, all told, they probably amounted to three or four millions. Yet they are not all Israel (1 Cor. x. 1–11; Heb. iv. 1, 2, 11). The Jews also in our Lord's time were very numerous; but the greater part of them perished in their unbelief, and were at length dispersed and ruined as a nation (Matt. xxiii. 34–39; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16). 2. Those also who profess religion have in all ages been very numerous, yet the number of the truly pious is very small. (1) How many who are called Christians are entirely ignorant of the fundamental truths of Christianity (Isa. xxix. 11, 12). (2) How many rest in outward privileges and performances. (3) How many selfish worldlings there are who follow Christ for the loaves and fishes. (4) What shall we say of those heartless and barren professors, who bring forth no fruit; or if any, it is to themselves, and not to God. II. THEY ARE CALLED A REMNANT, "A REMNANT THAT SHALL BE SAVED." With respect to the Jews in the apostles' time, only a small part of them were brought to believe in Christ; and though some thousands were converted in one day, the far greater number continued in obstinate unbelief. Instances of conversion since that time have been very rare. We are assured, however, that at the appointed time the Redeemer will come, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And with respect to the Gentiles, there has ever been and will be, even in times of the grossest darkness and corruption, a remnant according to the election of grace. 1. There is and shall be a remainder, a part reserved out of the whole, as the word generally signifies (Isa. x. 12: Rev. xii. 17). This implies—(1) Paucity or fewness. Christ's Church is a little city, and few men in it. A little flock, under the care of the great and good Shepherd; small when compared with the rest of the world, and with what it will be hereafter (Rev. vii. 9). But in any one age, and especially in any one place, the Church of Christ is comparatively small; and if the chaff were separated from the wheat, it would be smaller still (Matt. xx. 16). (2) Choice or separation. God's remnant is a chosen remnant, according to the election of grace; and this alone it is that secures its existence (Rom. viii. 29). 2. This remnant shall be saved, not only from the wrath to come, but also from innumerable evils in the present life (Isa. xxvi. 20; Ezek. ix. 4). But eternal salvation is chiefly intended, which includes—(1) A deliverance from all evil and the fear of evil (Rev. xxi. 4). (2) The possession of all good; perfect knowledge, holiness, peace; the true enjoyment of ourselves, and the most intimate communion with God. 3. The salvation of this remnant is certain, both from the

promises of God and the engagements of the Redeemer. Christ must reign. Conclusion: If we have hitherto been indifferent about this salvation, let us take warning. If we have immortal souls, surely their interest demands our chief attention. Are we only nominal Christians, let us remember that an empty name will be of no avail hereafter; but if we are Israelites indeed, how delightful are our prospects! (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) **For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness.**—*Judgment*—I. IS THE WORK OF GOD. II. MUST BE SEVERELY EXECUTED UPON SINNERS—when God arises His procedure is rapid, righteous, complete. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Some points in the Divine procedure:*—Irrespective of the particular application of this prophecy by Paul there are certain fundamental and abiding principles that are worth attention. I. COMPLETENESS. "As for God, His way, His method of operation," is perfect. From the atom to the sun there is no flaw in His handiwork. It will be found to be the same when we review the course of history from the standpoint of eternity. Things are fragmentary now, but the very fragments are complete, and when fitted into each other as a compacted whole we shall say, "Thou hast done all things well." "He will finish the work"—1. Why? Because—(1) His calculations are infallible who sees the end from the beginning. (2) His resources are inexhaustible who has all power in heaven and earth. (3) His determinations must take effect who "doth according to His will in the armies of heaven," &c. Men fail because they neglect to take all the factors into account; because their resources are limited, or because they are irresolute. But there can be no failure when we take into account God's omniscience, power, and sovereign will. 2. In spite of what? (1) The cunning, malice, strength, and determination of His enemies. These are many, and to any other than God would be formidable. (2) The ignorance, feebleness, apathy, and irresoluteness of His professed friends. These would lead any other than God to give up in despair. 3. What in? (1) Creation, which when "finished" was pronounced very good. (2) Providence. This is now in progress, but when "finished" no flaw will be detected in its procedure. (3) Redemption. Redemption by price was "finished" on the Cross; redemption by power when heaven's courts shall echo with "It is done." (4) Judgment. No one shall be missing from the great assize, and nothing will mar the completeness of the final awards. II. PROMPTNESS. "Cut it short." In creation, where God had only to deal with inert matter, this finds a perfect illustration. "He said, and it was done." In dealing with men it is somewhat different, yet the same in the end. God is patient, is willing, and can afford to wait; but when the hour of destiny is struck His action is decisive and irrevocable. This is seen in—1. The history of redemption. "When the fulness of the time was come," when the preparatory work was "finished," God *sent* His Son. "Down from the shining seats . . . He *fled*." What a "short work," too, the redeeming ministry was, and the expiating act. 2. The history of nations. The method of the Divine procedure with the antediluvians, the Canaanites, Babylon, Israel, and the Roman empire was first long-suffering, forbearance (chap. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii.); and then, when the cup of their iniquities was full, how suddenly was it emptied and destroyed. 3. The history of men—(1) In ordinary life. How long matters often are in coming to a climax, but how sharp and short is the decisive hour which determines temporal destiny. (2) In salvation. The preparatory process may be protracted, but the soul passes from death into life in a moment. (3) As regards the future. We may slumber in the dust for ages, but "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," we shall awake. III. RIGHTEOUSNESS. Without this the other two methods might fill us with terror. But it reassures us to know that in His providential government of the world, or in the salvation or judgment of men, God always acts—1. From a right motive. 2. In a right way. 3. At the right time. 4. With right results. (*J. W. Burn.*) **Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma.**—*The Lord of Sabaoth:*—1. THE MEANING OF THE TERM. Lord of hosts—of—1. The whole universe, with its hosts of things animate and inanimate. 2. The hosts of the heavens. 3. The hosts of hell. II. WHY GOD IS TERMED LORD OF SABAOTH. 1. Because He is supreme Ruler of all. 2. To oppose the prevailing worship of the heavenly bodies. 3. To give us some idea of His almighty power and grandeur. (*M. Thomson.*) *The Divine considerateness:*—Sodom and Gomorrha were utterly wiped out. No human being remained to perpetuate the progeny of the inhabitants of the plain. It might have been so, and deservedly, with Israel; but it was not so, and graciously. A remnant was, and always has been left, notwithstanding the most frightful devastations—a seed to propagate the race. So in God's procedure

generally, where men and nations have not sinned past recovery. A seed of some sort is left, which, by sedulous cultivation, may result in future harvests. This principle may be illustrated in—I. THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY AT LARGE. 1. After the fall the human race might have been as Sodoma, but in wrath God remembered mercy. He left man not only life, but a promise which kept human hope from utter extinction; some relics, too, of the Divine image on which the Redeemer could take hold in fashioning the new man. 2. After the flood the family of Noah was left, not only to preserve the species, but to hand on the hope. The covenant with the Patriarch was but the first of a series which culminated in the fulfilment of the covenant of redemption. A second time the Lord of Sabaoth left a seed. 3. In the fulness of time, when the world was ripe for destruction, the gift of *the* seed saved it. The state of things depicted in chaps. i. and ii. could not have gone on much longer but for the Divine interposition, which has at last changed the condition of the world. But for this it must have perished; as it is it lives, and has in it the germs of a total regeneration. II. THE HISTORY OF NATIONS. 1. Sometimes a few good men are left whose prayers, efforts, and influence save the nation from decay. Who can tell but that the preservation of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal postponed the catastrophe of the Hebrew nation. What a different history France would have had but for the expulsion of the Huguenots. It is impossible to tell what would have become of England but for the godly few who remained to perpetuate the Puritan revival through the reigns of Charles II. and James II. 2. Sometimes the seed presents itself in the form of a gracious opportunity. (1) The Reformation was such a seed. Contrast the destinies of the nations which accepted it with those that rejected it. (2) The missionary impulse of the close of the last century was another. Great Britain and America yielded to it, and the material and moral prosperity of both has never since looked back. III. THE HISTORY OF THE INDIVIDUAL. Here history repeats itself on a small scale. 1. Home reminiscences have often been as a seed perpetuating the life and moral character of a man. In temptation the remembrance of prayers offered or words uttered have made many a man stop short on the brink of ruin and retrace his steps into a nobler and better life. 2. The Word read or preached in myriads of instances has been such a seed. 3. So has some great affliction. 4. And some special summons to duty. (*J. W. Burn.*) *God's judgments are*—I. RICHLY DESERVED. Our sins are—1. Multiplied. 2. Aggravated. 3. Obstinately persisted in—like Sodom, &c. II. MERCIFULLY ALLEVIATED. 1. A remnant is spared. 2. As a seed of promise. 3. Through sovereign grace. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 30–33. **The Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness . . . but Israel which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained.**—*The gospel for the Gentiles*:—I. THEY NEEDED IT. 1. Were without righteousness. 2. Without the knowledge of it. 3. Without the desire for it. II. IT IS ADAPTED TO THEIR CASE. It reveals—1. The righteousness of God. 2. Without works. 3. By faith. 4. In Christ. III. IT HAS BEEN ATTAINED BY MANY. 1. As the free gift of God. 2. As the source of unspeakable happiness. 3. May be attained by all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The righteousness of the gospel*:—I. IT IS DESIGNED FOR SINNERS. II. OFFERED TO FAITH. III. IMPOSSIBLE BY WORKS. IV. BECAUSE THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS STUMBLE AT THE CROSS. V. BUT THE SINNER IS SAVED BY FAITH. (*Ibid.*) *The folly of rejecting the gospel*:—Now you may reject the gospel if you please, but wherein will your condition be improved? If on a ship where some pestilence is raging, the crew and the passengers throw the doctor and the medicine chest overboard, and keep the pestilence with them, how much better are they off? Many there are who are bent on casting Christianity overboard, on getting rid of the Church and priest and theology, and who are bent on keeping their sin and all its multitudinous train of mischief and evils. If men had become pure of heart, then there might be some reason in dispensing with these superfluous ministrations; but, thus far, scepticism and the rejection of Christianity is only to make darkness darker and sickness more fatal and distress more painful. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ rejected by Jews and accepted by Gentiles*:—I. THE FACT HERE STATED WAS—1. Plain and undeniable. 2. A verification of prophecy. II. THE INSTRUCTION TO BE GATHERED FROM it. 1. That however earnest we may be after salvation, we shall never attain it if we seek it in a self-righteous way. 2. That however regardless we have been about salvation hitherto, we shall attain to it the instant we believe in Christ. 3. That however calumniated this way of salvation

is, the very calumnies that are raised against it attest its truth. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *S.S.: or the sinner saved:*—Paul had two facts before him; the first was, that wherever he went preaching Christ certain Gentiles believed the doctrine, receiving at once forgiveness of sin and a change of heart; and although he had usually commenced his ministry in the synagogues, yet the Jews had almost everywhere rejected the Messiah, and at the same time missed the righteousness which they conceived they had obtained. Note—I. A WONDER OF GRACE. 1. Certain men had attained to righteousness. Now that alone is a great wonder, for we are all sinners both by nature and by practice. 2. The wonder grows when we consider that these persons had attained to righteousness under great disadvantages; for they were Gentiles, considered by the Jews to be offcasts and outcasts given up to idolatry or to atheism and lusts. There are virtues for which the heathen had no name; and they practised vices for which, thank God, you have no name. They were ignorant withal of the requirements of the law, the light of which alone shone upon the seed of Israel. The strange thing is that such originally were those men who attained unto righteousness. Having no righteousness of their own, and being convinced that they needed one, they fled at once to the righteousness which God has prepared for all who believe in Christ. Are there not persons here whose condition is somewhat similar? You are not religious; but why should not you also attain to righteousness by faith? Wonders of grace are things which God delights in; why should He not work such wonders in you? 3. The marvel of grace was all the greater because, "They followed not after righteousness." Some of them were thoughtful, just, and generous towards men, but righteousness towards God was not a matter after which they laboured. Gold or glory, power or pleasure, were the objects for which they ran. Yet when the gospel burst in upon the midnight of their souls they received its light with joy. They had not sought the Shepherd, but He had sought them, and, laying them on His shoulders, He brought them to His fold. They were like that Indian who, passing up the mountain-side pursuing game, grasped a shrub to prevent his slipping, and as its roots gave way they uncovered masses of silver. These Gentiles discovered in Christ the righteousness which they needed, but which they had never dreamed of finding. 4. These unlikely persons did really believe, and so attain to righteousness. They did not want hammering at so long as some of you do. At the first summons many of them surrendered. They rose at a bound from depths of sin to heights of righteousness. The apostle asks us, "What shall we say then?" (1) Herein is seen the sovereign appointment of the Lord. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. He will fulfil His promise to His Son, "Behold, Thou shalt call a nation that Thou knowest not," &c. (2) This also is according to Divine prophecy. "I will call them My people, which were not My people," &c. 3. This is, in fact, the gospel of the grace of God. That God smiles upon worthy people and rewards their goodness is not the gospel. The gospel is that God hath mercy upon the guilty and undeserving. II. A MARVEL OF FOLLY: "Israel," &c. These people —1. Were very advantageously placed. They were of the chosen race, born within the visible Church, and circumcised, and brought up to know the law of Moses, and yet they had never attained to righteousness. There are those present who were nursed in the lap of piety; they have scarcely been a single Sabbath absent from the Lord's house. Now that they have reached riper years they are still hovering around the gates of mercy, but they have not entered upon the way of life. I tremble for you who are so good and yet are not regenerate. 2. Were earnest and zealous in following after the law of righteousness. Alas! many who have never forgotten a single outward rite are nevertheless quite dead as to spiritual things. Nobody could put a finger upon an open fault in you, and yet you, at least, have a shrewd suspicion that all is not right between you and God. It is concerning such as you that Paul had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart. You may be earnestly seeking righteousness in the wrong way, and this is a terrible thing. 3. Made a mistake at the very beginning. Israel did not follow after righteousness, but after "the law of righteousness." They missed the spirit and followed after the mere letter of the law. They looked at "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," &c.; but to love God with all their heart was not thought of. They thought of what a man *does*, but they forgot the importance of what a man *is*. Escape from this error; be not so eager for the shell as to lose the kernel, so zealous for the form of godliness as to deny the power thereof! 4. Went upon a wrong principle—viz., that of works. This principle is wrong for—(1) It exalts man. (2) It ignores the great fact that you have sinned already. Are you going to be

saved by your works? What about the past? If I am going to pay my way for the future, this will not discharge my old debts. (3) It makes nothing of God. It shuts out both His justice and His mercy. (4) It is impossible to you. You cannot perfectly keep the law of God, for you are sold under sin. Who can get clean water from a polluted spring? "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." But suppose you could outwardly keep the law of God out of a sense of obligation to do so, yet the work is not done unless you yourself are made right with God. Your heart must love God as well as your hands serve Him. 5. Fully developed their unrighteousness when they stumbled at Christ. Jesus Christ came among them, and became to them a rock of offence. They seemed to stand upright until then; but when He came among them, down they went into actual rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed. Yes, your moralists are the great enemies of the Cross. They do not want an atonement; they can hardly endure the doctrine. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Divine method of salvation*:—I. ITS APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS (vers. 30, 31). 1. According to human judgment those who most earnestly seek after righteousness should be the first to attain it. 2. But the Gentiles who sought it not have obtained the righteousness of faith. 3. While the Jews who followed after the law of righteousness utterly failed. II. ITS SECRET HARMONIES (vers. 32, 33). 1. The righteousness is only by faith. 2. The Jews, who sought it by works, took offence at the Cross. 3. But the Gentile, conscious of his demerit, believed and was saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The reasonableness of God's working*:—The question hitherto has been—How can God set aside an elect people? And the answer—God chooses whom He will for the carrying on His saving work. But now a reason is adduced. For although God does what He will, we may be sure He never wills what is not right. And here the great reason for the rejection of Israel and the choice of the Gentiles is this, that the former have failed to apprehend the nature of salvation, whereas the latter have received the proffered gift. Needs it any arguing that they are better fitted to work for God than the others? I. THE GENTILES. 1. Their previous history, from a religious point of view, is that they "followed not after righteousness," *i.e.*, they sought not justification with God. For a subjective righteousness they did seek—witness Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and poets and historians who sought to set forth the principles of right. But as to an objective righteousness, a being right with God, this was not in all their thoughts. They regarded God as not much troubling Himself with human conduct, and sin itself as rather a defect than guilt. 2. Yet they "attained to righteousness." The dormant conscience awoke; the weakness of their ethical systems was revealed; the guilt of sin and the love of God was set forth in the Cross, and being stricken to the heart, and crying "What must I do to be saved?" they were eager to respond to the command "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," &c.; and accepting salvation they "attained to righteousness." II. JEWS. 1. Their history is stated by way of contrast. The wording is most accurate. They "followed a law" which was designed by God to teach them sin, and lead them to look to His free grace in Christ for pardon; but it was not this "end of the law" which they followed, but the law itself. They made an end of the means, and thus subverted its design; for instead of learning from the law their sin, they sought by a supposed fulfilment of its precepts to make themselves just before God. So instead of learning to be poor in spirit they learned an arrogant self-complacency; instead of coming to God's grace for pardon, they thanked God they were not as other men, and stood self-justified. 2. What was the result? They "did not arrive at that law"; not at its true purport, its ultimate design. So the real law of justification, salvation through faith, was hidden from their eyes. To them the Rock of Ages was "a stone of stumbling," &c. Learn, then, from the history of the past that there is only shame for us if we seek to make ourselves just before God. By accepting freely the grace that is freely given, we shall "not be put to shame." (*T. F. Lockyer, B.A.*) *Seeking after righteousness*:—They also gave to the world, by their ancient economy, a religion whose genius was the development of mankind. In other words, they gave to the world an ethical religion, as distinguished from a worshipping and superstitious religion. Although the Jew made manifest every office of devotion and reverence, and although you might select from the Jewish writers saints as eminent in observances as any others, yet the distinctive peculiarity of religion among the Israelites was that it had a practical drift as regards the conduct of men. It did not expend itself in lyrics and prayers of worship. It descended to the character of men, and sought first, and above all

other faiths of that age, to develop manhood. For the whole flow of that word "righteousness" in the Old Testament is the equivalent of our word "manhood" in modern phrase, and seeking after righteousness was the distinctive peculiarity of the Hebrew religion. It bred a race of men who put into the building of themselves the attributes of truth, of justice, of humanity, of morality, of gentleness, and of humility. It reared men who had no equals, and with whom there was nothing that could compare in their own time. The Greeks built better temples than the Hebrews; but though the Hebrew hand never carved a marble, it did better—it carved men. Such was the very drift of their religion. And the apostle, having received the culture of Greece at the feet of his great teacher, and knowing what it meant, declared that his brethren sought after righteousness, but that they did not well understand what were the instruments by which the higher development of manhood was to be attained. They sought to develop righteousness by institutions; but Paul says that no race of people ever did or ever will, merely by institutions, develop the highest form of character. That must be done by following a living example under a heroic inspiration. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *No righteousness by the law*:—I. MAN'S NEED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. II. HIS UNAVAILING EFFORTS AFTER IT. Example of the Jew. III. THE CAUSE OF HIS FAILURE. He seeks it not by faith, but by works, consequently stumbles at Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The unsuccessful seeker*:—I. WHAT HE SEEKS. II. HOW HE SEEKS IT. III. THE DISAPPOINTING RESULT. IV. BECAUSE HE STUMBLES AT CHRIST. (*Ibid.*) **Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith.**—This verse plainly teaches that *the reason why one man is unsaved while others are saved* is not in God, but in himself. So always (chap. x. 3, xi. 22*f*; Matt. xxiii. 37). This by no means contradicts ver. 18, but looks at the same subject from another point. The reason why any one criminal is put to death is, if justice be done, entirely in himself. But the question whether any criminals are to be put to death rests entirely with the legislature. Those who oppose capital punishment may leave out of sight the conduct of the criminal, and speak only of what it is expedient for the government to do. And the moralist may leave out of sight the expediency of capital punishment, and speak only of the consequences of sin. Or again, the motion of the withered leaves of autumn is due entirely to the wind. They do not in the least degree even co-operate to produce their own motion. But the stones on the wayside remain unmoved. The difference arises, not from a difference of the influence brought to bear on them, but simply from this, that while the leaves yield to, the stones resist, the influence which both alike experience. So with us. That believers are justified at all springs entirely from the undeserved mercy of God, and every step towards salvation is entirely God's work in them. But the reason why when some are justified others are not, is that they put themselves by unbelief outside the number of those whom God has determined to save. When Paul replied to the objection that the gospel is inconsistent with the justice of God, he said that salvation is not a manner of justice at all, and that God bestows it on whom He will. But when explaining why the Jews have not obtained salvation, he says that the reason is in themselves. Observe also that their position is attributed not to their sin, but to their unbelief. (*Prof. Beet.*) **Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence.**—It seems strange that Jesus the Saviour of men should be set before us in this way; but the great object is to cause us to consider what our own attitude is toward Christ. Am I clinging to Him as my Rock of Safety, or am I being repelled from Him as from a rock of offence? Jesus Himself alluded to the same idea (Matt. xxi. 42–44). I. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN CHRIST'S LIFE AND WORK AT WHICH MEN STUMBLE. 1. The way He came into the world (Matt. xii. 54–57). The people stumbled at the difficulty of His lowly parentage. Yet why? for it was all predicted, and ought rather to confirm faith. 2. The surroundings of His daily life. It was with the poor that He chiefly mingled. Here, however, is a proof that Christ was Divine. God is no respecter of persons. Had Christ been a mere man with an ambition to found a kingdom, He would have sought very different society. The persons He chose for His ambassadors were themselves a proof that their religion was Divine. Without rank or riches or worldly influence, and only by the power of their words, they founded a religion which will one day conquer the world. 3. His death. This was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And now men, while willing to regard Christ as the greatest of teachers and sublimest of examples, stumble at His atonement. Yet it is this only that gives meaning to the Old Testament, and without it Christ's own teaching is inexplicable, and to stumble at it is to find a difficulty in the most convincing proof of God's love.

Instead of stumbling at it they should find it as Paul did "the power of God." II. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN THEMSELVES WHICH CAUSE MEN TO STUMBLE AT CHRIST. Christ is a stumbling stone—1. To human pride. If we are to be saved by Jesus we must as guilty sinners lay aside all trust in our own merits. God's way of salvation is too simple. If He would bid us do or suffer some great thing we would gladly do it. But is not this again unreasonable? If I will not take God's way of getting to heaven, how can I expect to get there by any other? 2. To human sins. Many would like to get to heaven, but do not like to give up their sins. But how unreasonable. 3. To human selfishness. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (*C. H. Irwin, M.A.*) *Christ a stumbling stone and rock of collision*:—1. These are astounding words. Who is the speaker? Not Paul, for he quotes Isaiah: not Isaiah, for in both passages (chap. xxviii. 16; viii. 11, 13-16) he ascribes them to Jehovah—one therefore who has a right to speak great and terrible things. What, or rather who, is referred to? It is none else than Jehovah Jesus. 2. When He, then, is represented under the alternative figure of a refuge and a stone of stumbling it is implied that men need a refuge. Why? Because men are everywhere pursued—pursued by penal evils, and that because they are themselves pursuing after evils of another kind. They love "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life," and are keenly pursuing them. One man is making life subordinate to the ignoble pursuit of sensual indulgence, others to fame and power, myriads more to wealth. But the earth on which men live belongs to God, and He has therefore a right to rule in it and over it, and having this right and being holy His malediction is lying on every form of sinful gratification. Hence every nation is pursued by a host of evils, and is time after time driven to Divine means to stave them off for a season. In vain. 3. But, what, then, is to become of each mortal man, of nations, of the great world? Let us hear the voice of God. "Behold I lay," &c. Every man's refuge is in Jehovah Jesus. "There is none other name," &c. Never till the world takes refuge on or in Him will it be happy, and as the world is but a world full of individuals, never will individual men be happy until they flee to Him. 4. But why, then, is He called "a stumbling stone and a rock of collision"? Is a stumbling stone a refuge? Is a rock of collision an asylum? Undoubtedly. It is just according as Christ is made use of as that He will be found to be one or the other. That which is our greatest boon when rightly used may become our utter ruin when abused. Fire and water are among our greatest blessings, but if a man will leap into a blazing furnace, or into a seething flood it will be his destruction. Look how steam engines have multiplied the comforts of life! But if a man will rush into machinery in full motion, all the world's comforts will in one moment cease to be comforts available to him. The same principle holds good in the relation of Jehovah Jesus to men. If they use Him aright He will prove a sanctuary, but if they insist on going on as if He were not in existence at all then He will be a rock of dreadful collision, and they will rush upon Him and be broken and ruined. The Divine idea is this: if men will have none of Jesus, and run on in their way without deigning to look so low as to see Jesus, the interests they pursue must come into terrific collision with the interests He pursues; and whensoever the collision comes, they and they only, will suffer. They will be like fugitives from a flood, who dash with all their highest pressure of force full on, upon a jagged rock. The rock will remain uninjured; but they will fall and be broken, and the flood will overtake and overwhelm them. But there is the sweet addition to the potentous threatening "Whosoever believeth on Him," the Rock of Ages, "shall not be ashamed." His security is certain. The rain may descend, &c., but his hopes will not fail because they are founded upon the Rock. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Unbelievers stumbling; believers rejoicing*:—Our apostle was inspired, and yet he was moved to quote the Old Testament, and thus he sets us an example of searching the Scriptures. The passage is composed of two Scriptures woven into one. A part is found in Isaiah xxviii. 16; of which the apostle gives us rather the sense than the words, and another part in Isaiah viii. 14. In the latter of these passages we have a striking proof of Christ's divinity. Observe ver. 13, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself . . . and He shall be for a sanctuary" to believers; "but a stone of stumbling," &c. Isaiah utters a prophecy of the Lord of Hosts, Paul quotes it in reference to the Lord Jesus, plainly intending us to infer that Christ is no other than Jehovah. In his quotation from the former the apostle has omitted the words "for a foundation," and has inserted the words of the other passage, "a stumbling stone, a rock of offence." But the original prophecy serves to show that

God's real object in laying Christ in Zion was not that men might stumble at Him, but that He might be a foundation for their hopes; but the result has been that to one set of men Christ has become a sanctuary and a stone of dependence; and to others a stumbling stone. Note—I. THAT MANY STUMBLE AT CHRIST. 1. No sooner did He commence His ministry than men began to stumble at Him. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" was the question of those who looked for worldly pomp. "His father and His mother, we know," was the whispered objection of His own townsmen. In His own country the greatest of all prophets had no honour. The Pharisee stumbled at Him, because He did not wash His hands before He ate, nor make broad His phylactery. He healed the sick upon the Sabbath; He had no respect for traditions, and befriended publicans and sinners. The Sadducee, on the other hand, detested Jesus, because His teaching had in it very much of the supernatural element. All His life long, in the high courts of Herod or of Pilate, or in the lowest rank of the mob of Judæa, Christ was despised and rejected of men. But the Jew was not alone in his offence at the Cross. The polished Greeks, when they heard Paul preach, they saw nothing flattering to their philosophy, and therefore they openly mocked. In every age Christ has been rejected by the very men whom He came to bless. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." 2. However, we have very little to do with these past ages. There are amongst us some who stumble at Christ because of—(1) His holiness. He is too strict for them. Christ offends men because His gospel is intolerant of sin. (2) His plan of salvation by faith. They say, "What, are our good works to go for nothing?" This is too humbling. (3) The doctrine He preaches, more especially the doctrines of grace. If we preach virtue some will say, "I enjoyed that discourse"; but if we preach Christ, and begin to talk about the deep doctrines which lie underneath the gospel, straightway they are angry. Ah! Christ will not shape His doctrine to suit thy carnal taste. (4) His people and their inconsistencies. As though it is an excuse for going to hell because others do not walk straight to heaven. What if David falls and is restored, is this any reason why thou shouldst fall and never be restored? The shipwrecks of others should only make thee sail more carefully. (5) The real objection, however, is Christ Himself. You will not have this man to reign over you. If thou hast no objection to Christ, accept Him. 3. Now let me reason with those who have made Christ a stumbling stone. (1) Hast thou ever considered how much thou insultest God the Father by rejecting Christ? Would it not bring the blood into thy face if thou shouldst give thine only son to fight for thy country, and they to whom he was given should despise thee and thy gift? (2) What a proof is here of thy sinfulness, and how readily wilt thou be condemned at the last when this sin is written on thy forehead. There will be no reason to bring up any other sins against thee. Thou hast objected to God's dear Son, why need we any other witness? (3) How will this increase thy misery? Dost thou think God will be tender over thee when thou hast not been tender with His Son? How can you escape if you neglect so great salvation? You have broken down the only bridge which could have led you into safety. II. WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED. Notice—1. When those who trust Christ might be ashamed of having trusted Him. (1) Well might they be ashamed if Christ should ever leave them. (2) If Christ should fail them either as to providence or grace in times of trial and temptation. (3) If Christ's promises were not fulfilled. (4) If when he came to die he should find no support. But have ye ever heard of a Christian who was ashamed in his dying hour? 2. Why they might be ashamed if such things were to come. (1) We have ventured our all upon Christ. The world says you should never put all your eggs in one basket, and the world is quite right in human things. But here are we, we are depending everything upon one man. If He can fail us, we are of all men most miserable. (2) We have given up this life for the next. The world's proverb is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," but we, on the other hand, have said that the bird in the hand is nothing at all, that the bird in the bush is everything. Now, if things should turn out wrong, and we have believed in vain, then we shall be ashamed of our hope, but not till then, and that shall be never. (3) We began boasting before we had ended the battle. You have boasted in Christ; you have said that He is a sure foundation, but if He should fail you, why then you would be in the position of a man who boasted before the time. But we shall never be ashamed. (4) We have actually divided the spoil; and oh! if the battle should be lost, then we should be ashamed. The French once, before the battle began, commenced selling the English captives,

but then, fortunately, they never gained the victory. But you and I have already entered into our rest; and if it should be a delusion we should be ashamed, but not till then. (5) Men are ashamed when they have made a bad speculation, because they have induced others to enter into it. You and I have been inducing others to embark in this great venture. Oh, sweet assurance, we have not preached cunningly devised fables, and shall never be ashamed. 3. Who are they who shall never be ashamed? "Whosoever believeth"—that is, any man who ever lived, or ever shall live, who believes in Christ, shall never be ashamed. Whether he has been a gross sinner or a moralist; whether he be a prince or a beggar, it matters not. 4. The text means more than it says, viz., the believers shall be glorified and full of honour. If thou trustest Christ to-day, it will bring shame from men, it will ensure trials, but it will also ensure honour in the sight of God's holy angels and glory at the last in the sight of the assembled universe. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

A common stumbling block:—A preacher of the gospel had gone down into a coal mine during the noon hour to tell the miners of that grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. After telling them the simple story of God's love to lost sinners—man's state and God's remedy, a full and free salvation offered, the time came for the men to resume work, and the preacher came back to the shaft to ascend to the world again. Meeting the foreman, he asked him what he thought of God's way of salvation. The man replied, "Oh, it is too cheap: I cannot believe in such a religion as that!" Without an immediate answer to his remark, the preacher asked: "How do you get out of this place?" "Simply by getting into the cage," was the reply. "And does it take long to get to the top?" "Oh, no; only a few seconds!" "Well, that certainly is very easy and simple. But do you not need to help raise yourself?" said the preacher. "Of course not!" replied the miner. "As I have said, you have nothing to do but get into the cage." "But what about the people who sunk the shaft, and perfected all this arrangement? Was there much labour or expense about it?" "Indeed, yes; that was a laborious and expensive work. The shaft is eighteen hundred feet deep, and it was sunk at great cost to the proprietor; but it is our only way out, and without it we should never be able to get to the surface." "Just so. And when God's Word tells you that whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, you at once say, 'Too cheap!'—'Too cheap!' forgetting that God's work to bring you and others out of the pit of destruction and death was accomplished at a vast cost, the price being the death of His own Son." Men talk about the "help of Christ" in their salvation—that if they do their part, Christ will do His, forgetting, or not seeing, that the Lord Jesus Christ by Himself purged our sins, and that our part is but to accept what has been done. *A reliable salvation:*—My friends, I do not want to make an experiment about my own soul. I cannot afford to do it. I have but one soul to be saved or lost, and if you can show to me that this gospel of Jesus Christ is an experiment, I want nothing to do with it. I do not want to go on a trial trip. Some years ago, in the Canadas, there was a bridge built over an awful chasm. Far down beneath the waters rushed very violently. After this costly and beautiful bridge was done, the day for opening it came. Thousands of people assembled. Flags were flying, guns were sounding. There was a large coach drawn by six horses, a coach loaded with passengers, and at just the advertised moment, the architect of the bridge, to show that the structure was what it pretended to be, mounted the box of this coach, took the reins in his hands, and started, amid the huzzas of thousands and thousands of people. He drove on until he came to the centre of the bridge, when the timbers cracked, and all went down—some dashed against the abutments, some whelmed in the stream. You tell me that there is a bridge built for my soul over sin, and death, and hell, and you ask me to go on it, and ask me to take all these people on it. No; unless I am sure it is a safe bridge. But this is no experiment. We are not the first to go over it. Scores, and hundreds, and thousands have gone over it. "A great multitude that no man can number," have gone over it. That bridge is buttressed at one end with the "Rock of Ages," and at the other with the throne of the Lord God Almighty, and I am not afraid to trust it. Will you go with me to-day? Venture on Him. Venture wholly. No experiment about it. If it had been an unsafe salvation, your fathers and mothers would long ago have found it out. Oh, what a glorious salvation from sin, and death, and hell! Peter preached it at the Pentecost, and there went up the shout of three thousand delivered captives. Paul preached it in official circles, and the knees of Felix knocked together. Robert McCheyne preached it in Dundee until all Scotland was in a blaze. Richard Baxter preached it until Lord

Jeffries trembled on the judicial bench, and James II. turned pale on his iniquitous throne, and hundreds of souls started from Kidderminster for the saints' everlasting rest. It has dried up rivers of tears. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

CHAPTER X.

VERS. 1–13. **Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.**—*Paul's desire and prayer*:—I. PREDESTINATION SHOULD BE NO BARRIER IN THE WAY OF PRAYER. The text derives a special interest from the very position which it occupies. He who saw the farthest into the counsels of the Divinity above, saw nothing there which should affect either the diligence or the devotions of any humble worshipper below. However indelibly the ultimate futurities of man are written in the book of heaven, this should not foreclose but rather stimulate his prayers. Let us quit arduous speculation, and keep by obvious duty —taking our lesson from Paul, who, though just alighted from the daring ascents among the past ordinations of the Godhead, forthwith busies himself among the plain and the present duties of the humble Christian. Theology has its altitudes shooting upwardly to heaven till lost in the cloudy envelopment which surrounds them. Yet there is a clear path which winds around its basement, and by which the lowliest of Zion's travellers may find an ascending way that will land him in a place of purest transparency, where he shall know even as he is known. II. UNLESS THE DESIRE OF THE HEART GOES BEFORE IT, IT IS NO PRAYER AT ALL. The virtue does not lie in the articulation, but altogether in the wish which prompts it. It is thus that we can pray without ceasing. In the case of prayer, God has committed Himself to the amplest promises of fulfilment; but He is not pledged to the accomplishment of any prayer where the desire of the heart does not originate the utterance of the mouth. The want of such desire nullifies the prayer; and to imagine otherwise would be to countenance the superstition that a religious service consists in mere ceremonial. Be assured of this and of every other ordinance of Christianity, that, unless impregnated with life and meaning, it is but a body without a soul—a mere service which the hand can perform, but which the heart with all its high functions has no share in. It stands in the same relation of inferiority to genuine religion that the drudgery of an animal does to the devotion of a seraph. In one word, if in the doing of any ordinance there be not the intercourse of mind with mind, there substantially is nothing; and yet we fear it to be just such a nothingness as is yielded by many who are regular in prayer, and who walk with decency and order through the rounds of a sacrament. III. THE SUBJECT OF THE PRAYER. "That Israel might be saved." 1. It is not all desire that will meet with acceptance in heaven, for the same Scripture which holds out the promise of "ask, and ye shall receive," has also held out the warning that many ask and receive not "because they ask amiss." 2. Still, Scripture does furnish the principles by which to discriminate the warrantable from the unwarrantable, and so classifies the topics of prayer. It is written "that if we ask any thing according to His will He heareth us." This does not confer a sanction upon every suit, but certainly upon a vast number of them. Thus, surely, every petition in the Lord's Prayer may be preferred with utmost confidence; and so it is that while we have no warrant to pray for this world's riches, we have a perfect warrant to pray for daily bread. The same principle of agreeableness to the will of God sustains our faith, when praying for the salvation of ourselves or others, being expressly told that God willeth such intercessions to be made for all men, and on this ground too that He willeth all men to be saved. 3. So near does God bring salvation to us that there is no obstacle between our sincere wish for it and our secure possession of it. At least there is but one stepping-stone between them; and that is prayer. And so let us ask till we receive—let us seek till we find—let us knock till the door of salvation is opened to us. IV. THE WHOLE EXTENT AND IMPORT OF THE TERM SALVATION. 1. Its common acceptance is a deliverance from the penalty of sin. Whereas, additionally to this, it signifies deliverance from sin itself. "He shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins"—save them from a great deal more than the torment of sin's penalty, even from the tyranny of sin's power. The first secures for the sinner a change of place, the second a change of principle.

This last is the constituting essence of salvation; the other more the accompaniment. The one takes place after death. The other takes place now. 2. The legitimate desire, then, which should animate the heart when the mouth utters a prayer for salvation is for a future happiness, but also for a present holiness. Man might like to be put into a state of happiness without holiness; but God does not like that such a happiness shall be conferred upon him. It is most assuredly not God's will that heaven should be peopled with any but those who are of the same family likeness with Himself. He loves the happiness of His creatures, but He loves their virtue more. And so from Paradise all that offendeth shall be rooted out. Now remember that in praying to be saved, you just pray that such a heaven may be the place of your settlement through all eternity. Else there is no significancy in your prayer. It is not enough that you seize by faith on a deed of justification. You must enter forthwith on a busy process of sanctification. Now that a way for the ransomed of the Lord is open, let us forget not that it is a way of holiness. There is a work of salvation going on in heaven, and by which Jesus Christ is there employed in preparing a place for us. But there is also a work of salvation going on in earth, and by which Jesus Christ through His Word and Spirit is here employed in preparing us for the place. And our distinct business is to be ever practising and ever improving ourselves in the virtues of this preparation. This desire for salvation, then, if rightly understood, is desire for a present holiness. V. But THIS IS AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER, and suggests what we ought to do for the salvation of those who are dear to us. Paul had made many a vain effort for the salvation of his countrymen; but after every effort failed, still he had recourse to prayer. The desire of his heart was not extinguished by the disappointment he met with. 1. This might serve as admonition to those whose hearts are set on the salvation of relatives or friends—to the mother who has watched and laboured for years that the good seed might have fixture in the hearts of her children, but does not find that this precious deposit has yet settled or had occupation there, &c., &c. Let them never forget, that what has heretofore been impracticable to performance may not be impracticable to prayer. With man it may be impossible; but with God all things are possible. That cause which has so oft been defeated and is now hopeless on the field of exertion, may on the field of prayer and of faith be triumphant. God willeth intercessions to be made for all men, and He willeth all men to be saved. These declarations place you on firm and high vantage-ground in praying for souls. This, however, is a matter on which parents may delude themselves. They may be glad to stand exonerated from the fatigues of performance, and take refuge in the formalities of prayer. That prayer never can avail which is not the prayer of honesty, and it is not the prayer of honesty if, even though you pray to the uttermost for the religion of others, you do not also perform to the uttermost. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Paul's desire and prayer:*—Notice here—I. THE APOSTLE. Observe—1. That ministers are not only to preach against wicked persons, and to exhort their people to obedience, but also to pray for them, as Samuel and Jeremiah did (1 Sam. xii. 23; Jer. xiii. 17). 2. When ministers are to speak of a matter that may distaste, they must wisely prevent all offence by preparing the minds of the hearers, and showing that they speak out of love, and a desire of their salvation. As physicians prepare, and nurses sometimes still their little ones with singing, so also must ministers attempt every way which may profit their people. 3. Paul loves the Jews, but tells them plainly of their faults; so must ministers do. The way to get peace among men is not to reprove, but this is the way to lose the peace of God. 4. The condition of ministers is painful. The care to save souls that we may give up a good account is infinite. But our joy is in the conscionable discharge of our duty, and for such as receive the Word with reverence we praise God for the joy wherewith we rejoice on their behalf (1 Thess. iii. 9). II. THE CHRISTIAN. Observe—1. Though the Jews seek Paul's life, yet he loves them. We are Pharisees by nature, loving our friends and hating our foes, but we are Christians by grace, and therefore must love our enemies and pray for them, as our Saviour taught and practised. Every man can love his friend, but only a godly man can love his enemy; and in this doing we do ourselves more good than our enemies. If, then, thou canst so rule thine affection as to love thine enemy and pray for him, it will be a sweet comfort to thy breast. 2. Paul's love was hearty; so let thine be. Some, after a controversy is ended, will promise friendship, but with a reservation of revenge. Judas kissed Christ, and betrayed Him; and Joab saluted Amasa courteously and slew him. Remember thou to mean the truth thou makest show of. 3. Let thy love appear in kind

words and salutations, as Paul calls the Jews brethren, which condemns the practice of some, who, if they be offended, show that they are possessed either with a dumb devil—they will not speak; or with a railing devil—if they speak it shall be with taunts and reproaches. 4. Pray for them thou lovest. Thou shalt never have any comfort of his friendship for whom thou dost not pray. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Paul's chief desire for his countrymen*:—I. A TITLE WHICH SHOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. "Brethren" has in its surroundings here more than one lesson for us. Did we remember this in the world, what a very much better world it would be; how much more and truer interest we would take in each other; how much less selfishness, how much more sympathy there would be felt and manifested. And, then, if we remembered it in the church, how much liker Christ the Church and Christians would be. II. A MARRIAGE WHICH NONE SHOULD DIVORCE. "My heart's desire and prayer to God." Let these two always be united. Then our heart's desires shall be right, and our prayers real; and then too our heart's desires shall be granted, our prayers answered. View the phrase for a moment from both sides. First, as it stands. Whatever is our heart's desire, let us make it our prayer to God. For several reasons we should do so; but to mention only two, one is, should our heart's desire be wrong, we shall find ourselves unable to pray for it; or in the very praying for it we shall discover its wrongness; and so praying against it we shall get rid of it, and rid too of the distraction which it causes. And the second is, if on the other hand our heart's desire be right, prayer to God is the true way and the sure way to secure it. Turn also the phrase about, and learn from it another lesson. Our prayer to God should be, and ever, our heart's desire, and we do not pray really until or unless it is so. III. A PATRIOTISM ABOVE SUSPICION: "FOR ISRAEL." Not all so-called patriotism is above suspicion. Sometimes it is simply partyism, and the interests of a section are sought, not of the nation as a whole. Sometimes, again, patriotism is but personalism; apparently zealous for the country or for the party, some are simply seeking through the party to serve and secure their own individual interests. Such patriotism bears the name, but it is not the thing. The patriotism, however, here exemplified, is of another stamp. It is patriotism of the highest kind and type. IV. A NEED WHICH IS THE MOST IMPERATIVE. "That they might be saved." Paul tells us elsewhere that he felt this need the most imperative for himself. He says, "I count all things but loss," &c. (Phil. iii. 8, 9). And so here he speaks of it in the same way for others. And is it not so? Is this not the principal thing? What about health; what about wealth; what about all the gratification of earthly pleasures, the carrying out of earthly plans, the establishing of earthly prospects in comparison, or rather in contrast, with this? We need to be saved because we have sinned, and because we are already under sentence, and because we are utterly unable to remove or to escape that sentence by any merits or by any efforts of our own. And let us rejoice that we may be saved. God is not willing that any should perish. V. AN EARNESTNESS WHICH MAY BE AN ERROR. "For I bear them record," he continues, "that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." This may be said too about many of our countrymen. They put us to shame by the attention they pay to religious rights and duties. It might be said too about some amongst ourselves. But let us remember religiousness is not always religion. To be saved, we must come to a knowledge of the truth. Mere earnestness, mere sincerity will not avail. VI. AN IGNORANCE WHICH IS QUITE INEXCUSABLE. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness." God's righteousness means here, God's method of justification; and this phrase suggesting the question, what is that method? may I not characterise ignorance of it as quite inexcusable. God has so plainly, and fully, and repeatedly revealed it in His Word, "that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." See the succeeding verses here from the 5th to the 10th. VII. AN EFFORT WHICH MUST ALWAYS BE A FAILURE. "And going about to establish their own righteousness." Many would like to be saved, but they do not like to be beholden to Christ for salvation; or at all events they do not like to be beholden to Him entirely. And so they "go about to establish their own righteousness," wearying themselves for very vanity. The apostles idea or image here would seem to be as if men in this attempt were trying continuously to set up upon its feet that which had no feet to stand upon; or as if they were persevering with stones unsquared, and mortar untempered to raise up, upon an insecure foundation, a wall which, ever as they raised it, tottered and toppled down again. VIII. AN OBSTINACY WHICH MUST END IN RUIN. That is, it must do so if we continue it. If we will not submit ourselves to the righteousness of God; if, in other words, we

will not consent to be saved through the redemption and righteousness of Christ; then we utterly shut the door of hope against ourselves, and leave God no alternative but to pronounce our doom. Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him; but there is no salvation in any other. IX. A DIRECTION WHICH IS SIMPLE AND CERTAIN. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." In order to salvation men can do nothing; but Christ has done all; He "has made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness." X. A *sine quâ non* OF SALVATION. Many forget or fail to realise this: and therefore look for salvation to mercy alone. They do not take into account that if the sinner is to be saved, he cannot under the administration of God the righteous judge be so by any suspension of law, or setting aside of it; or by any failure to meet its just demands either of precept or punishment. In the salvation of the sinner, in other words, truth and mercy must meet together; and righteousness and peace embrace each other: and these can only meet, can only embrace in "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." XI. AN OPPORTUNITY ABUNDANTLY OPEN TO ALL. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." XII. A MEANS SUBLIMELY SIMPLE TO A SALVATION SUBLIMELY SURE AND GLORIOUS. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (*D. Jamison, B.A.*) *A comprehensive desire*:—Paul had just spoken with apparent severity of his brethren. To them his doctrines were peculiarly offensive. They must have regarded him as a traitor. Still he loved his kindred, and his loving heart gushes forth in this comprehensive desire. It is—I. HEARTFELT. "My heart's desire." Not all who are interested in the salvation of men are influenced by this desire. There may be—1. A professional desire. The evangelist, the teacher, the pastor may have it. 2. A duteous desire. Better this than none. 3. An intellectual desire. Paul's intellect was active, but it was sweetly submissive to Christ. All this gave him power. It gives power to-day. This is true of music, of art, of poetry. No heart, no power. Love evokes love. Heart responds to heart. II. PRAYERFUL. Genuine desire must voice itself in prayer. Our heart's desire is our prayer. The heart that goes out to men must go up to God. Often the shortest and surest way to reach men is by way of God's throne. III. FRATERNAL. Paul was a cosmopolitan man; still he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. The Christian is the true Jew. Judaism is the root; Christianity is the flower and the fruit. Judaism the dawn; Christianity is the splendour of noon. When Paul became a Christian he found that for which he always sought. Now he longs for his brethren. So ought we. There is a sanctified patriotism. IV. EVANGELICAL. "That they might be saved." This was Christlike. Nothing short of this could satisfy the apostle. Not enough for them to be saved from national disaster; not enough from earthly sorrow. They must be saved from sin here, and death hereafter. Are you saved? Then make Paul's comprehensive desire yours. (*R. S. MacArthur, D.D.*) *Apostolic patriotism*:—St. Paul was not more distinguished as a saint and an apostle than as a patriot. His patriotism had a philosophy which discovered the cause of his country's evils, and a policy exquisitely fitted to remove them. Without ignoring its temporal interests, his main endeavour was to raise its benighted intellect to light, and turn the current of its moral sympathies into the channel of truth and holiness. It was not an occasional sentiment passing off in chanting national airs or delivering florid speeches; it was with him a "heart's desire and prayer to God." It was consistent with, and a development of, true philanthropy. The passion that inspires men to ruin other countries in order to aggrandise their own, has no affinity with the apostle's passion. The statesmen, warriors, kings, who violate the eternal rights of man, bring a ruinous retribution upon their country. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The apostle's patriotism—I. SOUGHT THE HIGHEST GOOD OF HIS COUNTRY. What was that? Augmented wealth, extended dominion, a higher state of intellectual culture? No, salvation. Salvation is the master-theme of the Bible, the great want of the race. It implies deliverance from all evil, and a right state of soul in which every thought shall be true, every emotion felicitous, every act holy, and every scene gleaming with the smiles of an approving God. This "heart's desire" implies a conviction—1. That his countrymen needed salvation. Their physical blessings were great; his brethren "according to the flesh" lived in a beautiful country. "It was a land flowing with milk and honey." His countrymen had also the oracles of God, &c. Yet in spite of all this the apostle regarded his brethren as lost. He looked into the moral heart of his country, and he found that the soul was dead and dark under sin and condemnation; hence he sought

their salvation. Whatever else a country has, if it has not true religion it is lost. This is its great want. Give it this, and every other good will come. All political and social evils grow out of moral causes, and godliness alone can remove these. It is profitable therefore unto all things. 2. A conviction that the salvation of his countrymen requires the interposition of God. Why else did he pray? The apostle believed in the adaptation of the gospel to effect the spiritual restoration of mankind. His triumphs he ever gratefully ascribed to the agency of God, and the co-operation of that agency was the grand invocation of his most earnest prayers. "I have planted, Apollos watered," &c. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." 3. A conviction that this interposition of God is to be obtained by intercessory prayer. Hence he prays for others; hence he calls for others to pray for him and his apostolic coadjutors. I know not how prayer influences the Almighty, nor why it should; but I know that it does, and that it must be employed if human labour in His cause is ever to be crowned with efficiency. The true patriot is a man of prayer. Never did David act more truly a patriot's part than when he breathed this prayer to heaven:—"Let the people praise Thee, O God," &c. II. RECOGNISED THE CHARACTERISTIC EVILS OF HIS COUNTRY. 1. Corrupt zealotism (ver. 2). He himself had been a Jewish zealot, and was therefore qualified to pronounce a judgment upon it. Zeal is an important element in every undertaking. There is not much success where it is not. But when it is dissociated from intelligence it is fraught with evils. Zeal when directed to wrong objects, when directed to right objects in wrong proportions, and when it cannot assign an intelligent reason for its action, is "zeal without knowledge." This zeal was one of the cardinal evils amongst the Jews. Knowledge and zeal should always be associated. The former without the latter is a well-equipped vessel on a placid sea without the propulsion of steam, billow, or breeze. The latter without the former is like a bark on the billows with propulsion and no rudder. Both combined is like a goodly ship trading from port to port at will, steering clear of dangers, coping gallantly with hostile elements, and fulfilling the mission of its masters. 2. Ignorance of Christianity (ver. 3). By "God's righteousness," here, we understand not His personal rectitude, but that merciful method by which He makes corrupt men right (chap. viii. 2, 3). Of this method the Jews were "ignorant." Men perish for the lack of this knowledge. In the case of the Jew it was not only ruinous, but culpable. They had the means of knowledge. 3. Self-righteousness (ver. 2). They considered their own righteousness to consist in their patriarchal descent, and their conformity to the letter of the law. In this they gloried as that which distinguished them from all the nations of the earth, and which met the righteous claims of Heaven. The apostle himself once felt this to be his glory (Phil. iii.). The Pharisee in the temple was a type of the leading religious sect, and his language is expressive of its spirit. 4. Gospel rejection. "Have not submitted," &c. This is the grand result of all other evils, and the crowning sin of all. They refused the only Physician who could heal their diseases; the only Liberator that could break their fetters, the only Priest whose sacrifice could atone for their guilt. Such are some of the evils which Paul as a patriot discovered and deplored in his country. He is no patriot who shuts his eyes to his country's crimes, and pours into her ears the most fulsome eulogies. Call not this patriotism; call it moral obliquity. III. PROPOSED THE RIGHT METHOD FOR SAVING HIS COUNTRY (ver. 4). Note—1. That righteousness is essential to the well-being of the people. There is no true happiness without righteousness. All the social, political, religious, moral evils under which all men and nations groan, spring from the want of righteousness. As no individual can be happy until he has been made thoroughly right in heart, so no people or country can. This rectitude is the only element that can work off all the evils that afflict mankind, and give them the tone and blessedness of a vigorous health. This is the only key-note that can set the discordant elements of the world to music. The righteousness which is essential to the salvation of a soul, is that which alone "exalteth a nation." 2. That the grand aim of the moral law is to promote righteousness. Righteousness is the end of the law. The law was holy, just, and good. Conformity to it is righteousness in the creature (ver. 5). 3. That the righteousness which the law aimed to promote is to be obtained by faith in Christ (ver. 4). Christ did not abolish law, on the contrary He fulfilled it. He wrought out its principles in a grand life; He demonstrated its majesty in a wonderful death. Instead of releasing His disciples from obligation to the law, He brings the law to them with a mightier aspect and a greater force of motive. And the apostle's method

of making the sinner righteous is by faith in Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Paul's concern for his people*:—ITS OBJECT—their salvation. II. THE CAUSE OF IT (chap. ix. 32). III. ITS INTENSITY. 1. Heartfelt. 2. Inspired by the Spirit of God and belief of the truth. IV. ITS EXPRESSION. 1. Prayer to God. 2. Effort. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The salvation of Israel*:—I. CONTEMPLATE THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE, and judge whether it deserves our respect and veneration. And first, reflect on its antiquity. Before the empire of Persia was founded, when Greece was overrun by a few barbarian hordes, and Italy was an unpeopled wilderness, the race of Abraham was chosen by the Divine Founder of all empires as one distinct and peculiar people; incorporated by an inviolable charter from the Supreme Monarch of the universe, no human power has been able, for four thousand years, to dissolve its union, or shake its stability. But if this nation is venerable, as the grand depository of historical truth and ancient wisdom, much more is it distinguished and consecrated as the chosen instrument which the Divinity has employed for the religious instruction of mankind, the guardians and witnesses of every sacred truth; the hallowed fount which, springing from the sanctuary of God, has poured forth in unceasing and abundant profusion its healing and holy waters, to purify and bless the surrounding regions of the earth. But, beyond all this, in considering the blessings derived to us and all mankind from the Jewish law and the Jewish people, we never should forget the clearness and solemnity with which the great rules of moral conduct are promulgated in the Decalogue, and the two grand principles of love to God and love to our neighbour inculcated by the Jewish law. What a powerful claim to the respect, the gratitude of every man who values virtue or reveres religion must such a people possess, if we consider them merely as the depositaries and guardian of natural theology, the preservers and teachers of moral principle; but they are connected with us by ties much closer, they possess claims on our regard far more sacred: they were the instruments employed by God to prepare for the dominion of the gospel of Christ. II. LET US NEXT PROCEED TO ENQUIRE HOW HAVE CHRISTIANS ANSWERED ALL THESE CLAIMS, how have they repaid this debt of gratitude? Alas, almost incredible to tell, their conduct towards this chosen nation has been one almost uninterrupted series of cruelty and calumny, of oppression and persecution. I do not mean to say that such cruelty and persecution were unprovoked and gratuitous; but I contend that however great the provocation, such cruelty and persecution were unjust and criminal. Would we vindicate our holy religion from the foulest reproach that ever stained its character, we will atone for the past oppressions heaped upon this ancient though unhappy race, by straining every nerve to promote from henceforward their happiness both temporal and eternal. III. But what, you ask, are THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES WHICH ENCOURAGE US NOW TO HOPE FOR SUCCESS in attempting the conversion of the Jews rather than at any preceding period of the world. (*Dean Graves.*) *How to promote the salvation of others*:—I. OUR HEARTS MUST BE IN THE WORK. It must be—1. Our most earnest desire. 2. Our constant prayer. II. WE MUST CORRECTLY ESTIMATE THEIR STATE AND CONDITION. 1. Appreciating what is good. 2. Discriminating what is defective. III. WE MUST GUARD THEM AGAINST—1. Error. 2. Ignorance. 3. Self-righteousness. 4. Unbelief. IV. WE MUST POINT THEM TO CHRIST. 1. The end of the law. 2. Through faith. (*Ibid.*) *Zeal for the salvation of sinners*:—True religion consists chiefly in love to God and love to man; and wherever one of these is found, there is the other also. Observe—I. THAT SERIOUS CHRISTIANS PLAINLY PERCEIVE THE DANGEROUS STATE OF UNCONVERTED SINNERS AROUND THEM. This state appears from—1. Their openly living in sin. 2. Their carelessness about religion. 3. Their formality in religion. 4. Their reception for truth of great and fundamental errors as to the doctrines of religion. II. THAT SERIOUS CHRISTIANS EARNESTLY AND SINCERELY DESIRE THE SALVATION OF THEIR NEIGHBOURS, WHOM THEY THUS PERCEIVE TO BE IN A DANGEROUS STATE. 1. We tremble to think of their future misery (chap. i. 18). 2. As we wish to prevent their future destruction, so we earnestly desire that they may share with us in the joys and glories of the heavenly world. 3. We wish them to know and enjoy the present pleasures of true religion. 4. We wish the salvation of others on account of the glory of God, for which we feel ourselves concerned, and which will be promoted thereby. 5. Beside all, we have some view to our own peace and happiness. The conversion of a soul is the greatest honour and happiness, next to our own salvation, that we can enjoy. III. IN WHAT MANNER THIS DESIRE OUGHT TO BE EXPRESSED. 1. By prayer. 2. By urging our friends to come and hear the gospel.

3. By the Christian education of children—our own and our neighbour's. 4. By personal exhortation. 5. By a holy life. (*G. Burder.*) *Zeal for the conversion of relatives*:—"I can't die till I see my brother converted." So said a very aged Karen chief to Mr. Mason. He had just returned from a last visit to this brother, who lived a long day's journey from him. Too feeble to walk, he had made the journey on the back of a grandson, a fine intelligent Christian, whose willingness to perform the laborious service was worthy of the zeal with which the old man forgot his aching bones in the delight he felt at having once more exhorted his brother, and seen in him some evidences of Divine grace. (*Mrs. McLeod Wylie.*) *Israel a lamentable example of the blindness of unbelief*:—I. THEIR ZEAL FOR THE LAW. 1. Pitiable (ver. 1). 2. Ignorant (vers. 2, 3). 3. Ruinous, because misguided (ver. 4). II. THEIR REJECTION OF CHRIST. 1. Relying on their own unavailing effort (vers. 5–7). 2. Refusing the word of faith (vers. 8–9). 3. Denying the salvation of the gospel. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *On zeal*:—The conversion of Paul did not cool the ardour of his affection for his countrymen. Fidelity impelled him to expose their errors, but charity inclined him to notice what was commendable. They were honest in their zeal; but honesty can make no atonement for dangerous errors or perverse abuses. They were ignorant, but they shut their eyes to the light. I. The apostle here ascribes to the Jews AN ESSENTIAL AND MOST VALUABLE PROPERTY OF THE CHRISTIAN, AND MORE ESPECIALLY OF THE MINISTERIAL CHARACTER. Two things seemed to be included under it—ardour, as opposed to lukewarmness, and activity, as opposed to remissness. It implies that the object which has called it forth is held in the highest estimation by us; that our hearts, engaged in the love and animated by the desire of it, prompt us to make every effort to secure its attainment. Christian zeal consists in the warm exercise of the graces of the Spirit, issuing in the decided and growing production of the fruits of the Spirit. It is founded on an enlightened and firmly-rooted conviction of the truth of the gospel. In its exercise, zeal, like charity, must begin at home. The man who searches abroad for evils to remedy, and overlooks those which attach to himself, is either a hypocrite or a fool, or both. But zeal, though it begins, does not terminate with ourselves. It feels for the honour of God and the souls of men, and endeavours to advance the one and save the other. When this principle is wanting, religion is an empty name, a lifeless carcass. But though there cannot be religion without zeal, there may be zeal without religion. Note some of the defects of that zeal which the apostle condemns. 1. It was exerted in contending for matters of inferior moment, and neglected those which were of supreme importance. The Jews expended the strength of their zeal on points of form and ceremony, and overlooked the weightier matters of the law. Those who are most ignorant or indifferent in regard to what is essential are invariably the most violent and tenacious in regard to what is circumstantial. Liberality, it is true, may be carried to a dangerous extreme, but so may intolerance, and it is better to err on the side of charity than to incur the imputation of bigotry. The object of zeal is to make converts, not proselytes; to bring accessions to the Church from the world, not to transfer the members of one religious denomination to another. 2. It was ostentatious and presuming. They wore broad phylacteries, said long prayers at the corners of the streets, &c. Our Lord saw through the disguise of their fair professions and their hollow sanctity, and inculcated a course of conduct quite the reverse of theirs. The zeal of which He approves is not that which assumes useless singularities, and is ever urging its claims to public admiration. It is not the men that make the most noise that do the greatest good. 3. It was overbearing and uncharitable. They excluded from the pale of the Church all who did not think as they thought and do as they did. It would have been well had the intolerant spirit of the Jews died with themselves; but it has, in this enlightened age, made its appearance in a most offensive and injurious form. When we see individuals setting themselves up as the only true Christians on earth, denouncing the religion of the whole world, except their own, we know not whether most to pity or to blame. As perfection is not attainable here, neither probably is uniformity. II. FROM THEIR DEFECTS LET US NOW LEARN WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF ZEAL IN US. To escape the charge which the Jews deservedly incurred, ours must be—1. An enlightened zeal formed and regulated by clear, comprehensive, and correct views of truth and duty. Without this, zeal is a most dangerous principle. There are no extravagances which it will not practise; there are no cruelties which it will not perpetrate. Before his conversion Paul had zeal, but it was not according to knowledge (Phil. iii.). 2. Pure zeal; a zeal influenced by

gospel motives and animated by Christ's Spirit. Jehu boasted of his zeal for the Lord; but he had no higher aim than the gratification of his own ambition. In requesting our Lord to command fire from heaven for the destruction of the Samaritans, the disciples discovered an impure zeal, and spake under the influence of national prejudices and irritated feelings. 3. Prudent zeal: guarding against every avoidable occasion of offence to others; displaying all the wisdom of the serpent in selecting means and opportunities of doing good, and employing them with a tender regard to the feelings and prejudices of others. Destitute of this property, zeal is calculated to do far more harm than good, and awakens aversion where it should conciliate love. 4. Peaceable; calm in its exercise; prompting to no foolish extravagances; disposed to put the most favourable construction on others, and discovering a sincere regard for their welfare. 5. Decided zeal; above the meanness of all temporising accommodations; disregarding the fear of man; determined to pursue the path of duty; prepared to stand by the consequences. 6. Fruitful; not evaporating in words, but abounding in deeds of usefulness. (*J. Barr, D.D.*) **For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.**—*Zealous, but wrong*:—We ought to have an intense longing for the salvation of all sorts of men, and especially for those that treat us badly. We shall see more conversions when more people pray for conversions. We should earnestly pray for the conversion of the kind of people who are here described: *self*-righteous people, people that have done no ill, but, on the contrary, have laboured to do a great deal of good. I. WHY ARE WE SPECIALLY CONCERNED FOR THESE PEOPLE? Because—1. They are so zealous. You see plenty of zeal where politics, fashion, art, &c., are concerned; but we are not overdone with it in religion. If anybody is a little zealous above others, great efforts are made to put him down. Therefore, when we do meet with zealous people, we take an interest in them, however mistaken their zeal may be. We like to associate with people who have hearts, not dry leather bottles. It does seem a pity that any zeal should be wasted, and that any one full of zeal should yet miss his way. And when we meet with any who are zealous in a wrong cause, they become peculiarly the object of a Christian's prayers. 2. They may go so very wrong, and may do so much mischief to others. Those who have no life nor energy may easily ruin themselves, but they are not likely to harm others; whereas a mistaken zealot is like a madman with a firebrand in his hand. What did the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's day? And Saul afterwards? Take heed that none of you fall into a persecuting spirit through your zeal for the gospel, like zealous mistresses who will not have a servant in their house who does not go to their place of worship, and zealous landlords who turn every Dissenter out of their cottages. 3. They would be so useful. The man that is desperately earnest in a wrong way will be just as earnest in the right. See what Paul himself was. 4. It is so difficult to convert them. It requires the power of God to convert anybody; but there seems to be a double manifestation of power in the conversion of a downright bigot. II. WHAT THESE PEOPLE ARE ACCORDING TO OUR TEXT. They are—1. Ignorant. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness," &c. You may be brought up under the shadow of a church, you may hear the gospel till you know every phrase by heart, and yet be ignorant of the righteousness of God. There are many who are ignorant as to—(1) The natural righteousness of God's character, and those who are satisfied with their own holiness are ignorant of this. (2) The righteousness of the law. You may hear the ten commandments read every Sabbath-day, but you will not know anything about them by merely hearing or reading them. There is a depth of meaning in those commandments of which self-righteous persons are ignorant. For instance, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"—even a lascivious look breaks that. Let me stretch out the line before you for a moment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. Who among us has ever done that? (3) God's righteous requirements, viz., not only that thou shouldst do, but that thou shouldst think, love, and be that which is right. He desires truth in the inward parts. (4) That God has prepared a better righteousness for us in Christ. III. WHAT THEY DO. They go about to establish their own righteousness, but, like a statue badly constructed, it tumbles down. They use all manner of schemes to set up their righteousness upon its legs, but to no purpose. Or they have bad foundations for a house, and bad materials, and bad mortar, and they are by no means good workmen; and when they have built up enough wall to shelter themselves, it tumbles down. They are determined, somehow or other, to build up a righteousness of their own, which is worthless when it is built. At first the man says, "I shall be saved, for I have

kept the law. What lack I yet?" Now, a very small hole will let enough light into the man's heart to force him to see that this pretence will not answer. No one of us has kept the law. When driven from this foolish hope, the man readily sets up another. If he cannot work, then he tries to feel. Or else he cries, "I must join a bit of religion to my pure morals. I will pray regularly, &c. And when I have done all this, do you not think it will come pretty square?" If a man's conscience is awake, it will not come square, and the man will say, "No, I do not feel righteous after all! There is something amiss." Conscience begins to call out, "It will not do." Peradventure the man is taken ill. He thinks that he is going to die, and he must keep his wretched pretence afloat somehow; and so he cries, if he is rich, "I will endow an almshouse." According to the church to which he belongs, the zealous person becomes a determined partisan of his sect. Now suppose that you were to get to heaven in your way, what would happen? You will throw up your cap, and say, "I have managed it after all!" You will glorify yourself, and depend upon it sinners saved by grace will glorify Christ. But our Lord is not going to have any discord in heaven; you shall all sing His praises there, or never sing at all. IV. WHAT THEY WILL NOT DO. "They have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." 1. Why, there are some that have not submitted even to *hear it!* Our law does not judge any man before it hears him, but these people both judge and condemn the gospel without giving it an hour's attention. Are they not good enough of themselves? What can you tell them better than they know already? But it is always a pity not to know even that which we most despise. It will not hurt you to know. And yet there is such prejudice in the mind of some that they refuse to acquaint themselves with the verities which God has revealed. "Sinners saved by grace! It is all very well for the commonalty; but we were always so good." Very well, then; there is a heaven for the commonalty, and it is highly probable that you ladies and gentlemen are too good to go there. Where will you go? There is but one way to heaven, and that way is closed against the proud. 2. And then there are others who, when they hear it, will not admit that they need it. "What, sir! Must I go down on my knees and plead guilty?" Yes, you must, or else you will never be saved. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." 3. There are others who will not submit to the spirit of it, to the influence of it, for the spirit of free grace is this: if God saves me for nothing, then I belong to Him for ever and ever. If He forgives me every sin simply because I believe in Jesus, then I will hate every sin, and flee from it. I will love Him with all my heart, and for the love I bear Him I will lead a holy life. The virtue I aimed at before, in my own strength, I will now ask for from His Holy Spirit. Many will not submit to that; yet they can never be saved from sin unless they yield themselves as the blood-bought servants of Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Blind zeal*:—As all zeal without discretion is as an offering without eyes, which was by God forbidden, so likewise all blind zeal is a blind offering, which God will never accept. (*Cawdray.*) *Zeal, cautious*:—As Minerva is said to have put a golden bridle upon Pegasus, that he should not fly too fast, so our Christian discretion must put a golden bridle upon our Pegasus—that is, our zeal—lest, if it be unbridled, it make us run out of course. (*Ibid.*) *Zeal, false*:—There is a sort of men who seem to be mighty zealous for religion; but their heart breaks out wholly in this way: that they fill the place wherever they are with noise and clamour, with dust and smoke. Nothing can be said in their presence, but instantly a controversy is started, scarcely anything is orthodox enough for them; for they spin so fine a thread, and have such a cobweb divinity, that the least brush against it is not to be endured, and yet withal they are as positive and decretal in their assertions that the Pope himself is nobody to them. One would think they were privy counsellors of heaven. They define with so great confidence what will and what will not please God. (*J. Goodman.*) *Zeal, misguided*:—I. ITS FEATURES. It errs in—1. Its motives. 2. Its objects. 3. Its means. II. ITS PREVALENCE. 1. In the world. 2. In the Church. III. ITS MISCHIEVOUS TENDENCY. It breeds—1. Delusion. 2. Disorder. 3. Hatred. 4. Contention. 5. Ruin. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The proper regulation of religious zeal*:—I. IT MUST BE FOUNDED UPON KNOWLEDGE OF AND JUDGMENT ABOUT THE MATTER WHICH ENGAGES OUR ZEAL. It is for wanting this that the apostle blames the zeal of the Jews. The necessity of such knowledge is, one would think, obvious, for without it our zeal may, for aught we know, be engaged in a bad cause. The man who, designing to make great haste, either shuts his eyes or takes no notice whither he goes, is the likeliest to stumble or go astray.

Let us, then, take care that, before we suffer our zeal to grow warm for or against any cause, we get as thorough a knowledge of it as we can. And yet, as history shows, most of those in every age who have shown the warmest zeal have discovered the greatest ignorance, and where there has been most knowledge there has been most candour and forbearance towards those of a different opinion. II. MUST BE FREE FROM PREJUDICE AND PARTY VIEWS, and PROCEED FROM A SINCERE REGARD TO TRUTH AND VIRTUE. It is not my being thoroughly acquainted with a cause that will justify my zeal in it. If, knowing a thing to be false or unlawful, I strenuously insist upon it, all the zeal I express is faulty. Nay, though it be truth or duty, if my zeal is occasioned by prejudice, it is not of the right kind. We ought therefore to be very careful about the springs from whence our zeal flows. When the heart glows with an ardent love to God and for the cause of truth and virtue, there will be very little danger of running into extremes. III. MUST ALWAYS BE PROPORTIONED TO THE MOMENT OF THE THINGS ABOUT WHICH IT IS ENGAGED. The more important the thing is, the warmer may our zeal be, either for or against it; and the less important, the less need is there of being much concerned about it. That zeal is very irregular which is equally warm upon every occasion. It would be endless to tell you what trifling matters have given occasion to the most furious contests in the Christian Church. 1. Since it is of vastly greater importance to us that we should judge right in matters of doctrine and behave well in matters of practice ourselves than that others should do so, it follows that our zeal ought principally to be employed this way. Nothing is more common than to see the same men who express a great concern that others should think and act just as they do in matters of religion shamelessly careless in their own searches after truth, and in regulating their own conduct. 2. Plain duties are of more importance than matters of speculation, and therefore regular zeal will be more solicitous about the former than about the latter. And yet, as if mankind were resolved to act preposterously, they have generally acted from the opposite principle. Observe how contentedly some of the warmest zealots can let a drunkard, a swearer, &c., live peaceably by them, and yet take fire immediately on the utterance of a contrary opinion. But will not God much more easily pardon an error in judgment than badness of life? 3. Peace and love among Christians are of unspeakably more importance than any particular form of church government or any religious rites, and therefore if our zeal be regular, we shall be much less concerned about imposing these than for the securing peace and love among all good men. IV. MUST BE ATTENDED WITH CHRISTIAN CHARITY, and must never break in upon those rights which all claim in common as men and Christians. Nothing has been more common than for intemperate zeal to do the greatest mischiefs and commit the most bare-faced violations of justice and humanity, under the pretence of charity to men's souls and a hearty concern for their everlasting welfare. V. MUST BE UNDER THE CONDUCT OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE, by which I mean the prudence that will direct to the choice, and in the use of the properest methods, and the fittest seasons for promoting these good ends. (*W. Smyth.*) *Zeal, true*:—True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification, and not to destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt; it only warmeth, quickeneth, and enliveneth us; but if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh, and kindle our corrupt nature, and set the house of our body on fire, it is no longer zeal—heavenly fire, but a most destructive and devouring thing. True zeal is an *ignis lambens*, a soft and gentle flame that will not scorch our hand; it is no predatory or voracious thing; but carnal and fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True zeal is like the vital heat in us that we live upon, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome; but though it gently feed upon the radical oil within us, that sweet balsam of our natural moisture, yet it lives lovingly with it, and maintains that by which it is fed; but that other furious and distempered zeal is nothing else but a fever in the soul. To conclude, we may learn what kind of zeal it is that we should use in promoting the gospel by an emblem of God's own—those fiery tongues that on the Day of Pentecost sat upon the apostles; which sure, were harmless flames, for we cannot read that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe a hair of their heads. (*R. Cudworth.*) *Zeal, true and false*:—Andrew Melville, Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews in the reign of James VI., was a very bold and zealous man for the cause of God and truth. When some of his more moderate brethren blamed him for being too hot and fiery, he was wont to reply, "If you see my fire go downwards, set your foot upon it and put it out; but if it

go upwards, let it return to its own place." (*J. Whitecross.*) *Zeal without knowledge*:—I. THE QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPERTIES OF A ZEAL "ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE." 1. That our zeal be right in respect of its object; viz., that those things which we are zealous for be certainly good, and that those things which we are zealous against be certainly evil. Otherwise it is not a heavenly fire, but like the fire of hell, heat without light. 2. That the measure and degree of it must be proportioned to the good or evil of things about which it is conversant. That is an ignorant zeal which is conversant about lesser things and unconcerned for greater. A zealous strictness about external rites and matters of difference, where there is a visible neglect of the substantial duties of religion, is either a gross ignorance of the true nature of religion, or a fulsome hypocrisy. 3. That we pursue it by lawful means and ways. No zeal for God and His glory, for His true Church and religion, will justify the doing of that which is morally evil. II. BY WHAT MARKS WE MAY KNOW THE ZEAL WHICH IS "NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE." It is a zeal without knowledge—1. That is mistaken in the proper object of it; that calls good evil, and evil good. 2. That is manifestly disproportioned to the good or evil of things about which it is conversant, when there is in men a greater and fiercer zeal for the externals of religion than for the vital and essential parts of it. 3. That is prosecuted by unlawful and unwarrantable means, that, *e.g.*, which warrants the doing of evil that good may come. 4. That is uncharitable, and is an enemy to peace and order, and thinks itself sufficiently warranted to break the peace of the Church upon every scruple. 5. That is furious and cruel, that which St. James tells us tends to "confusion and every evil work." 6. A zeal for ignorance. This is a zeal peculiar to the Church of Rome, which forbids people the use of the Holy Scriptures in a known tongue. III. INFERENCES. 1. If it be so necessary that our zeal be directed by knowledge, this shows us how dangerous a thing zeal is in the weak and ignorant. Zeal is an edge-tool, which children in understanding should not meddle withal. Zeal is only fit for wise men, but it is chiefly in fashion among fools. Nay, it is dangerous in the hands of wise men, and to be kept in with a strict rein, otherwise it will transport them to the doing of undue and irregular things. Moses in a fit of zeal let fall the two tables of the law which he had but just received from God. A true emblem of an ungoverned zeal, in the transport whereof even good men are apt to forget the laws of God. 2. From hence we plainly see that men may do the worst and wickedest things out of a zeal for God and religion. Thus it was among the Jews, who engrossed salvation to themselves, and denied the possibility of it to all the world besides, and the Church of Rome have taken copy by them. 3. Zeal for God and religion does not alter the nature of actions done upon that account. Persecution and murder are damnable sins, and no zeal for God and religion can excuse them. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *Zeal and knowledge*:—There are two sorts of men hereby to be apprehended. 1. They which have a defect not of zeal, but of knowledge for the ground of their zeal. 2. They which have a defect not of knowledge, but of zeal answerable to their knowledge. Of the first of these may be verified the proverb, they set the cart before the horse. The second may be likened to Pharaoh's chariots when the wheels were off, so slowly do they express their knowledge in their lives. The first are like a little ship without ballast and freight, but with a great many sails, which is soon either dashed against the rocks or toppled over. The second are like a goodly great ship, well ballasted and richly freighted, but without any sails, which quickly falleth into the hands of pirates because it can make no speed, sooner making a prey for them than a good voyage for the merchant. Separate zeal and knowledge, and they become both unprofitable, but wisely join them, and they perfect a Christian, being like a precious diamond in a ring of gold. Let not zeal outrun knowledge or lag behind it, but let it *ad equale* agree, going hand in hand with the same. For even as in an instrument of music there is a proportion of sound wherein is the harmony, beyond which, if any string be strained, it makes a squeaking noise; and if it be not strained enough it yields a clagging, dull, and unpleasant sound. So is it in our zeal if it be either more or less than our knowledge. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Zeal, uncontrolled*:—Phaeton took upon him to drive the chariot of the sun; but through his rashness set the world in combustion. What a horse is without a rider, or a ship without a rudder, such is zeal without knowledge. St. Bernard hits full on this point. Discretion without zeal is slow-paced, and zeal without discretion is strong-headed; let, therefore, zeal spur on discretion, and discretion rein in zeal. (*J. Spencer.*) *Zeal without knowledge*:—The first good use of some texts

is, to endeavour to prevent a bad one. I. THE TEXT HAS OFTEN BEEN CITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEPRECIATING GENUINE ZEAL. Think on how many excellent designs it has been quoted against, and what would have become of home and foreign missionary enterprise had certain interpretations ruled! With men of indifferent, frozen temperament, the text has been a great favourite. So it has with timid, cowardly men, with the parsimonious, with idolaters of custom, and of everything established, and with that class which is content with mere speculation, regarding scarcely anything as worth attempting. With most of these, however, it is not zeal itself that is contemned, for "none would be more zealous than they—on a proper occasion." But when can that occasion come? Is it to be expressly brought on by Providence to enable them to show this virtue? Or is it to be when all things are mended, so that there shall be less to be done? But who, then, is to do all this in the meantime? II. BUT STILL THERE IS IN THE WORLD AN ILL-JUDGING AND UNWARRANTABLE ZEAL. 1. Indeed, if we take it in its general sense, persevering ardour in prosecution of a purpose, it has been, in its depraved operation, the animating demon of every active evil. And, many that are comparatively harmless, let but this fire be kindled by a torch from hell applied to the brimstone that lies cold and quiet in their nature—and we should see. 2. But not to dwell on these terrible operations of zeal, we see its effect in numberless things of a more diminutive order, *e.g.*, long and earnest exertions for excellence in some most trifling attainment; unremitting efforts in prosecution of inquiry into something not worth any cost to know; an intense devotion to add particle after particle to the little sum of worldly possession; the earnest vying in little points of appearance, consequence, precedence. Zeal is an element that will combine with any active principle in man; it is like fire, that will smoulder in garbage, and will lighten in the heavens. III. ZEAL thus has its operation in all the active interests of men. But it is MOST USUALLY SPOKEN OF AS BELONGING TO RELIGION, and it is in this relation that we have here to consider it. "Zeal of God." 1. And who can help wishing that there were a thousand times more zeal directed this way? Of the whole measure that there is being constantly expended what proportion might well be spared, nay, destroyed, to advantage? Nine parts in ten? Perhaps more. Now think, if one or more of these portions misapplied could be devoted to God! Look at an ambitious man's zeal; an avaricious man's zeal; an indefatigable intellectual trifler's zeal! nine parts in ten misapplied; wasted at the best; a large portion worse than wasted! So it is going—while there is here what deserves it all—like clouds, heavy with rain, passing away from gardens and fields languishing under drought, to be discharged on mere deserts or marshes or sea. Or suppose a great city on fire in a severe winter; what a blessing so much fire would be if distributed into all the abodes of shivering poverty and sickness! 2. After such a view of the immense proportion of zeal altogether lost to God, we are reluctant to consider that a share even of the zeal that is directed to God may be "not according to knowledge." The necessity of knowledge to religious zeal is fearfully illustrated by—(1) The mighty empires of superstition—Pagan, Mohammedan, Popish. It is true that many go no further than a stupid, slavish acquiescence; and that some are sceptics, only preserving appearances; but countless legions of them are burning with fanatic zeal—they know no better. (2) The direful history of persecution. For, though some persecutors have only been politic, infernal hypocrites, yet the mighty host of them have really believed that they did God service. (3) The wild novelties of fanaticism that have occasionally sprung up in the Christian community. In view of all this the good man has still to exclaim, "Oh for knowledge! for knowledge!" IV. Turn now to THE ORDINARY FORMS IN WHICH RELIGIOUS ZEAL IS DEVOID OF KNOWLEDGE. 1. That which the apostle here speaks of, namely, men's zealously maintaining the sufficiency of a righteousness of their own, which God will not accept (ver. 3). Fatal ignorance in zeal! Knowledge here would reveal to them the holiness, justice, and law of God; would reveal themselves to them; and then their zeal would go another way, as when a convinced pagan perceives his god to be a worthless idol. 2. Zeal when accompanied by no desire of knowledge, rather aversion to it. Horror of free reasoning. A notion that all religious speculation is necessarily destructive to religious feeling, insomuch that the very reasons for being zealous are not to be clearly defined. Whatever the strong impulse may be, it plainly is not "zeal according to knowledge" when a man does not know why he is zealous. 3. A capricious and fluctuating zeal, and what we have just described is likely to be such. It shall blaze at one time and seem sunk under the ashes at another, varying with the changeable mood of the

man's mind. It is true that there will be in most minds considerable variations of feeling, of which zeal will in a measure partake. But a most important counteracting and sustaining principle is a clear, decided knowledge of the object and reasons of the zeal. 4. The zeal which consists in a considerable degree of mere temper, where a man's irritability or impetuousness and restlessness goes into the zeal for the object, and is mistaken by him as all pure zeal respecting the object itself. So that, in this one point especially, it is not "according to knowledge," for he knows not himself. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." 5. That zeal which is less concerned about the object itself than about the man himself. Jehu's zeal was, in mere point of fact, for the "Lord of hosts," but he did not really care much for that sacred cause itself. It was a fine thing that he should be exhibited as a conspicuous vindicator in the ranks of the Lord's "hosts." 6. A great zeal for comparatively little things in religion. Now knowledge gives the scale of the greater and the less. There are minor points of doctrine, form, and observance. These have often been magnified and enforced as if they were the very life and essence of Christianity. 7. Zeal for great things for little reasons. Thus Christianity has been zealously advocated just on the ground that it is conducive to the temporal well-being of a state! By innumerable persons some one model of Christian faith is zealously maintained, chiefly because it has been maintained by their ancestors. We have known persons zealously holding some important doctrine because it has happened to coincide with some particular fancy or impression of the person's mind; not from a consideration of its own great evidences. This is a gross desertion of the rule—that zeal should be "according to knowledge." 8. A zeal for single points in religion, especially the most controverted ones, as if the whole importance of religion converged to these, as we see in the most strenuous Calvinists and Arminians. Such zeal miserably impoverishes the interest for religion as a grand comprehensive whole, and for all the parts of it but the one. And thus the very "knowledge" itself will dwindle from taking account of the whole. 9. The excessive zeal for a religious sect or party, a mere worldly spirit of competition and jealousy. This indeed is "according to knowledge," the "wisdom" that James describes as coming from below. 10. The zeal which is expended in some one way of attempting to serve religion when it might be applied to better purpose in another. Thus able men have exhausted their talents and labours upon comparative trifles when, with the same exertion, they might have served the greatest interests. And ordinary Christians have been invincibly set on serving God in ways foreign to their attainments and situations when there were plainly before them other ways of certain usefulness. 11. That zeal which, in attempting to do good, takes no account of the fitness of season and occasion. Knowledge would show the adaptation of means to ends—the laws and working of human minds—the favourable conjuncture. Knowledge, too, would point to consequences. And zeal should not fancy itself the more noble and heroic for setting all consequences at defiance. 12. That zeal which seems willing to let its activity in public plans and exertions to serve religion be a substitute for personal religion. In such zeal where is the man's knowledge if it does not strike him with irresistible conviction how indispensable is religion to his own self? (*John Foster.*) *Zeal without knowledge*:—I. THE ISRAELITES HAD ONE GOOD QUALITY while they wanted another, AND THE APOSTLE MAKES THEIR POSSESSION OF THIS THE REASON OF HIS PRAYER—"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God." One would think that, if they wanted both, they would stand in greater need of his prayers; and the mystery is, how their having something good should be the moving cause why Paul should pray for their salvation, an intimation that if they had not been in the possession at least of this he would not have prayed for them. 1. The explanation is this. It is only the prayer of faith that availeth, and in proportion as this faith is staggered or weakened prayer loses its efficacy—*e.g.*, you have not the same heart in praying for some unlikelihood as in praying for what is agreeable to the will of God. You cannot pray so hopefully for a confirmed reprobate as for a man in whom you perceive some lurking remainders of good. Paul was not yet discouraged about the Jews. He still observed one good point, even that very zeal which once actuated himself. And so he still could hope and pray for them. 2. From such an argument there may be constructed a powerful appeal to arrest the headlong way of that moral desperado, who, hastening on from one enormity to another, is fast losing all the delicacies of conscience, and whom the Spirit, tired and provoked by stubborn resistance, is on the eve perhaps of abandoning. Know, then, that your friends behold the progress

of this impenitency, and supplicate Heaven on your account. But the time may arrive when your impiety shall look so desperate that to supplicate in faith is beyond them. And is it not time to retrace your footsteps, unknowing as you are how soon the very parents who gave you birth may weep but cannot pray for you! II. That must have been a valuable property, in virtue of which the Jews could still be prayed for. But THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A MOST IMPORTANT PROPERTY FROM THE WANT OF WHICH THEY EVENTUALLY PERISHED. Had they added knowledge to their zeal they would still have remained the favourites of Heaven. 1. From their actual history we may learn what a serious want this is. That day of their visitation, in the prospect of which our Saviour shed tears, came upon them just because they "knew not the things which belonged to their peace." It is true that the extermination came upon them because they had killed the Prince of Life. But it was, as Peter and John testify, through ignorance that they did it, and had they known, Paul says, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Let us not, then, underrate the importance of knowledge in religion, nor be under the imagination that ignorance is not a responsible or not a punishable offence. 2. But in addition to the historical proofs of the importance of religious knowledge, there is abundance of still more direct proof. The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ is said to be eternal life, and many are said to perish for lack of knowledge. Christ shall come "to take vengeance on those that know not God." Knowledge and ignorance in fact are dealt with, even as righteousness and sin are dealt with. 3. Now the question is, ought this in moral fairness to be? The difficulty is to conceive on what ground the views of the understanding should be made the subjects of reckoning. Man is held to be responsible for his doings, which he can help; but not for his doctrines, which they say he cannot help. But we affirm that his belief in certain circumstances (and Christianity is in these circumstances) is that which he can help. It is by an act of the will that you set yourself to the acquisition of knowledge. It is by a continued act of the will that you continue a prolonged examination into the grounds of an opinion. It is at the bidding of the will, not that you believe without evidence, but that you investigate the evidence on which you might believe. It is in no way your fault that you do not see when it is dark. But it is in every way your fault that you do not look when either the light of heaven or of heaven's revelation is around you. It is thus that the will has virtually to do with the ultimate belief, just because it has to do with the various steps of that process which goes before it. Where there is candour, which is a moral property, the due attention will be given; when there is the opposite of candour—moral unfairness—the due attention will be refused, and the man will be landed in the state of being wrong intellectually, but just because he is wrong morally. 4. You find a most impressive exemplification of this in the history of those very Jews. During the whole of our Saviour's ministry upon earth they were plied with evidences which, if they had but attended to, would have carried their belief in the validity of His claims. But the belief was painful to them, and at all hazards they resolved to bar the avenues of their minds against the admittance of it. Theirs was not the darkness of men whom no light had visited, but of men who obstinately shut their eyes. 5. And this for our admonition. In this our day the want of faith is still due to the want of a thorough moral earnestness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Zealotry*:—The worst of madmen is a saint run mad. (*Pope.*) To be furious in religion is to be irreligiously religious. (*W. Penn.*) *The way of salvation*:—I. MAN'S WAY. 1. Consists in zeal for God ignorantly directed. 2. Terminates in self-righteousness and unbelief. 3. Utterly fails, because Christ is the end of the law, and the law requires absolute obedience (vers. 2–5). II. GOD'S WAY. 1. Requires—(1) Despair of our own efforts. (2) A humble reception of the gospel. (3) Confession and faith. 2. Terminates in salvation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own . . . have not submitted . . . unto the righteousness of God.**—*Ignorance of God's righteousness, the guilt of*:—The ignorance here spoken of is something more than the mere passive blindness of those who cannot help themselves because of the total darkness by which they are encompassed. It was very much the ignorance of those who would not open their eyes. There was an activity, a will in it, as much as there was in the other things ascribed to them in the "going about" to establish a different righteousness from that which they would not submit to. This forms the true principle on which the condemnation of unbelief rests. "They love the darkness rather than the light." Even as the Gentiles "liked not to retain God in their knowledge"—even so the Jews liked not in this instance to

admit God into their knowledge, or give entertainment in their minds to that way of salvation which He had devised for the recovery of a guilty world. It is the part which the will has in it that makes ignorance the proper object of retribution; and so, when Christ cometh, He will take vengeance "on those who know not God and obey not the gospel." (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Human righteousness only attainable by submitting to "the righteousness of God":*—1. "The righteousness of God" is His truth, justice, holiness, wisdom, and love blended in eternal perfection, and embraces infinite hatred to sin with infinite love to the sinner. It is at once the terror of every guilty conscience, and the hope of every true penitent. 2. The world before and since the days of Luther has been making the same mistake as he at first made. It has so felt the need of righteousness as to make desperate efforts to attain unto it, now soaring to inaccessible heights, and then delving to unknown depths, while the blessing itself has been ever within reach. I. MEN, UNTIL THEY COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST, ARE EVERYWHERE VAINLY ENDEAVOURING TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. If it had been possible for any man to succeed, surely it had been Paul. Constancy, conscientiousness, self-denial, lofty motives, a blameless life, &c.; and yet, when viewed in relation to the object sought, how utterly vain! Solomon's experiment ought to have been sufficient to satisfy all voluptuaries of the vanity of earthly things, and Paul's failure ought to convince all self-righteous moralists that righteousness is not attainable by "the deeds of the law." 2. But the truth can only be known, or wisdom taught, by experience. And so Paul's experiment, in all its essential features, has been made again and again. Luther in his way repeated the experiment with the same result. These men remind one of the old alchemists, who, vary their experiments as they might, and imitate the colour of gold as they did, yet the base metal remained base metal after all. 3. And yet multitudes continue to "go about to establish their own righteousness." It is impossible to avoid a feeling of mingled respect and pity for them. This feeling filled Paul's heart (ver. 1). "Going about to" is old English for "trying at." They were eager, restless, painstaking, ready to employ every means in order to secure it. But an April day might sooner establish its character for constancy, and the wide ocean its character as a refuge; the raven with its croak, and the owl with its hooting, establish theirs for melody; the farthing rushlight its right to rule the day; every little pool its claim to be considered a fountain; the bramble its pretensions to be king over the forest, than these misguided souls succeed in establishing their own righteousness. They are endeavouring to forge a key to unlock the grave, to build a lifeboat to swim in a sea of fire, to construct a ladder to scale the skies, to hush the thunders of Sinai by filling their ears with wool, to stop the lightning of God's wrath by gossamer threads of human goodness, to arrest the course of Divine justice by piling up little heaps of stones in their path. God pronounces "our righteousness"—not our wickedness—to be "filthy rags." 4. No man ever established his "own righteousness" to his own satisfaction. This sky was never without a cloud, this sun without a spot, this life without a defect. It was the consciousness of this that quickened the steps of Saul of Tarsus in his persecution of the early disciples, and prompted him to a deadlier revenge. In proportion to a soul's consciousness of what sin is will be its misery at the sight of it. God has set our sins "in the light of His countenance"; and when we remember that there may be impurity in a look, and murder in a desire, the very thought of "establishing our own righteousness" is the wildest of fancies, the wickedest of delusions! 5. And men thus court failure, because they are "ignorant of God's righteousness," both of what it is and what it requires. The whiteness of the snow, the morning light, the blue heavens, are figures that inadequately represent the righteousness of God. "The heavens are not clean in His sight." God is so "glorious in holiness" that the angels cover their faces and their feet with their wings. Being thus essentially and absolutely righteous, what mere outward propriety or thin crust of goodness could satisfy Him? Motives as pure as the light, and ways as straight as a mathematical line, do but indicate what God requires of men if He enter into judgment with them. This they do not understand nor realise, nor that if God's love is holy, His righteousness is tender, merciful, long-suffering to the vilest offender. If men knew that they had only to ask of Him, and He would cover them with the robe of His righteousness, they would desist from all their vain efforts to "establish their own righteousness." His righteousness is unknown by men, and hence—II. THEIR INSANE REFUSAL TO SUBMIT UNTO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD—1. For the very reason, IN MOST INSTANCES, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every

one that believeth." And yet this glorious fact is the very essence of saving truth. Salvation by faith in Christ is taught in type, prophecy, history, promise, and doctrine. The same God "who lights one world by another, and sustains one life by another," purposes to save all who truly repent and believe by Christ's obedience, death, resurrection, and intercession. And yet infidels stigmatise the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ as absurd, cruel, immoral, and many professedly Christian teachers speak of justification by the righteousness of another in disparaging terms. And if it were true that men might be saved by faith in Christ without a change of heart and life; if the caricature of this doctrine of justification set forth by its enemies were correct, then nothing more monstrous could be conceived. 2. Let, however, the apostles term rebuke their ignorant presumption. Men have to "submit themselves to the righteousness of God." Is God or man to be supreme? When man submits to God the cause of difference is removed, the moral distance between man and God is annihilated. A revolution has taken place. Repentance, justification, regeneration, conversion, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification are words which represent the various aspects of the one great reality, and do not exaggerate the greatness of the change that is experienced. The understanding is enlightened, the conscience rejoices in God's righteousness in condemning sin and sinners, the will returns to its true allegiance, and the heart casts away its idols and loathes its sin. 3. It should not be lost sight of that it is to the righteousness of God that men have to submit—not to His caprice, nor to His will, divorced from purity and goodness. And so in the very act of submission man acquires a nobleness which in his condition of wilful independence had been impossible. It never can be degrading or injurious to submit to righteousness. As righteousness is the glory of God, when man submits to it it becomes his also. 4. As Christ was hated by Scribes and Pharisees on account of His goodness and purity, and as the Jews who searched the Scriptures for eternal life had no sooner discovered that it centred in Christ than they refused to come to Him that they might have life, so submission to the righteousness of God seems more difficult because it involves an acknowledgment of and delight in the fact that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Yet this exactly meets man's case as a sinner. Christ has satisfied every requirement. God's righteousness is established. His vindication is complete, and in the act of showing mercy "His truth and justice receive their brightest manifestation." 5. The blessing which is received is also retained by faith. Faith first joins us to Christ, and by faith the union is perpetuated. We set no limits to God's power, but the eternal inheritance is reserved for those who are kept by it through faith. "The just shall live by faith." The righteousness of Christ is not only appropriated and retained by faith, but it must also be attested, shown, illustrated. And thus, while sinners become righteous through the righteousness of another, yet, as the Apostle John says, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." This, by His indwelling Spirit, He enables believers to do. (*F. W. Bourne, D.D.*) *Reasons why men reject the righteousness of God*:—1. The position of the apostle was a very affecting one. He was in plenary possession of the great saving truth. He had submitted to the righteousness of God, and was persuaded that nothing could separate him from the love of God. But to an unselfish mind personal security is not always perfect felicity. Suppose that a man has found refuge in a fortress on the alarm of a sudden invasion, but has not succeeded in carrying all his kindred with him, the first emotion, as he realises the commanding position of the castle, will likely be assurance, exultation, gratitude. But, alas! out on the open plain he descries a brother who has thus far escaped, but who, by some infatuation, is running past the castle gate in quest of some other inlet. In such a case the brother saved would only eye with the more lacerating anguish the wilfulness of that brother who was fleeing from the door of safety. This was the apostle's situation. He had found the refuge. He was looking over the ramparts of salvation—so far, a happy man. But there, in the open field of danger, were his kinsmen according to the flesh. Some blindness had happened to them, for scarcely one of them made for the door of hope; and though, in the fulness of his fraternal affection, he had lifted up his voice and directed them to the open door, scarce one believed his report. 2. The reason given in this chapter for his sorrow was not merely his patriotic love of his countrymen, but his respect for the motives and character of many among them. They were not atheists; they had a zeal of God. They were not infidels, reprobates, or libertines, for they had a great regard for the law, and a real anxiety to establish a righteousness for themselves. 3. Unhappily, the very same thing which wrung

the apostle's heart is still going on in the world. Multitudes of people, the facsimiles of these zealous Jews, are falling short of heaven for the same reasons which proved so fatal in the days of Paul. Let us consider these reasons:—I. IGNORANCE OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. It is the glory of heaven that there is nothing unholy there. A perfect righteousness is the only passport into the presence of a holy God. 2. But in this world of ours there is no such thing as a spotless soul. The only real righteousness on earth is a righteousness which came down from heaven. The Word was made flesh. He bare our sins, and in His own body on the tree made ample satisfaction for them. His blood cleanseth from all sin. But it is not enough that the guilt be cancelled. The rebel's attainder may be removed, but he may not be restored to his place beside the sovereign's person, nor put anew in his patrimonial possessions. A creature may be cleansed from the pollution of actual sin, and remain in all the insipidity of no positive righteousness. Now herein consists the completeness of the great redemption. During the thirty years which preceded His directly expiatory work the sinner's Representative was living a life of vicarious obedience. Year by year He was accumulating that merit which He needed not for Himself, but which was needful for every one that would enter heaven. Now observe these two things go together; the neutralising and the positive ingredients make up one righteousness—the sin-cancelling atonement and the heaven-claiming merit—the sufferings which shut the sinner's hell and the obedience which opened the ransomed sinner's heaven. But Christ was God. His obedience had a Divine virtue in it, and His sufferings had a Divine virtue in them. And therefore His obedience and satisfaction are called "the righteousness of God." 3. Now many are ignorant of the existence of such a righteousness. This righteousness is so hid in its notoriety, so puzzling in its plainness, so overlooked in its studious obviousness, that people who, in their anxiety after acceptance with God, would give all that they had for the least scrap of unquestionable merit, never dream that the righteousness of God—neither Adam's righteousness, nor an angel's righteousness, but God's own righteousness—was that which they might appropriate as their own. We have heard of scholars who could speak many tongues, but who did not know the meaning of Jehovah Tsidkenu. We have known chronologists who could tell most of the remarkable events of history, but who could not tell the year which "brought in everlasting righteousness." And we have listened to acute reasoners and metaphysicians who could discourse eloquently on the powers of human nature, and high-souled moralists who described the beauty of true virtue, and divines full of zeal for God, but who never adverted to that righteousness which alone the apostle deemed worthy of the name. II. SOME ARE AWARE THAT SUCH A RIGHTEOUSNESS EXISTS WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW THEY ARE TO BENEFIT BY IT. 1. They say in their heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven? By what process of self-elevation shall I render myself worthy of this righteousness? Or who shall descend into the deep? How humbled must I become before I be in a fit state for God to impart this righteousness?" Now the righteousness of God is brought so near that nothing which the sinner can do can bring it nearer. 2. The Lord Jesus did not purchase pardon and then deposit it in some far island of the sea, so that it would be needful to undertake a tedious and hazardous voyage in order to arrive at it. Nor did He perch it on some cloud of the upper firmament, so as to rack the anxious invention in finding out the aërostation which would soar up to it, or the spell which would charm it down. And yet the intricacy of system has conveyed some such idea to many minds. You may perfectly perceive that the righteousness of Jesus is the righteousness of God, but you may fancy that faith is the ship which you need to float you over this abyss, or the wings you need to waft you up to the airy elevation where this righteousness dwells. But the righteousness is not only wrought out, but brought so near that not a moment of time nor a point of space intervenes between you and its present possession. If you have such affection for the Lord Jesus as to confess Him before men—and this you will have if you really believe that God has raised Him from the dead as your Redeemer—"thou shalt be saved." 3. A welcome from the King (as our Lord taught in the parable) depends entirely on having on "a wedding robe," and none who is willing need want it, for it is gratuitously given to all. That robe is righteousness—not man's, but Jehovah's (Phil. iii. 8, 9). Be persuaded—put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Ye poor and blind! step in to the feast—ye halt and maimed! creep in. When at heaven's gate they ask in whose right you come, make mention of Jesus' righteousness, and the everlasting doors will open to receive you. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth; speak it out. Avow your faith in Him by the life and language of dis-

cipleship. The Lord has not bid you do some great thing, not even sent you to wash in Jordan seven times. III. SOME REJECT GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THEIR ANXIETY "TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN." 1. "I have broken God's law times without number, but I see that it is good, and it would be a real satisfaction to myself if I could do anything to atone for my transgressions; and if you could only prescribe what I should do—if it were only revealed from heaven how many prayers I should offer, how many fasts I should keep, &c., I would grudge no sacrifice." When to a soul so convinced of sin you say, "Believe and live—accept the righteousness of God and nothing more is needed," the simplicity of the prescription is almost provoking. The soul wants to do some great thing. Bent on establishing a righteousness of its own, it is not easy to "submit to the righteousness of God." 2. In this state of mind there is a just feeling, and there is also a strong delusion. It is a just feeling that the law should be vindicated, and that sin should receive its commensurate punishment. But it is a delusion to imagine that a sinner can atone for sin. But the greatest delusion of all is that you think yourself wiser than God when you prefer your plan to His, and mightier than Immanuel if you consider your work more perfect than His. Believe in Christ, who is the end of the law, and you are righteous in Him. IV. YOU FEAR LEST SO FREE AND PROMPT A FORGIVENESS SHOULD BE FATAL TO FUTURE OBEDIENCE. You find, by experience among men, that a pardon too easily obtained is apt to be abused, and you fear lest this scheme should encourage men to sin because grace is so abundant. 1. Remark, however, that the gospel pardon, though so prompt and free to the sinner, is not a cheap nor easy pardon to Him who first of all procured it; owing to the darkness of the human understanding and the perversity of the human will, it is seldom too suddenly or lightly attained by the sinner, who eventually finds it his own. And I think it might be commended to reason that real obedience begins only where slavish terror ends, and that the principle most prolific of loyalty and unwearied services is love. 2. But the gospel puts the matter beyond all question by its express declarations. It assures us that the faith which receives the Saviour is the first step of new obedience—that the moment when God's righteousness is accepted is the moment when morality begins. V. SOME EARNEST SEEKERS MISS SALVATION BECAUSE THEY GO TOO FAR TO FIND IT. There was a small colony planted on a creek of a vast continent. Their soil was very fertile, but its limits were somewhat narrow. On the landward side it was enclosed by rocky mountains, on the other it looked out on the immeasurable main. A pestilence broke out, which made fearful havoc all through the population, and the doctors declared that it was beyond their skill. Just at the time the plague was raging worst a stranger appeared and told them of a plant which healed this disorder, and left a paper in which, he said, they would find a full description of it and directions how to find it. The tidings diffused considerable activity. A plant of such efficacy deserved the most diligent search. Almost all agreed that it must be far away, but a discussion arose whether it lay beyond the cliffs or across the sea. Most thought the latter, and a ship was launched, which they christened *Ecclesia*, and sent in search of the famous plant, and all who wished to escape the plague were invited to take passages in this good ship. A few others, however, thought that they would have better success by trying to get over the cliffs. This was an arduous enterprise, for the precipices were steep and extremely high. A few attempts were made, and, after many wearisome efforts, the climbers either grew dizzy and fell back, or allowed themselves to slide down again. But others, more inventive, busied themselves constructing artificial wings and aerial engines of various kinds, *Imitatio Christi*, asceticism, penitential prayers, and such like; and some of them answered exceedingly well for a little, and rose so high that their neighbours really thought they would reach the top; but, after getting a certain height, they uniformly found themselves again on the spot from which they first ascended. A long time had now passed on, and multitudes had died of the plague, when a poor sufferer who had already gone a fruitless expedition in the ship, and from the severity of his anguish was eager in trying every scheme, lay tossing on his bed. He got hold of a large paper roll which lay on a shelf beside him. It was very dirty, and the ink was faded. He at once suspected that it was the book which the stranger had left. It gave a full description of the Plant of Renown, and as he advanced in his feverish earnestness, hoping that it would tell him the very spot where he should look for it, he found the plant itself! There it lay in the heart of the long-neglected volume, and Luther's eye glistened as he read "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "But where is Christ to be found? Must I ascend the height or descend into the

deep? Oh, no! Christ is here—nigh me—God's present *gift* to me conveyed in the volume of this book. I accept Him. I believe." The apologue has prematurely betrayed itself, but no matter. The cure for a plague-stricken, dying world was long concealed in the Bible, till, led by the Spirit of God, Luther found it there. You have only to go where Luther went. (*James Hamilton.*) *Man's tendency to trust in his own righteousness*:—I. MAN FEELS THAT HE IS UNDER LAW TO GOD. He knows that there is a power above him to which he is subject. He may try to deliver himself and claim independence, but ever and anon he is made to see that there is a moral law commanding him to do this and avoid that. He may refuse to obey only to find that it imposes a penalty in the shape of a reproach of conscience, or thwarting of his plans, &c. He may drown it in folly, but it will take its revenge when the hour of reflection comes. Under this feeling every man is made to realise that he "must give an account of himself to God." II. THERE IS A FEAR IN EVERY ONE THAT HIS CONDUCT CANNOT STAND A SIFTING INSPECTION. So he has an apprehension at times that the power above him may be hostile. Our own consciences condemn us, and we cannot but see that God, who is purer than our conscience, must also condemn us. So we shrink from the law which we have broken and from the lawgiver. "When I remembered God, I was troubled." We are troubled, as the boy is by the presence of his father whose command he has just disobeyed. We strive to press down the thought, but it is unsuppressible. So, in consequence of the pressure of these two feelings on each other, a third feeling is brought forth. This may be one or other of two sorts. III. WE MAY BANISH GOD AND HIS LAW FROM OUR THOUGHTS. This may be our first impulse. We act as the disobedient child who flees from his father. It was thus with Cain and Jonah. True, there will be times when God appears to allure or warn, but sinners do not wish to be disturbed, and they pray to Him, as the Gadarenes did when Jesus visited them, to "depart out of their coasts"; and He left them, never to return. IV. ANOTHER CLASS act in an equally unworthy manner. They GO ABOUT TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS. They know that God requires His intelligent and responsible creatures to give obedience to His royal law of love. According to the first covenant every man was to work out a righteousness for himself. But man has failed in this; he is not able to present a perfect obedience. He has only to search himself to discover that he has sinned. But then he would in future make amends for the past. See the self-righteous man as he goes about so diligently in working out a righteousness of his own. Listen to him as he talks to himself in the chamber of his thoughts. When he does a smart act, he, as it were, says, "How clever I am!" He relieves distress, and it is followed by the thought, "How tender-hearted I am!" He engages in a religious service, and then feels that he is so pious. This self-righteousness is all along offensive to God, and apt to be offensive to our fellow-men. It shows itself in a haughty manner, and in the perpetual narratives of our ability and prowess. A ploughman, whom Hervey once addressed to the effect that it was our first duty at once to abandon our sins, answered, "There is a prior duty, and that is to abandon the trust in our own righteousness." There was true philosophy in this. As long as we are trusting in our own righteousness we have little motive to search out our sins and destroy them. Let a man feel that his deeds are as filthy rags before God, and then he will be disposed to give them up and seek for a better clothing. This self-righteous spirit is that of the Pharisees, so severely condemned by our Lord. It is embodied in the prayer, "Lord, I thank Thee," &c. It was the spirit of the Stoics which seized on some of the highest minds in Greece and Rome. The meditations of Marcus Aurelius contain very lofty moral precepts, but his ethics are self-righteous throughout; the good man stands before God in the strength of his own merits. This being so, we can understand how the philosophers of this school should have been unwilling to submit to the humbling doctrines of the Cross, which require us to trust in the righteousness of another. What a humiliation must it have been to Saul of Tarsus when he was arrested on the road to Damascus, when not only his person but his pride were cast down to the ground! But his humiliation was a step necessary in order to his exaltation. He gave up trusting in his own righteousness, and went forward in the strength of Him who there and then conquered him, and thereby enabled him to conquer himself, and sent him forth to proclaim a doctrine which conquered the Roman world. Every man needs to pass through such a crisis. As long as the man is cherishing a self-righteous spirit he feels himself restrained on all hands. He cherishes a sense of merit, and yet is not satisfied. He makes new and greater exertions, only to find that they do not come up to the full requirements of the law. And the unforgiven sin will ever

trouble the sinner till it is forgiven. Better at once submit, and instead of the prayer of the Pharisee put up the prayer of the publican. When the ground is as it is in winter, we might try to soften the hardness and remove the cold by shovelling away the frost and snow. But there is a better way. Let us have the returning sun of spring, and the coldness will disappear, and the earth will array itself in the loveliest green. So when we feel our hearts to be chilled and hardened, let us seek that the light of God's countenance shine upon us, and the hardness will be dissolved, and the graces of peace and love will flow forth as the streams do in spring. (*J. McCosh, D.D.*) *Self-righteousness—ruin of many* :—"A gentleman in our late civil wars," says Cowley, "when his quarters were beaten up by the enemy, was taken prisoner, and lost his life afterwards only by staying to put on a band and adjust his periwig; he would escape like a person of quality, or not at all, and died the noble martyr of ceremony and gentility." Poor fool! and yet he is as bad who waits till he is dressed in the rags of his own fancied fitness before he will come to Jesus. He will die a martyr to pride and self-righteousness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Phariseeism* :—Concerning the Jews, consider—I. WHAT THEY DID. 1. They trusted to their self-righteousness. 2. They sought to establish it. 3. They laboured diligently to do this. II. WHAT THEY DID NOT DO. They did not—1. Accept God's righteousness. 2. Realise its extent. 3. Bow down to it. III. THE CAUSE OF THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUS IGNORANCE, which was—1. Wilful. 2. Persistent. 3. Destructive. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Barriers broken down* :—The text sets forth three difficulties in the way of a man's salvation. I. IGNORANCE. 1. Ignorance is the "mother of devotion," according to the Church of Rome; "the mother of error," according to the Word of God. (1) Men do not know what that righteousness is which God requires. If you want to be saved by your own righteousness, know that it must be perfect. If you have committed but one sin, your hope of perfect righteousness is gone. "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." If I break one link in a chain of twenty I have broken the chain. Suppose that I should have to give a perfect vase of crystal as a present to the Queen. But it has got chipped a little. What is to be done? I may cement the little pieces in their places; but if it must be perfect before royalty can accept it I must get another vase. Now, while I am talking about a chip here and a chip there in your life, you may be saying, "But we are smashed right up; and as to broken links, why, we have fairly melted the chain." I am glad to hear it. If you have no righteousness of your own, you have got to the half-way house of salvation. When you strip a man you are partly on the way to clothing him. (2) Men do not know that God has provided a righteousness. God came here in human form, and became "obedient to His own law, even to the death of the cross." And His obedience is ours, if we believe. Christ was "made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Alas! how many there are who do not know that God justifieth the ungodly; that sinners can be regarded as just, through what Christ has done and suffered. (3) Many are ignorant as to how they are to receive this righteousness. The current notion is, "I must pray so much; I must weep so much; I must feel so much." Ah! this is the common ignorance; whereas men should know that "there is life for a look at the Crucified One." (4) The worst of this terrible ignorance is, that the mass of mankind do not know Him who is our righteousness. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" 2. This ignorance—(1) Is of the facts of the truth. You do not know that in the very midst and heart of London there are tens of thousands who do not know the name of Christ. (2) Of the excellence of the gospel. They do not know the peace, the joy, the rest it brings. (3) With many is wilful. Nobody is so blind as the man that does not want to see; nobody so deaf as the man that does not wish to hear. (4) Some are ignorant despairingly. The devil tells men, first, that they can be saved any day they like; so they may put it off. Then he says, "Salvation is not for such as you." But Christ says that whoever comes to Him He will in no wise cast out. II. SELF-WILL. Men, ignorant of God's righteousness, "go about to establish their own." 1. They set up the poor idol of their own righteousness. There is a treasure of gold, and the man says, "No, I will not have that. I think that I could make a sovereign at home out of a bit of brass." If I were at heaven's gate, and a voice should say, "Enter freely," and I replied, "No, I think I prefer the Surrey hills, or a place down by the seaside," what a fool I should be! A human thing at best, how shall that match the Divine righteousness? An imperfect thing at best, how shall I compare that with the perfect righteousness of Christ? A fading, fleeting thing,

always apt to be damaged by the next moment's temptation, how can I be so foolish? 2. In what vain efforts they spend their time and strength! You will better understand the text if I read it: "They go about to set up their own righteousness." It is a dead thing. The corpse of our own righteousness has a tendency to fall, and down it goes! "It wants something inside"; for until there is life within, it will not stand. It is like a man trying to patch up an old house which has not been repaired for fifty years. So he puts in a beam there, and a strut there, and another timber there; and, by the time he has spent as much as would have built a house, he has got a very handsome ruin left, and nothing more. Charles the First used to swear, "God mend me." Somebody said it would be an easier job to make a new one of him. When men say, "God mend me," they had better say "God make me new." 3. They "go about" to do this. (1) They set about it with great zeal. When a man says, "I am going about a thing," he means that he is going to take his coat off. I recollect how I set to work in my shirt-sleeves to make a righteousness of my own; and I did very nicely indeed while it was dark. But when a little light from the Cross broke in I began to see the filthiness of it. (2) They have various ways of doing it. I have talked with a person, and said, "Can you trust in your own works?" "Oh, no." "Well, can you come to Christ, and take the righteousness of God?" "Well, no; I do not feel enough my own emptiness." Each time you drive him out of his refuge of lies he hastens back to the old ground again—something of himself. There is a ship out at sea, and one of the crew says, "I know that we shall not drift far out of our course." "Why?" "Because we have such a big anchor on board." Why, an anchor on board is no good to anybody! It is when you "let go" the anchor, and lose sight of it, that it is good for something. So you want to have your anchor on board. You do not like it to "enter into that which is within the veil." You want to feel something, to have something of your own. O self-will! God will have salvation to be all of grace, and man will have it of debt. 4. These efforts of men for their own salvation are deadly efforts. God will save them one way, and they want to be saved another. God says, "There is medicine; take it." Man says, "No, I will compound my own physic." Can he ever get well in such a way as that? God says, "I will forgive." Man says, "I will try and deserve to be forgiven"—as if that could be possible. III. FLAT REBELLION. "They have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." This is—1. A strange word. Here is a criminal who will not submit to be pardoned; a sick man who will not submit to be made well; a poor beggar who will not submit to be made into a gentleman. 2. A searching word. Do I stick out? Am I such a self-willed fool that I will not submit before my Maker—will not yield even to have salvation for nothing? 3. A true word. There is many a sinner who has nothing to be proud of, and yet he is as proud as Lucifer. A dustman can be as proud as my Lord Mayor. The worse the man, the harder he is to bow before the righteousness of God. 4. A suggestive word. They will not own that God is King. When a man denies the rights of the magistrate to condemn him, how can he be pardoned? You must yield. Submit to the fact that God is God, or else you will not submit to God's righteousness. 5. A very word. All I have to do is to submit myself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 4. **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**—*Christ the end of the law*:—I. IN WHAT SENSE? 1. As its great antitype. 2. Its only sacrifice. 3. The source of its moral power. II. FOR WHAT END? To secure—1. Pardon of sin. 2. Holiness of life. III. UNTO WHOM? 1. Every one. 2. That believeth. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ the end of the law for righteousness*:—I. THE END OF ALL LAW IS RIGHTEOUSNESS—the production of the most perfect results. 1. In the natural world the use of the law is to perpetuate results essential to its well-being, *e.g.*, the circulation of the atmosphere, ebb and flow of tide, alteration of seasons, motions and influence of planets, &c. 2. The great aim of law in the moral world is to regulate conduct so as to produce a righteous character. The aim of the law of Moses was to lead to a higher life (chap. vii. 10). (1) The ethical element in the Mosaic law discovered to man the havoc made by sin (chap. vii. 7, 11, 13). (2) The ceremonial element shadowed forth the remedy. The sacrifices and festivals were intended to show the necessity for the expiation of sin, by the atonement of Christ. II. IN CHRIST WE HAVE THE GRAND END OF BOTH THE ETHICAL AND CEREMONIAL LAW—righteousness and holiness. Law depends for its authority upon the personal character of the lawgiver. The character of Christ

was like His law—holy, just, and good. 1. From Christ proceeds the moral law by which sin is discovered to us. His character is a constant reproof to us. His words bring home the consciousness of violated law. 2. In Christ is the only remedy for sin. The arrangements of the ceremonial law terminated in Him—the shadow retired when the substance appeared. In His life and death He fulfilled the duties and endured the penalties of the law, thus vindicating the righteousness of God and providing a complete righteousness for sinful man. III. FAITH IN CHRIST IS ACCEPTED AS A PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW. Law is powerless punitively when the end for which it exists is attained. We disarm the law by obeying it. All our unaided efforts to obey law—while in a state of lawless unnature—are futile. It is like running alongside a parallel pathway into which we are vainly trying to turn ourselves. Faith, and faith only, is the means of junction. This puts us into the position in which law would place us. The end of all law being the production of the most perfect results, this very end is answered when we believe in Jesus. For Christ, and all He has, becomes our own. "He is made unto us, of God, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." "The law and the gospel are evidenced in man's moral nature. The law the ideal of its life, the gospel the life of its ideal." LESSONS: 1. It is hopeless to attempt to attain righteousness by law, because of our moral inability to obey all its requirements. 2. Faith in Christ is the only and universal way of obedience. (*J. S. Exell, M.A.*) *Christ the end of the law for righteousness:*—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THESE WORDS. 1. That the law of God has been universally broken (chap. iii. 10–12). 2. That, therefore, every man is under the curse of that law (Gal. iii. 13; Rom. ii. 8–11). 3. That, in order to be saved, this curse must be removed and sins remitted. 4. That no man of himself can remove this curse or obtain this remission of his sins. 5. That notwithstanding God cannot recede from His claims, nor abate one jot or tittle of what His holy law demands, either in penalty or precept. 6. That every person who would obtain salvation must look out for such a righteousness as shall be answerable to all the claims of the law, be perfectly satisfactory to God, and therefore available for his justification and peace. II. IN WHAT WAY IS "CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH"? Consider—1. The general purport of Christ's coming (Psa. xl. 6–10; Heb. x. 1–14; Isa. xlii. 6, 7, 21; Dan. ix. 24; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 15, 16; Isa. liii. 6, *cf.* 1 Pet. ii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21). 2. The special character of His mediation. We must consider it as substitutional. We must behold Him rendering unto God, for those whom He represented, a perfect obedience to the law which they have broken, and suffering to its full and utmost extent the curse which they have incurred. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness—not by abrogating its authority, or lowering its requisitions, to meet the exigencies of our lapsed condition—but rather by asserting its full obligation and satisfying all its equitable claims. This is the great glory of the gospel—that God can be just—in exacting every claim of the law and in punishing every sin of those whom He saves to its full desert—and yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. III. TO WHOM IS THIS PROVISION AVAILABLE, OR WHO ARE BENEFITED THEREBY. "Every one that believeth," and no more. But we must ascertain—1. The testimony given in Scripture to this truth. We are again and again told that faith alone is the means appointed by God for granting the efficacy of this provision to the souls of men. 2. Why we can be benefited in this way of faith, and in no other? It is enough to say that God hath declared it. But we need not let the subject rest here. Man is utterly lost, helpless, and undone. Nothing that we can do can avail for our salvation. Our help and hope are based upon One, who only is mighty to save. It is therefore evident that the only way in which we can be benefited by what another has done for our salvation, must be by believing in Him for the execution of such an interposition, and for the advantage of the blessing procured thereby. 3. What is the nature of that faith by which we become interested in this righteousness. It is the act of a soul made willing in the day of God's power, under a clear discovery of its lost condition, and a clear perception of the mediation of Jesus, by which it is brought to rely on that mediation, and to plead that righteousness with God for its pardon and peace (chap. x. 10; Heb. xi. 1). 4. To what extent is this truth to be carried in the justification of the sinner before God? To the full extent for which it is designed for that purpose. It takes in the sinner's whole case—sins, guilt, condemnation, and deserved wrath. It brings him a full and complete deliverance and justification from all. Nay, more, it invests him with the perfect righteousness of Christ, as a perfect fulfilment of the law by which he

stands accepted with God. IV. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGES ARISING THEREFROM. Hereby—1. The law is established in all its authority, obligations, and claims. 2. God is honoured and exalted in the possession and exercise of all His perfections. 3. A sure and certain way of life and salvation, of pardon and peace, is opened for guilty men. 4. A sure provision is made for a loving, devoted, and delightful obedience to the will of God. 5. There is afforded to the soul a sure rock for its present safety and a firm foundation for its future security, even for ever. 6. The Church of God is provided with an unerring test by which to try every doctrine proposed for her acceptance, and an indomitable weapon by which to conquer every antichristian foe. (*R. Shittler.*) *Christ the end of the law for righteousness*:—I. THE PROPOSITION. "Christ is the end of the law." The end of a thing is either mathematical or moral. The mathematical end is the utmost part of a thing, in which the length or continuance is determined; as a point is the end of a line, death the end of life, the day of judgment the end of this world. The moral end of a thing is the scope and perfection of it. Now Christ is the end of the law both ways. 1. The mathematical end of the ceremonial and moral. Of the ceremonial by a direct signification, of the moral by an accidental direction. The ceremonies signified Christ and ended at Him. Properly, the moral law leads sinners to the curse, but by account to Christ, as the disease leads to the medicine or physician. 2. He is also the moral end of both. For He is the body of those ceremonies and shadows, and He perfectly fulfilled the Decalogue for us, and that three ways. (1) In His pure conception. (2) In His godly life. (3) In His holy and obedient sufferings, and all for us. For whatsoever the law required that we should be, do, or suffer, He hath performed in our behalf. Therefore one wittily saith that Christ is *Telos*, the end, or tribute, and we, by His payment, *Ateleis*, tribute-free, we are discharged by Him before God. Christ is both these ends, but principally the last is here understood. II. THE AMPLIFICATION "for righteousness." When thou art come to Christ thou must not cast away the law, but use it still to make thee more to cling unto Christ and as a rule of righteous living. Christ is the end of the law, not the killing, but fulfilling end; not to end, but to urge thy obedience. When the merchant is come aboard his ship by boat, he drowns not his boat, but hoists it up into his ship; he may have use of it another time. Or as a nobleman neglects not his schoolmaster when he is come to his lands, but prefers him. So certainly, if the law (though sharp) hath brought thee to Christ, thou canst not but love it for this office; if thou doest not, thou hast not Christ. Yea, it will be the delight of a man to be then doing, when Christ is with him, as Peter then willingly and with success cast out his net. Without Christ the law is an uncomfortable study; but with Him, nothing more delightful. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Christ the end of the law*:—Consider—I. CHRIST IN CONNECTION WITH THE LAW. The law is that which we have cause to dread; for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Yet, like the fascination which attracts the gnat to the candle, men by nature fly to the law for salvation. Now, what has our Lord to do with the law? 1. He is its purpose and object. The law is our schoolmaster, or rather our attendant to conduct us to the school of Jesus; the great net in which the fish are enclosed that they may be drawn out of the element of sin; the stormy wind which drives souls into the harbour of refuge; the sheriff's officer to shut men up in prison for their sin, concluding them all under condemnation in order that they may look to the free grace of God alone for deliverance. It empties that grace may fill, wounds that mercy may heal. Had man never fallen, the law would have been most helpful to show him the way in which he should walk: and by keeping it he would have lived (ver. 5). But since man has fallen, a way of salvation by works has become impossible. The law is meant to lead the sinner to faith *in* Christ, by showing the impossibility of any other way. It is the dog to fetch the sheep to the shepherd, the burning heat which drives the traveller to the shadow of the great rock in a weary land. The law is adapted to this; for—(1) It shows man his sin. Who can lay his own character side by side with it without seeing how far he has fallen short of the standard? When the law comes home to the soul it is like light in a dark room revealing the dust and the dirt which else had been unperceived. It is the test which detects the presence of the poison of sin in the soul. A true balance discovers short weight, and such is the first effect of the law upon the conscience of man. (2) It shows the result and mischief of sin. The types were intended to lead men to Christ by making them see their unclean condition and their need of such cleansing as only He can

give. Men put apart because of disease or uncleanness were made to see how sin separated them from God; and when they were brought back and purified with mystic rites, they were made to see how they can only be restored by Christ, the great High Priest. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (3) It teaches men their utter helplessness. Such holiness as the law demands no man can reach of himself. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" In grace there is hope, but as a matter of debt there is none, for we do not merit anything but wrath. The law tells us this, and the sooner we know it to be so the better, for the sooner we shall fly to Christ. (4) It shows us our great need. The law is the surgeon's knife which cuts out the proud flesh that the wound may heal. The law by itself only sweeps and raises the dust, but the gospel sprinkles clean water upon the dust. The law kills, the gospel makes alive; the law strips, and then Jesus Christ robes the soul in beauty. 2. Christ is the law's fulfilment. (1) God by immutable necessity demands righteousness of His creatures, and the law is not compelled to lower its terms, as though it had originally asked too much; but Christ gives the law all it requires. The law claims complete obedience, and Christ has brought in such a righteousness as that, and gives it to His people. Only as righteous ones can we be saved, but Christ makes us righteous, and therefore we are saved. (2) Jesus has thus fulfilled the original demands of the law, but since we have broken it there are other demands. God "will by no means clear the guilty," but every transgression shall have its just punishment. Here, then, Christ is the end of the law as to penalty. The claims of the law both as broken and unbroken Christ has met: both the positive and the penal demands are satisfied in Him. (3) Not only has the penalty been paid, but Christ has put great honour upon the law in so doing. If the whole race had kept the law it would not stand in so splendid a position as it does now that the Son of God has paid obeisance to it. Who shall say a word against the law to which the Lawgiver Himself submits? (4) The law's stability also has been secured by Christ. That alone can remain which is proved to be just, and Jesus has proved the law to be so, magnifying it and making it honourable. He says, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." As to the settlement of the eternal principles of right and wrong, Christ's life and death have achieved this for ever. "We establish the law, we do not make void the law through faith." 3. Christ is the end of the law in that He is the termination of it in two senses. (1) His people are not under it as a covenant of life. "We are not under the law, but under grace." (2) We are no longer under its curse. Jesus has given us all the righteousness it demands, and the law is bound to bless. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." II. OURSELVES IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST—for "to every one that believeth." To believe is not merely to accept a set of doctrines but to trust, to confide, to rest in. Dost thou believe that Christ stood in the sinner's stead and suffered the just for the unjust, and that He is able to save to the uttermost? And dost thou therefore lay the whole weight of thy soul's salvation upon Him alone? Then Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to thee, and thou art righteous. It is of no use to bring forward anything else if you are not believing, for nothing will avail—sacraments, prayers, &c. Observe—1. There is no question raised about the previous character, for it is written, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every one* that believeth." But, Lord, this man before he believed was a persecutor and injurious. Yes, and that is the very man who wrote these words. So if I address one who is defiled with every sin, yet I say if thou believest thine iniquities are blotted out, for the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. 2. There is nothing said by way of qualification as to the strength of the faith. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, whether he is Little Faith or Greatheart. The link may be very like a film, a spider's line of trembling faith, but, if it runs all the way from the heart to Christ, Divine grace can and will flow along the most slender thread. It is marvellous how fine the wire may be that will carry the electric flash. If thy faith be of the mustard-seed kind, if it be only such as tremblingly touches the garment's hem, if it be but the faith of sinking Peter, or weeping Mary, yet Christ will be the end of the law for righteousness to thee as well as to the chief of the apostles. 3. If this be so then all of us who believe are righteous. We are not completely sanctified, but still, in the sight of God, we are righteous, and being justified by faith we have peace with Him. 4. The connection of our text assures us that being righteous we are saved (ver. 9). Conclusion: 1. If any one thinks he can save himself, and that his own righteousness will suffice before God, I would

ask, if your righteousness sufficeth, why did Christ come here to work one out? 2. For any to reject the righteousness of Christ must be to perish everlastingly, because it cannot be that God will accept you or your pretended righteousness when you have refused the real and Divine righteousness which He sets before you in His Son. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ the end of the law for righteousness*:—I. WHAT THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS, SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT. Evidently that which is necessary in order to eternal life, and which infallibly leads to it (chap. v. 17, 21). It is termed "The righteousness of God" (ver. 3; chap. i. 17), and said to be by faith (chap. iii. 21, 22; Phil. iii. 9). It implies—1. Justification (chap. iii. 24; Tit. iii. 7); without which, as guilty condemned sinners, we can have no title to eternal life. 2. Regeneration or sanctification (see Phil. iii. 9); spoken of Eph. iv. 17–24; Tit. iii. 5, 6; John iii. 5, 6; without which we are not in Christ (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15), and have no fitness for heaven. 3. Practical obedience (Eph. ii. 10); the grand evidence that we are righteous (Luke i. 6; 1 John iii. 7). As to the necessity of this, see chap. ii. 6, 7; Rev. xxii. 14; and especially Matt. vii. 20, 21. II. WHERE AND HOW THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO BE FOUND. 1. Not in, or by, the law. (1) The moral law (chap. viii. 3) which requires perfect obedience. This we have not paid, do not, and cannot in future, pay. Hence it finds us guilty, and has no pardon to give us; it finds us depraved, and has no new nature for us; it finds us helpless, and has no supernatural aid to impart. (2) The ceremonial law. Its sacrifices could not remove sin (Heb. ix. 23; x. 4). Its purifications could only impart a ceremonial cleanness, or remove "the filth of the flesh" (Heb. ix. 13; 1 Pet. iii. 21). Its institutions respecting meats, days, &c. As they did not make the tree good, of course the fruit could not be good (Matt. xii. 16–19). 2. But wherefore, then, serveth the law? In Christ was the end for which the law was instituted; the moral law being chiefly to convince men of sin (chap. iii. 19, 20; vii. 7, 8), and thus to be a "schoolmaster to bring them to Christ" (Gal. iii. 19–24), and the ceremonial law to shadow forth His sacrifice and grace. The end may mean—(1) The scope; the law continually points to Christ; the moral law directs the sinner to Him who fulfilled and removed the curse of it, for that justification which itself cannot give; and the ceremonial law directs him to look from its sacrifices and purifications to the atonement and Spirit of Christ. (2) The perfection, or completion (1 Tim. i. 5). Christ fulfilled the moral law in fully explaining its meaning, and freeing it from the glosses of the Scribes; in obeying it, in suffering its penalty, and in providing that it may be written in our hearts; He also answered in His person all the types and shadows of the ceremonial law. (3) The period or termination (chap. vi. 21). Thus the whole Mosaic dispensation gives way to the gospel (2 Cor. iii. 11), and its ceremonies are taken out of the way by Christ (Col. ii. 14). 3. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." (1) For justification, or righteousness imputed, is only to be found in His obedience unto death (chap. iii. 24; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21). (2) Regeneration, a new creation, and entire sanctification are only to be found in Christ, by His Spirit and grace, who is made of God to us sanctification (John i. 14, 16; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 Cor. i. 30). (3) Practical righteousness is likewise to be had in Him; His laws direct us how to walk; His promises and threatenings enforce His laws; His example allures us; and His grace enables us to walk in His ways (2 Cor. xii. 9; Heb. iv. 14–16). III. BY WHOM THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO BE FOUND. By "every one that believeth" (vers. 5–10). 1. Its object is that God hath raised Christ from the dead. This—(1) Demonstrated Him to be the Son of God (chap. i. 3, 4), and, therefore, the only Saviour able and willing to save to the uttermost. Of this faith is persuaded, and, therefore, trusts in Him for salvation. (2) Was the broad seal of heaven set to His doctrine, of which faith is so thoroughly persuaded as to lay it to heart and walk according to it. (3) Was to show that His atonement was sufficient and accepted; of this faith is also persuaded and, therefore, relies solely on the propitiation in His blood for justification (chap. iii. 23, &c.; Gal. ii. 16–20). (4) Was that He might ascend, and intercede, and receive for us "the promise of the Father," for which faith thirsts and comes to Him (John vii. 37, 38). (5) He rose and ascended as our Forerunner. This faith believes, and, consequently, anticipates immortality and glory. He rose to give evidence that He will judge all mankind (Acts xvii. 31). Faith is persuaded of this, and prepares to meet Him. 2. Our faith, in these respects, must be such as will enable us to "make confession with our mouth," therefore it must be "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (ver. 10). As to the faith that does not part with sin, and give up everything that stands in competition with Christ, it is dead (James ii. 20–26). 3. As to the origin of this faith (see vers. 11–17). It

arises from the Word and Spirit of God (Acts xvi. 14; Eph. ii. 8, 9; Col. ii. 12). Therefore, hearing, reading, and prayer, are the important means. And in the exercise of that measure of faith we have received, however small, it will be increased. (*Joseph Benson.*) *Christ the end of the law for righteousness*:—I. THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE LAW IS A FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH. This rests on its nature and the immutability of God. The evidence is found in nature and conscience. 1. This the Jews believed, and it lay at the foundation of their error, which was twofold. (1) That the law was to be fulfilled by their own righteousness. (2) That the form in which the law was immutable was Mosaism. 2. This error led—(1) To the effort to establish their own righteousness. (2) To their making righteousness consist in ceremonial obedience. 3. Paul taught—(1) That the law is immutable. (2) That it cannot be satisfied by our righteousness, but only by the righteousness of God. (3) That Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (4) Consequently the immutability of the law is consistent with its abrogation, because its abrogation is effected by its fulfilment. The law is immutable so far as it demands righteousness as an indispensable condition of justification. But it is abrogated so far as it says, "Do this and live," *i.e.*, so far as it requires our own righteousness. II. IN WHAT SENSE IS CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW. 1. Not in the sense of its completion. *Telos* never occurs in the sense of *pleroma*. 2. But in the sense of having made an end of it, abolished it. This He has done—(1) In so satisfying its demands that it ceases to require our own personal righteousness as a condition of justification. (2) In putting an end to the Mosaic institutions, so that obedience to that law is no longer necessary to salvation. 3. In the sense of being its aim or object. This means either—(1) That the end of the law is righteousness. Christ is the end of the law because He is our righteousness; its design is secured in Him. So that it is by faith, not works, that the end of the law is to be attained. (2) Or, Christ is the object aimed at in the law. It was designed to bring us to Christ. III. CONSEQUENCES. 1. Out of Christ we are exposed—(1) To the inexorable demands of the law. (2) To its awful curse. (3) To its slavish spirit. 2. In Him we are righteous. (1) We meet all the demands of the law by pleading what He has done. (2) We are free from its curse as He was made a curse for us. (3) We are delivered from the spirit of bondage again to fear and are filled with the Spirit of adoption. Conclusion: As a result of faith in Christ our righteousness we have—1. Peace with God, and peace of conscience. 2. Assurance of eternal life, as no one can condemn those whom God justifies. 3. A principle of obedience, for until we are reconciled there can be no holiness. 4. All the benefits of Christ's triumph. Having obeyed and suffered for us as our representative, we share in all the blessings promised as His reward. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Christ the end of the law*:—Christ was revealed to abrogate, to annihilate, utterly to abolish sin. Now, we all know what it is to have a thing abrogated. Certain laws have held good up to the first of January of this year with regard to the hiring of public carriages, but now are under a new law. Suppose a driver complies with the new law, gets his license, puts up his flag, gives the passenger his card of prices, and afterwards the passenger summons him before the magistrate for asking a fare not authorised by the old law; the magistrate would say, "You are out of court, there is no such law. You cannot bring the man here, he has not broken the old law, for he is not under it. He has complied with the requisition of the new law, by which he declares himself no longer under the old rules, and I have no power over him." So he that believeth in Christ Jesus may be summoned by conscience when misinformed before the bar of God, but the answer of peace to his conscience is, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The relation of the law to the gospel* (text and 1 Tim. i. 5):—The law of God may be viewed in a twofold aspect, to distinguish between which is to prove a safeguard against both the errors of legality and the errors of antinomianism. We must regard the law—I. IN RELATION TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH CONSTITUTES THE TITLE TO ITS REWARDS. 1. When we strive to make this out by our own obedience, the aim is to possess ourselves of a legal right to heaven. We proceed on the imagination of a contract between God and man—whereof the counterpart terms are a fulfilment of the law's requisitions upon the one side, and a bestowment of the law's rewards upon the other. The one is the purchase-money—the other is the payment. They stand related to each other, as work does to wages. Now this spirit of legality, as it is called, is nearly the universal spirit of humanity. They are not the Israelites only who go about to establish a righteousness of their own. There is, in fact, a legal disposition in the heart,

and, long after the utter shortness of human virtue has been demonstrated, yet will man, as if by the bias of a constitutional necessity, recur to the old legal imagination, of this virtue being a thing of desert, and of heaven being the reward which is due to it. 2. Now, for man to establish a right by his righteousness, is in the face of all jurisprudence. Both the law and the gospel alike disown man's legal right to the rewards of eternity; and if he be too proud to disown it himself, he remains both a victim of condemnation by the one, and a helpless, hopeless outcast from the mercy of the other. If man will persist in seeking to make out a title-deed to heaven by his own obedience, then that obedience must be perfect. Even if he have but committed one sin—there is the barrier of a moral necessity in his way, which it is impossible to force. The God who cannot lie, cannot recall His curse upon every one who continueth not in all the words of the book of His law to do them. And one of two things must happen. Either, with a just conception of the standard of the law, he will sink into despair; or, with a low conception of that standard, he, though but grovelling among the mere decencies of civil life or the barren formalities of religious service, will aspire no farther and yet count himself safe. 3. Now herein lies the grand peculiarity of the gospel. It pronounces on the utter insignificance of all that man can do for the establishment of his right to the kingdom of heaven; and yet, he must be somehow or other provided with such a right, ere that he can find admittance there. It is not by an act of mercy alone that the gate of heaven is opened to the sinner. He must be furnished with a plea which he can state at the bar of justice—not the plea of his own deservings, which the gospel holds no terms with; and therefore with a plea founded exclusively on the deservings of another. Now what we reckon to be the very essence of the gospel is the report which it brings to a sinful world of a solid and satisfying plea; and that every sinner is welcome to the use of it. In defect of his own righteousness, which he is required to disown, he is told of an everlasting righteousness which another has brought in; and which he is invited, nay commanded, to make mention of. It is thus that Christ becomes the end of the law for righteousness. II. As HOLDING OUT A METHOD BY WHICH WE MIGHT ACQUIRE A RIGHTNESS OF CHARACTER IN THE CULTIVATION AND THE EXERCISE OF ITS BIDDEN VIRTUES. The legal right which obedience confers is one thing. The personal rightness which obedience confers is another. Obedience for a legal right is everywhere denounced in the New Testament, but obedience for a personal rightness is everywhere urged. For the one end, the law has altogether lost its efficacy; and we, in our own utter inability to substantiate its claims, must seek to be justified only by the righteousness of Christ. For the other end, the law retains its office as a perfect guide and exemplar of all virtue; and we, empowered by strength from on high to follow its dictates, must seek to be sanctified by the transference of its bidden uprightness upon our own characters. It is no longer the purchase-money by which to buy your right of entry to the marriage supper of the Lamb; but it is the wedding garment, without which you will never be seated among the beatitudes of that festival. To be meet in law, and without violence done to the jurisprudence of heaven, we must be invested by faith with the righteousness of Christ. To be meet in character, and without offence or violence to the spirit or the taste of heaven's society, we must be invested with the graces of our own personal righteousness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Vers. 5-11. **For Moses describeth the righteousness of the law.**—*The righteousness of the law*:—I. REQUIRES ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE—1. In every point. 2. In the spirit as in the letter. 3. In the past as in the future. II. IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE TO MAN, because—1. He is sinful. 2. Has actually sinned. III. IS DESCRIBED BY MOSES TO PREPARE US FOR CHRIST, and it discovers our—1. Misery. 2. Helplessness. 3. Danger. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The righteousness of the law and of faith*:—I. The righteousness OF THE LAW requires—1. A sinless nature. 2. A perfect obedience. II. The righteousness OF FAITH requires—1. No impossible achievements. 2. But a believing reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. (*Ibid.*) *The righteousness of the law and of faith*:—The apostle does not here oppose the covenant given by Moses to that given by Christ, for the latter as well as the former words were spoken by Moses concerning the covenant that then was (Deut. xxx. 11-14). But it is the covenant of grace, which God through Christ has established with men in all ages that is here opposed to the covenant of works made with Adam in Paradise. I. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF THE LAW required—1. That man should fulfil all righteousness inward and outward, negative and positive. 2. That this righteousness should be perfect in degree. No allowance could be

made for falling short in any particular. 3. That it should be perfectly uninterrupted. II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF FAITH. 1. By this is meant that condition of justification which was given by God to fallen man through the mediation of Christ (Gen. iii. 15). It was a little more clearly revealed to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 16, 18), and more fully made known to Moses and the prophets; but it was not fully brought to light until Christ came. 2. This covenant saith not to sinful man, "Perform unsinning obedience and live," or he would have no more benefit through Christ than if he were required to "ascend into heaven," &c. This were to mock human weakness. Strictly speaking, the covenant of grace doth not require us to do anything, but only to believe (Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv. 11, 23–25). 3. What, then, saith this covenant of forgiveness? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." In the day that thou believest thou shalt surely live. 4. Now "this word is nigh thee." The condition of life is plain, easy, always at hand. The moment that thou believest thou shalt be saved. III. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO. 1. The one supposes him to whom it is given to be already happy and holy, and prescribes the condition wherein he may continue so; the other supposes him to be unholy and unhappy, and prescribes the condition wherein he may regain what he has lost. 2. The first in order to man's continuance in God's favour prescribed a perfect obedience; the second in order to man's recovery of God's favour prescribes only faith. 3. The one required of Adam and his posterity to pay the price themselves, in consideration of which they were to receive God's blessing; in the other, seeing that we have nothing to pay, God "frankly forgives us all," provided only we believe in Him who hath paid the price for us. The first required what is now afar off, the second what is nigh at hand. IV. THE FOLLY OF TRUSTING IN "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF THE LAW." 1. Those who do this set out wrong; their first step is a fundamental mistake; for before they can claim any blessing on the terms of this covenant they must suppose themselves in his state with whom it was made. And how foolish to forget that it was not given to man when "dead in trespasses and sins," but when he was alive to God, and that it was never designed for the recovery of God's favour, but only for the continuance thereof. 2. They do not consider what manner of obedience the law requires, nor their inability to perform it. What folly to offer our poor doings, mixed as they are with many sins, to Him who is strict to mark what is done amiss, and in whose sight no flesh living is justified. V. THE WISDOM OF SUBMITTING TO THE "RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD BY FAITH." This appears from three considerations. 1. That it is acting according to truth and to the real nature of things. For what is it more than to acknowledge our sinfulness and helplessness. 2. That it is the righteousness of God—the method chosen by God Himself. Now as it is not meet for man to say unto God, "What doest Thou?" so it is true wisdom to acquiesce in whatever He has chosen. 3. That as it was of mere grace and undeserved mercy that God has vouchsafed to sinful man any way of reconciliation with Himself, whatever method He is pleased to appoint it is doubtless our wisdom to thankfully accept. 4. That it is wisdom to aim at the best end by the best means. Now the best end a fallen creature can pursue is happiness in God. But the best, nay the only, means of attaining this is submitting to the righteousness which is of God by faith. Conclusion: Then do not say in thy heart—1. "I must first do this; conquer sin, go to church," &c., but first believe. 2. "I am not good enough." Thou never wilt be till thou believe. 3. "I am not sensible enough of my sins." It may be that God will make thee so by believing. (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *The two ways of salvation*:—Two ways to eternal life are here contrasted. The one is by doing; the other is by believing. The one by doing a full and finished righteousness for ourselves; the other by believing that Christ has done a full and sufficient righteousness for us. There are two places at which these respective ways may be compared with each other. I. AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TWO WAYS—when man, under the first effectual visitation of earnestness, resolves to go forth in busy search after the good of his eternity. 1. And here a consideration meets us at the very outset of the way of doing. (1) It is he who doeth all things that shall live. Have we hitherto done all things? It is not enough that there be the purpose of obedience in all time coming. Can we appeal to every hour of our bygone history, and confidently speak of each, having, without one flaw, been pervaded by those duteous conformities of a heart ever glowing with affection, and a hand ever glowing with activity, which the creature owes to the Creator who gave him birth? Should there be one single deed either of sin or of deficiency to soil the retrospect, it nullifies the enterprise.

(2) If the conscience be at all enlightened, this will be felt as a difficulty. The sense of a debt which no effort of ours can possibly lessen—of a guilt that by ourselves is wholly inexpiable—will paralyse the movements of a conscious sinner; and just because they paralyse his hopes. The likest thing to it in human experience is, when a decree of bankruptcy without a discharge has come forth on the man who has long struggled with his difficulties, and is now irrecoverably sunk under the weight of them. There is an effectual drag laid upon this man's activity. The spirit of industry dies within him when he finds that he can neither make aught for himself, nor, from the enormous mass of his obligations, make any sensible advances towards his liberation; and he either breaks forth into recklessness or is chilled into inactivity by despair. 2. From all this there is no release to the spiritual bankrupt, till the gospel puts its discharge into his hands. By this gospel there is a deed of amnesity made known, to which all are welcome. There is revealed to us a Surety who hath taken the whole of our debt upon Himself. And whereas in the way of doing, the very entrance was impracticably closed against us—this initial obstruction is entirely moved aside from the way of believing. Like the emancipated debtor to whom the fruits of all his future toil and diligence are now fully assured to him, a weight is taken off from the activities of nature. Our labour is no longer in vain—because now it is labour in the Lord; and every effort becomes a step in advance towards heaven. II. AFTER A MAN HAS SET FORTH IN THE PURSUIT OF THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, and has made the weary struggle it may be of months or of years in order to attain it. 1. A thousand punctualities may be rendered, with the view to establish a merit in the eye of heaven's Lawgiver, which never can be effectually done without a full and faultless adherence to Heaven's law. Now, if conscience feel as it ought, there will throughout this whole process be an inappeasable disquietude—a self-dissatisfaction which no doings or deserts of our own can terminate. For, let it be observed, that, reach what elevation of virtue we may, the higher we proceed, we shall command a farther view of the spaces which still lie before us; or, in other words, we shall be more filled with a sense of the magnitude of our own shortcomings. The conscience, in fact, grows in sensibility, just as the conduct is more the object of our strict and scrupulous regulation. The presumptuous imagination of our sufficiency comes down when we thus bring it to the trial; and that impotency of which we were not aware at the outset, we are made to know and to feel experimentally. Meanwhile that is a sore drudgery in which we are implicated; and all the more fatiguing that it is so utterly fruitless. This is the grand failure. The hand can labour; but the heart cannot love. And after wasting and wearying ourselves with the operose drudgeries of a manifold observation, we still find that we are helpless defaulters from the first and the greatest commandment. 2. Now, it is when thus harassed, that the very outlet required is opened. The righteousness, which the sinner has so ineffectually tried to make out in his own person, has been already made out for him by another; and now lies for his acceptance. The sin, which hitherto has so hardened him with despondency and remorse, is now washed away by the blood of a satisfying expiation. What a mighty enlargement when the title-deed to heaven, for which he had been stretching forward with many long and laborious efforts, till he at last sunk down into exhaustion and despair, is put into his hand. He passes from death unto life. And when delivered from the burden of this felt impossibility, man breaks forth on a scene of enlargement; and with all the alacrity of an emancipated creature whose bonds have been loosed, he proceeds to offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and to call on the name of the Lord. 3. And let us not be afraid lest this judicial salvation should not bring a moral salvation in its train. The great author of that economy under which we live will sanctify as well as justify; and if we but trust in Christ, we shall be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who will superadd the personal to the judicial righteousness, and make us meet in character as well as meet in law for that heaven, the door whereof Christ hath opened to us. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The four witnesses*:—I. WHAT MOSES SAITH (ver. 5). If you wish to be saved by the law you must do its commands and you shall live. The law is written in the ten commandments; you know them; and if you desire to live by them you must keep them. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Moses does not tone down the law to suit our fallen state, or talk of our doing our best and God's being satisfied with our imperfect obedience. If the law is once broken it is all over with you as to salvation thereby. You that hope to be saved by your works are indulging in a forlorn hope; whatever you may

do or be in the future, the past has already ruined you. If you were to be saved by the law you should have begun without sin, continued without sin, and then it would be needful to end without sin. This is what Moses saith; hear it and be humbled. II. WHAT THE GOSPEL SAITH (vers. 6–9). 1. The gospel claims to be like the law in its clearness. Moses claimed for the law that it was within the range of their knowledge and understanding (Deut. xxx. 11). The gospel says, "Believe and live," quite as distinctly as Moses said, "Do and live." No man doubts that if he had performed the law God would give him life; but it is equally certain that if we have believed in Christ we have eternal life. 2. It forbids the questions of despair. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend," &c. When a man is awakened to a sense of sin he cries, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Surely it would need that I mount to heaven to own my sin, or dive to hell to bear my punishment. How is it possible that I can be saved?" This wail of despair takes many forms: one man puts it thus, "What doings can I perform by which I can be saved?" Another, despairing of deliverance by his doings, runs upon his feelings. Now, the gospel forbids us to dream in this fashion. Say not even in thy heart that anything is wanted as to doings or feelings in order to complete the righteousness which is wrought out by Jesus. Ah, then the heart foolishly cries, "I must know a great deal; as much as if I had been to heaven, or as if I had dived into the depths." No, you must not: the gospel is simple; easy as the A B C of your childhood. Say not in thine heart that thou must be made into a scholar. No, trust in the sinner's Saviour, and you are saved. Another says, "I must undergo a singular experience of heavenly delight, or hellish despair." No, the righteousness of faith lies only in reliance upon the work of Jesus finished for you. 3. The gospel translates these questions, and then answers them. A voice cries, "Who shall ascend into heaven?" The gospel replies, if you did what would you do there, without the Saviour? You say, "Who shall descend into the deep?" Listen. If you were to descend there, what would you do without Him whom God has anointed to save? If you find Him it will not much matter where you find Him, in heaven or in the deep, for He must be almighty everywhere. Thou sayest, "Who shall ascend into heaven?" Why? "To bring Christ down?" Hear this! Jesus has come down—to the manger, the Cross, the grave. And our salvation lies not in our descending, but in Christ's descending. You need not "bring up Christ again from the dead," for the Lord has risen indeed. And your hope lies wholly in what this Son of God did in His descent and ascent. Now, soul, thou hast nothing to do with asking vain questions; thou hast to accept the result of the Saviour's actual performances. 4. The gospel declares this word of life by faith in the risen Christ to be near us. As your next door neighbour's house is not hard to get at, so neither is salvation by the gospel. III. WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAITH (ver. 11). 1. That "whosoever" in all the world, throughout all the ages, shall trust on Christ shall never be ashamed of having done so; he shall never turn round on his dying bed, and cry, "I made a mistake in trusting Christ." Cardinal Bellarmine thought that we might trust in our works; but admitted that inasmuch as no man could be sure that he had done enough, it was safest to trust altogether to the merits of Jesus. I have always felt obliged to the Cardinal for that admission; because the best is good enough for me. 2. That no man is forbidden to believe (ver. 12). There never was a sinner yet to whom God said, "You must not trust My Son"; on the contrary, it is written, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." 3. That though your faith should only be strong enough to lead you to pray, yet it shall save you (ver. 13). IV. WHAT EXPERIENCE SAITH. 1. That it is the grandest way of living in the world. (1) In times of doubt, distress and sinfulness. (2) In times of jubilation and success. When God gives you growth in grace and fruitfulness in good works it will be your safety to trust in nothing but the work of the Lord. 2. That it enables men to face death with courage. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.**—*The righteousness of faith* is—I. RELATIVE. 1. The gift of God. 2. Through Christ. II. EASY OF ATTAINMENT. 1. You have no great thing to do. 2. But simply believe. III. IS SURE. Thou shalt be saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The righteousness of faith:*—The apostle employs a strong personification, investing "the righteousness which is of faith" with powers of speech in general, and of discriminative and persuasive speech in particular. The personified object is represented as "of," *i.e.*, "from," faith. Not that it originates "in" or is identical "with" faith. It is conveyed to the soul of the recipient "by" faith, and as elsewhere represented is from God to be enjoyed by man on the condition of faith. If it were gifted with speech it would

say to each man, "Say not in thy heart," &c. No such effort is required. Men who have fallen into unrighteousness can be lifted up again. It is a great work. But it is not to be effected by some supernatural effort on the part of men themselves. They do not need, *e.g.*, to soar aloft to find Christ and induce Him to come down to save. The indispensable supernatural forthputting of energy has already been put forth by one who is "mighty to save to the uttermost." The apostle weaves the woof of the utterances of his personified pleader into the warp of some grand oratorical pleading addressed by Moses to the Israelites on the eve of his disappearance within the veil (Deut. xxx. 11–14). In ver. 7 an alternative is oratorically introduced, not identical with that laid down by Moses, but substantially parallel. Moses spoke of "going over the sea." But the apostle, for his peculiar purpose, modifies and intensifies the representation. He desired to make the way plain for introducing a reference to Christ's resurrection; and hence he speaks of the world of the deceased, representing it, in one of its awesome aspects, as an abyss. Will it be needful to go down into that dismal region, which, as "bottomless," has never been explored. "Say not Who shall make that terrible descent?" The personified righteousness continues to speak, and as it speaks it draws attention to "the word" in which it is conveyed to the soul. In Deuteronomy it is not righteousness that speaks, but Moses in God's name. Hence there is no rhetorical personification, but the living personality of the lawgiver. And it is with his own living voice that he specifies "the commandment which God commanded," and says, "It is not hidden, nor afar off, but nigh . . . that thou mayest do it." "The word" referred to is the commandment exhibiting the duty devolving on the Israelites. The apostle's reference is different. The "word" with him is the gospel—"the word of faith," so called because it is the object towards which faith points and in which it terminates. The gospel is "a word," though not necessarily or generally a mere vocable. As there may be several vocables in a word of exhortation, so in the proclamation of the word of faith harmonious groups of vocables may be requisite. Sometimes, indeed, it may be condensed into a single one such as "Jesus," "Christ," "propitiation," &c. But more frequently it expands itself into some such worded utterance as "God so loved the world," &c. Let a man study till he understands this word; or let him master the vocables referred to, and a great light will dawn on his spirit. The personified pleader says of the word, "It is near thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." It has been brought near by proclamation, or conversation, or by some kindred modification of instrumentality, or by some more subtle influence still. Men heedlessly utter gospel words with their mouths; and both before and after utterance, the words are in the heart or mind. Like other words, however, they have both a kernel and a husk; and too often is the attention occupied with the exterior to the neglect of the interior. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *What saith the righteousness of faith?*—Seek—I. NOT IN HEAVEN. Christ is here. II. NOT IN THE GRAVE. Christ is risen. III. NOT AFAR OFF. Christ is nigh thee. IV. IN THY MOUTH, IN THY HEART, if thou canst but believe. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The cry of the soul and the answer of the gospel*:—A man of poetic genius has ever a strong tendency to personifications. He gives life to dead things, thought and feeling to unconscious objects, and makes even dumb matter speak. Hence the apostle here personifies Christianity; he makes her speak to the men who are looking out in the distance for the good which stood in all its plenitude by their side. His description of Christianity here is simple, compendious, and expressive. He calls it the righteousness which is of faith, which means the system which is to make men right by believing in the heart. A heart-belief in the gospel makes men right—right in their spirit, motives, lives, relations. Note here—I. THE CRY OF THE SOUL. "Say not in thine heart," &c. 1. The spirit of this cry is identical throughout the race. What is it? It is a heart craving for some good in the external, the distant, and the supernatural. This craving explains much of the history of the ages. 2. The objects of this cry are various throughout the race. Whilst all cry for good, all do not cry for the same kind of good. The *summum bonum* varies with different men. The text implies that the men addressed are seeking the Messianic good, and crying out for Christ. This was the grand wish of the Jewish world. Christ is the desire of nations. If we analyse the cry we shall find that it includes—(1) A deep consciousness of want. Man is a needy creature, and the deepest need of man, as a sinner, is a "Christ," some Divinely-anointed one who shall make right his soul. (2) Belief in the existence of a provision. Man's primitive notions of a God, and his experience of the fitness of the world to his physical needs, give him the conviction, that, wherever there is a deep

want, there must be somewhere a Divine provision. (3) A felt necessity of some agency to bring the provision near. Who shall ascend? The good is somewhere, who shall bring it near? What priest? What sage? What measures? What men? II. THE ANSWER OF THE GOSPEL. 1. The answer discourages this tendency. "Say not in thine heart." Christianity discourages the tendency in man to look for good outside, far off, and in the miraculous; it bids him to look within, enjoy the near and the natural. 2. The answer reveals the provision. "The word is nigh thee," &c. The good, to satisfy the deepest cravings of the human soul, is to be found in that Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us. Christ meets all the exigencies and aspirations of the soul, and He is near to every one who has the revelation. Near—(1) In the Scriptures. The Scriptures are not far off from thee; not in distant lands, distant libraries, or churches, but in thy house, thy home, &c. They are they that testify of Him. (2) In thy memory. Thou hast been taught the biography of Christ, &c. Thoughts of Him are constantly coming up to thee, "Nay, it is even in thy heart." Much of thy speech is shaped by sentiments concerning Him. Even in thy "heart." He has often stirred thy emotions. The preaching of Him has often evoked the tenderest sympathies of thy nature. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The cry of humanity and the response of the gospel*:—I. MAN CRIES FOR THE SUPERNATURAL (ver. 6). II. CHRISTIANITY RESPONDS TO MAN'S CRY (ver. 8). III. THE PRACTICAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE RESPONSE IS SALVATION (ver. 9). (*Homilist.*) *Important questions answered*:—The questions asked may be through unbelief, or embarrassment, or anxiety, or possibly through all three combined. The anxious follower after righteousness is not disappointed by an impracticable code, nor mocked by an unintelligible revelation: the word is near him, therefore accessible; plain and simple, and therefore apprehensible; and, we may fairly add, deals with definite historical fact, and therefore certain; so that his salvation is not contingent on an amount of performance which is beyond him, and therefore inaccessible; irrational, and therefore inapprehensible; undefined, and therefore involved in uncertainty. (*Dean Alford.*) *The present blessing*:—Your salvation is in Christ, and that salvation is marked—I. BY CLEARNESS. "Who shall ascend into heaven?" &c., is the language of one bewildered. Salvation is felt as a difficult and perplexing problem. The apostle reminds us that it is plain and intelligible. In ver. 9 you have the Apostle's Creed. 1. It is a definite creed. A dying German metaphysician exclaimed, "Only one man in Germany understands my philosophy, and he doesn't understand it." But we are not called upon to struggle with incomprehensible speculations, but to receive simple, historical facts. To believe in the Christ: His incarnation, His atoning death, His resurrection, His reign at the right hand of God, dispensing grace and joy to all who trust in Him. 2. It is a simple creed. But you say, "It is full of mysteries." True, but you are called upon to rest in the facts, not to understand the mysteries. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Thousands of men enjoy the sunshine who know nothing of astronomy; admire the rainbow knowing nothing of optics. God will some day reveal more fully the philosophy of redemption, but to-day I am to take God at His word, and leave the mysteries. Believe that in your lost estate God loved you, that He worked out your salvation in Christ, that if you only rest in Christ God will not cast you out. "If thou shalt believe," &c. 3. It is a short creed. Dr. Porson declared he should require fifty years to satisfy himself on all points of divinity, but in five hours you may grasp the truth which saves the soul. There is no intellectual impossibility. It is not as difficult to become a saint as to become a Homer or Newton. We cannot write an "Iliad" or a "Principia," but we can believe that God loves us, and that He for Christ's sake blots out our sin. II. BY NEARNESS. "The word is nigh thee," &c. It is not in the heights or depths. Our poet says, "A man's best things lie nearest him, lie close about his feet." It is so in daily life, and also in spiritual things. 1. All we need for the healing of our nature is here. Some maintain that we need never have recourse to foreign drugs, that God has planted in each locality the very plants which can cure the diseases of that locality. "God put such and such a plant that heals sore throats by the riverside," they tell us, "because where the bane is, the antidote is." However this may be, it is a grand thing to know that the Plant of Renown, the Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, is close to us. 2. All we need for the perfecting of our life is here. In the third verse we read of Israel "going about to establish their own righteousness." A plant has not to go about looking for the sunshine, the dew, the rain; all that it has to do is to bare its heart and take in the precious influences which wait upon it. So the truth which saves, the love

which purifies, the faith which uplifts, the power which perfects, are all about us, waiting only the opening of our heart to take them in. By this time a great number of our rich countrymen have left us for milder climes; but the poor and busy amongst us cannot take our flight to find health and life beyond the sea—we must stay where we are, and die, it may be, under the rigours of an English winter. But, thank God, the poorest of us for our spiritual health and salvation need not to cross the sea. "Say not who shall ascend into heaven, or go beyond the sea." The world of health and blessing is about us already. Men are seeking for truth and power as if they were up in the sky, down in the depths; but the saving truth has been in our lips, the saving grace in our heart from childhood, and all we have to do is to realise that language, to exercise that grace. The Redeemer is not distant geographically, nor historically. The difficulty is not to find Christ, but to avoid Him. The word of salvation is in thy mouth, the power in thine heart—believe it, use it, and you shall know your Saviour nigh at hand and not afar off. III. BY FREENESS. "Who shall ascend," &c. Some impossible task is contemplated. But the argument is, all has been done already; all we have to do is gratefully to accept what is pressed upon us. Justification and eternal life are free gifts. I know that men do not like to think so; they fancy they can work up to them, but this is in strict consistency with God's method of action in the intellectual world. Men may work day and night, know well the theory of their art, strictly observe rule and order, but it is all to little purpose if they are not originally gifted men. Did the poor ploughman Robert Burns "learn" to make poetry? Did that tinker of Bedford "learn" to dream? No; they were gifted, and it was easy to them to sing, to write, to paint the very grandest things the world has ever seen. So it is with true righteousness. Genius, however, is to the few, but the same Lord over all is rich in grace to all who call upon Him. Some of you have long sought to fulfil the law, and you have miserably failed. You could not climb the sky of moral perfection, you could not penetrate its depths; but find in Christ abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and you shall delightfully fulfil the commandment in all its heights and depths. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) **But what saith it? The word is nigh thee.**—*The importance of simple faith in the Word:*—To bring Christ down from above, or to bring Him up from the dead, would be to make Him an object of sight. A current aphorism is, that seeing is believing; yet Scripture distinguishes between the two. "Faith is the assurance of things not seen," and belief through the medium of the senses is far less valued than a belief in a testimony (Luke xxiv. 25; Mark xvi. 14; 1 Pet. i. 7, 8; Rom. iv. 21). But there is a third way in which an absent thing might be viewed by us—viz., as an object of conception, an act often conjoined with faith, yet perfectly distinct from it. One might conceive a thing without any belief in its reality; and, on the other hand, though one can scarcely believe without some conception of the object of faith—yet may that conception be so dull as almost to justify the expression of our believing in the dark. You might believe in the existence of an absent friend, and in his affection for yourself; and this belief might or might not be as strong to-morrow as it is to-day. His whole countenance, manner, and voice, bespeaking the utmost cordiality—these may all tell more vividly on the imagination at one time than another. This conception flits and fluctuates, as if dependent on the ever varying mood of the spirit—at one time gleaming forth towards the vivacity of sense, and at another fading almost to extinction. But the remarkable thing is that, under all these varieties of conception, the faith might remain invariable. There may be a dimness in the contemplation, without the slightest mixture of a doubt in the object contemplated. What is true of an earthly friend is true of our Friend in heaven. He is far removed out of sight, but may become the object of faith through the word that is nigh unto us. And He may also become the object of conception, which is a sort of substitute for sight. But let us never forget that as faith without sight is all the more pleasing to God in that it subsists on its own unborrowed strength without the aid of the senses—so might faith be in the absence of any lucid or enlivening conception, having nothing to sustain it but the simple credit which it gives to the word of the testimony. Yet while we hold these bright and exhilarating views of the Saviour to be unspeakably precious (John xiv. 21), we should distinguish between the conception and the faith—because while the one may be a minister of sensible comfort, it is the other which is the guarantee of our salvation. The man who, to repair the insufficiency of the word, would bring down Christ from heaven, but exemplifies the man who, as if to make up for the same insufficiency, strains but ineffectually to frame some picturesque idea of Him there. The danger

is that he may compass himself about with sparks of his own kindling, or walk in the light of his own fancy or his own fire. Let him keep, then, determinedly by the word which is nigh, rather than by the imagery wherewith he peoples the distinct and lofty places which are away from him. He who has conception but not faith, will at length lie down in sorrow. He who has faith, but from the want of conception walketh in darkness, and has no light, is still bidden trust in the name of God and stay upon His word. He who conceiveth may have sensible comfort; but, with or without this, he who believeth is safe (Isa. l. 10, 11). (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The apparatus of salvation nigh*:—Once in the city of Rome, giving a gentleman of the place an account of a sermon I had heard a friar preach in the Coloseum, I said that though many things in it pleased me, one did not: he never gave the people to understand that they might go for absolution direct to God without the offices of a priest. That intelligent and noble man leaned across the table, and, with an eager look, said, "Do you believe that a man can obtain absolution without the intermediation of a priest?" Of course, I replied that our view of the place and work of the minister of the gospel was directly the opposite of that. Instead of his being a power between God and the sinner, we hold that his happiest work is to make the sinner feel that there is no power, visible or invisible, between him and the Saviour, and so to encourage him and lead him direct to the one Mediator. He then put some question which seemed to say, "What, then, is the apparatus of absolution?" This, he was told, was settled by a few words of St. Paul. "The word is nigh you" (chap. x. 6–10). Here the whole apparatus is "nigh" the man, in his own person—his heart to trust in the Saviour, his mouth to call upon Him; that is all the apparatus. Wherever a man stands feeling his need of salvation, there are all things now ready—the loving Saviour, the free pardon, the blood that speaketh peace, the heart to believe, the mouth to call upon the Lord. When the Roman heard this he looked up and said, "How grand that is! why, that could be done in a quarter of an hour." Yes, it may be done in a quarter of an hour; for this salvation is a free gift (Matt. vii. 7, 8). (*W. Arthur, M.A.*) *Salvation near*:—It is said that some years ago a vessel sailing on the northern coast of the South American continent was observed to make signals of distress. When hailed by another vessel, they reported themselves as "dying for water!" "Dip it up, then," was the response, "you are in the mouth of the Amazon river." There was fresh water all around them, they had nothing to do but to dip it up, and yet they were dying of thirst, because they thought themselves to be surrounded by the salt sea. How often are men ignorant of their mercies! How sad that they should perish for lack of knowledge! Jesus is near the seeker even when he is tossed upon oceans of doubt. The sinner has but to stoop down and drink and live; and yet he is ready to perish, as if salvation were hard to find. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Even in thy mouth and in thy heart.**—In the heart for our personal salvation; in the mouth for God's glory and the salvation of others. In the heart and not in the mouth is cowardice; in the mouth and not in the heart is hypocrisy. The gospel believed is a fountain in the heart; the gospel possessed is the streams through the mouth. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **That is, the word of faith which we preach.**—*The word of faith*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. It teaches faith. 2. Is offered to faith. 3. Inspires faith. II. ITS DISPENSATION. 1. We are but dispensers. 2. Divinely commissioned. 3. To all who will receive it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Faith is desire*:—Faith is desire. Never in the history of the world has it been, or can it be, that a longing towards Christ shall be a longing thrown back unsatisfied upon itself. You have but to trust, and you possess. We open the door for the entrance of Christ by the simple act of faith; and, blessed be His name, He can squeeze Himself through a little chink, and He does not require the gates should be flung wide open in order that, with some of His blessings, He may come in. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *True preaching*:—Preaching is not the communication of information, the transfer of a dead sum or capital of facts or theories from one mind to another, but the opening of living fountains within the heart, the scattering of sparks which shall kindle where they fall; the planting of seeds of truth which shall take root in the new soil where they are cast, and striking their roots downward and sending their branches upward shall grow into goodly trees. (*Abp. Trench.*) **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**—*Mouth and heart*:—Paul's great work was saving souls. This is one of the reasons why he so often gives us weighty condensations of the gospel. He prepared them for his brethren, as one provides for travellers portable meats. A compact sentence of this sort is a little Bible, a miniature Body of Divinity, and he who composes

such may be working as effectively for the salvation of men as another who preaches. Notice—I. THAT THE GOSPEL IS A GOSPEL OF FAITH, AND THIS GOSPEL IS EVIDENTLY INTENDED FOR LOST MEN. 1. The law continues life to those who have already life enough to do good work (ver. 5); but the gospel saith not only that we shall live by it, but that we shall be saved by it, which implies that we are lost and ruined. 2. Jesus comes to bring salvation. (1) From the punishment of sin. (2) From sin itself. (3) From the power of sin. II. THAT SAVING FAITH CONCERNS ITSELF ONLY ABOUT JESUS HIMSELF. Read vers. 6–9. 1. Unbelief saith, "Who shall ascend into heaven? Who shall descend into the abyss?" Unbelief is always starting questions. Faith is of another kind: she takes her stand where Christ is, and she says, "If salvation is anywhere it is in Him." 2. Unbelief dreams of skies and seas, and all immeasurable things. "Who shall ascend into heaven?" Imagination beholds her mighty merits scaling the everlasting ramparts. At another time, when she is heavy, her dream is of a wretched diver into the deep seas of anguish, plunging down into the abyss to find the pearl of peace. Faith has done with dreams, for she has done with Sinai. With open eye faith reads facts. She reflects that Christ died, rose again, and is gone into glory. 3. Unbelief puts a sad slur upon Christ. She talks about going up to heaven: but that would imply that Jesus had never come down. She talks of descending into the abyss, as if Christ had never come up from the dead. The fact is, all that can be done has been done. Why do you want to do what is already done? III. THAT SAVING FAITH HAS A CONFESSION TO MAKE. Observe—1. This confession is put first. (1) Because Paul was quoting from Deuteronomy, and had, of course, to place the words as there arranged. Yet there must be other reasons. (2) Because it is most likely to be forgotten. We have plenty of preaching of "Believe and live." Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now, baptism is the confession of our faith. The faith to which salvation is promised is never a dumb faith; it is a faith which owns the Lord even in the teeth of adversaries. (3) Because it is first as far as our fellow-creatures are concerned. How can I know what you believe in your heart? I must first hear what you confess with your mouth. "Speak, that I may see you." (4) Because in a certain sense it is actually first. Many persons never receive comfort because they have never confessed. The Lord will not give to you the warmth of faith unless you are willing to yield the obedience of faith by taking up your cross and confessing Him. 2. What it is that is to be confessed: "The Lord Jesus." (1) The Deity of Christ. He who denies this puts himself out of court, for he rejects that part of the Redeemer's character which is essential to His being a Saviour. (2) That Jesus is Lord; *i.e.*, Ruler and Master. You must cheerfully become His disciple, follower, and servant. (3) Jesus, *i.e.*, Saviour. 3. This confession is very definite. It is not to be an inference drawn in silence from your life, but a declared statement of the mouth. If the apostle meant that we were merely to obey Christ, he would have said so. Why is this? Because confession with the mouth is—(1) A sort of breaking away from the world. When a man says, "I believe in Christ," it is as good as saying to the world, "I have done with you." (2) A way of forming a visible union with Jesus. When a man confesses Christ he takes sides with Him and His cause. (3) Useful to the outside world as a witness reproving their ungodliness, and inviting them to a better mind. The confessions of the saved are often the means of saving others. This is a hard saying to some of you. You have good points about you, but you do not let your light shine before men. Your candle is under a bushel: it cannot burn well in so confined a space. If it is God's own fire, and you put it under a bed to hide it, it will soon set the bed on a blaze. Mischief comes of suppressed truth. IV. THAT FAITH HAS A GREAT COMFORT TO ENJOY. 1. She has truth of which she must speak with her mouth; but she has also facts which she ponders in her heart. "With thy heart believe that God hath raised Him from the dead"—does not only mean that you believe the fact, but so believe it that it warms and comforts our heart. 2. Why is salvation promised especially to this? Because—(1) All the rest of Christ's history is implied and included in it. If He was raised from the dead, then He must have died. If He died, then He must have been a man, and have been born. (2) It is confirmatory of the whole. By raising Him the Father set His seal upon His person as Divine, upon His office as commissioned of God, upon His life as well-pleasing, and upon His death as being accepted of God for full atonement. (3) It is the source of the heart's best comfort. We shall rise to glory because He rose to glory. How this ought to cheer those who are near despair! How it should encourage those

who lie at death's door! V. THAT FAITH HAS A SURE PROMISE TO REST UPON. "If thou believest . . . thou shalt be saved." 1. The singular pronoun, "thou," sets its mark upon you. Put thine ear to this telephone; a voice speaks to thee. 2. Observe the absence of "ifs" and "buts." It is not "thou mayest be saved," but "thou shalt be saved." 3. There is a sort of passiveness about the expression "be saved." The text does not speak about what you are going to do, but about something that is to be done for and in you. 4. There never was, and there never will be, a man that with his mouth confessed the Lord Jesus, and with his heart believed that God raised Him from the dead, that was not saved. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith and confession*:—Distinguished by this text of belief, and confession of that belief, men are divided into four classes. There are those (1) who neither make confession of any such belief with the mouth, nor believe these truths in their hearts. (2) Those who believe indeed in the heart, but who fear to confess their belief in Christ before men, or who even do as Peter did, when in the time of trial he denied that he knew the Lord (Matt. xxvi. 72; *cf.* Mark viii. 38). (3) Those who confess with their lips the truths revealed by God, but who do not believe in Him with their hearts; who profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus i. 16; *cf.* Matt. xv. 7, 8). (4) Those who confess Him with their mouth before men, and who believe in Him with their hearts. To these is the promise made that they shall be saved. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *Faith and confession*:—There is no Christian faith without Christian confession, and *vice versâ*. Confession is just faith turned from its obverse side to its reverse. The two sides of the precious unity are inseparable and mutually indispensable. When faith comes forth in silence to announce itself, and to proclaim the glory and grace of the Lord, its voice is confession. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Confession of faith*:—Paul is making an earnest effort to show how simple for both Jew and Gentile the way of salvation is. It is heart-faith in Jesus. It is life-devotion to His honour. Three principles are laid down with the utmost assurance. I. A MAN SHOULD HAVE A HEART-FAITH IN CHRIST TO CONFESS. Profession without such heart-life is self-delusion or hypocrisy, and has most pernicious influence on the man. The heart-life is something between Christ and the soul. None may intermeddle with it. But it has its tests, which discover it to others. Heart-faith is—1. Sincere and loving. 2. In Christ: Christ risen: Christ raised by God. 3. Tones the life with righteousness. Can these tests be applied now by men to themselves? Can these tests be applied now by men to their fellow men? Show they can. The sincere response to these is the abiding confidence of godly men. II. A MAN SHOULD FIND OUT THE BEST WAY IN WHICH TO CONFESS SUCH HEART-LIFE. It is due to Christ that he should. It is needful for himself that he should. Life repressed is imperilled. Illustration. Archimedes running into the street, saying, "Eureka. I have found it," when his problem was solved. And what is the best way in which to confess? 1. A life on all of which lies the Christly stamp. 2. Association with those who stand out as manifestly Christ's. 3. Obedience to Christ in any public symbolic act—as Lord's Supper. Illustration. How these would come home to timid secret disciples among Romans. In these Christian times such confession is still demanded. III. A MAN WILL SURELY FIND THAT GOD'S BLESSING RESTS ON FULL OBEDIENCE: in heart-belief, and lip, and life confession. Remember Christ's words—"Ashamed of Me before men." Blessing comes—1. To the man himself—in fixity of mind and of life. 2. To others—in the example of His firmness, and in the work which confessed disciples undertake. Conclusion: Public confession of Christ must not be delayed until either—(1) An adequate knowledge is gained; (2) or model experience reached. When may the Eunuch confess Christ? When may Lydia—or the jailer? When may we? When with the heart we receive the risen Saviour as our Saviour, and begin to live in the rule of Christ, our saving Lord. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *Confession of faith, public*:—There was one Victorinus, famous in Rome as a teacher of rhetoric, who in his old age was converted to Christianity, and came to Simplicianus, who was an eminent man, whispering softly in his ears, "I am a Christian." But the holy man answered, "I will not believe it, nor count thee so, till I see thee among the Christians in the church." At which he laughed, saying, "Do these walls make a Christian? Cannot I be such unless I openly profess it, and let the world know the same?" A while after being more confirmed in the faith, and considering that, if he should thus continue ashamed of Christ, Christ would be ashamed of him in the last day, he changed his language, and came to Simplicianus, saying, "Let us go to the church: I will now in earnest be a

Christian." And there, though a private confession of his faith might have been sufficient, yet he chose to make it open, saying, "That he had openly professed rhetoric, which was not a matter of salvation, and should he be afraid to own the Word of God in the congregation of the faithful? (*Biblical Museum.*) *Confession of faith the glory of Christians*:—As the emperor always wears the diadem upon his head, so let us everywhere carry about the confession of our heart. The crown cannot so adorn the emperor as confession and faith the Christian. (*Chrysostom.*) *Confessing the Lord Jesus*:—This is a short chain to reach from earth to heaven. And God meant it to be easy. But its ease is its difficulty. Can this be really all? I. As TO FAITH—"If thou shalt believe," &c. 1. All real faith lies in the heart, not in the understanding; it is not the result of reasoning; no education will give it. I have to feel—in the closest personality—that Jesus died for me. If your faith has been inoperative, may not the reason be that it has not yet been heart work? 2. But why does God say, "Believe that God raised Him from the dead" instead of "that He died for you"? (1) The resurrection is the seal of all. By "raising Him from the dead" the Father showed that He accepted the ransom Christ had paid. (2) That resurrection is our resurrection. We rise in Him; now, to a newness of life; presently, to a life in glory. II. As TO CONFESSION. What is "the confession of the mouth"? 1. It may be that general acknowledgment of Christ, and the great doctrines of His religion, which ought to characterise our daily conversation. And here most of us must plead guilty to the charge that we do not show "whose we are, and whom we serve," by speaking of Christ and the great truths of the Christian religion. And yet if all we profess to believe of Christ be really true—if we owe to Him every comfort and every hope—if He is really my Brother, my Friend, my Saviour, my King, "out of the abundance of the heart" would not "the mouth speak"? We read, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." To talk in generalities about religion requires no effort, and brings no shame. The world likes it. But to talk of Christ requires an effort, and offends people. And yet it is a very solemn thought that Christ has said, "Whosoever shall confess Me," &c. Therefore it is no mean test of a believer, and we cannot wonder that it is made one of the conditions of salvation. 2. There can be no doubt that, from the first, all Christians were required to make, at some time, a public declaration of their faith. It is of this that St. Paul says to Timothy—"Thou hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." (1) This was evidently a part of adult baptism, which would, of course, be the most frequent in the early church. (2) Now that infant baptism has become, and rightly, the almost universal custom of the Church, the public confession has been transferred to Confirmation, which is an act by which a person who has come to years of discretion accepts and ratifies the covenant of his baptism renews the dedication of himself to God, and declares his faith in the promises and privileges into which his baptism has admitted him. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Confessing Christ*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO CONFESS? 1. That Christ is risen. The resurrection of Jesus was the decision of all controversies between Him and His enemies. They had invented stories to discredit it. To confess Christ, therefore, was to declare for Christ against the Jewish rulers. And as the Gentile philosophers scorned the resurrection, to confess Christ was to brave this scorn. 2. Christ's official character as the Messiah, which He suspended on His resurrection. 3. His personal dignity, as proved by the fact (Rom. i. 3, 4). 4. The sufficiency and the exclusive efficacy of his righteousness and atonement. To confess His resurrection is to glory in His cross and passion. 5. His sole and supreme authority. We must acknowledge Him as the only Lord of the conscience, and if we do this we shall follow His will, let the world say what they may. This practical confession is indispensable. In the confession of the lips without it there is no sincerity. The apostle speaks of some who professed that they knew God, while in works they denied Him. The practical denial was the true testimony. 6. His title to Divine worship and adoration. This is suggested by vers. 11–13. In all this the avowal must be sincere and open, no silent reserve, no ashamed concealment, no disguising and palliating of the truth, no trimming and artful evasion. II. WHY ARE WE TO CONFESS? Because—1. Jesus is well entitled to it, both for what He is and what He hath done (John i. 1–3; 2 Cor. viii. 9). Away with ingratitude so base that would disown or shrink from acknowledging such a friend! 2. It is one of the required and reasonable evidences of faith. There is no faith where there is no confession. And this evidence is of the utmost importance and value. Evidence of personal interest in Christ must be added to the evidence of

the truth itself to give stability to personal hope and confidence (1 John iii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 5). 3. It is intimately connected with salvation. The terms expressing this connection are equally explicit with those which express the connection of faith with justification. If you do not make confession you do not believe, you are not justified, and cannot be saved. 4. It distinguishes the believer from the world, and is opposed to everything like neutrality. A man must be on one side or on the other. There must be no "halting between two opinions," and compromising with the so-called Christian world, any more than with the world of the avowedly unbelieving and ungodly. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Confessing Christ*:—I. WHAT DOES IT EMBRACE? 1. A hearty reception of Christ (Luke viii. 40; John xx. 28; 1 Pet. i. 8, 9). (1) Of Himself (John xiv. 6, x. 9; Eph. ii. 18). (2) Of His work (Eph. i. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iii. 24, 25). 2. An acknowledgment of the power of the Holy Spirit. (1) To renew (Titus iii. 5–7; John iii. 7). (2) To sustain (Eph. i. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 9; ix. 8; Jude 24). Giving all glory and praise for our salvation unto God, through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. i. 30, 31; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Gal. i, 4, 5). 3. A public acknowledgment. (1) By union with His visible Church (1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. i. 22, 23; Rom. x. 9, 10). (2) By everywhere acknowledging Christ's claim upon you and yours (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; Matt. xvi. 24). II. EXCUSES MEN OFFER FOR NOT CONFESSING CHRIST. 1. Personal unworthiness. 2. Moral weakness; fear of inconsistency; will not hold out; bondage to sin. 3. Have not sufficient knowledge—(1) Of the Word. (2) Of the doctrines of the Church. 4. Will defer it for the present. III. REASONS GIVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES WHY MEN DO NOT CONFESS CHRIST. Because of—1. Unbelief (John v. 38, 40; viii. 24; 1 John v. 10, 11; 1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. Insincerity (Jer. xvii. 9; xxix. 13). 3. Fear of man; sensitiveness to ridicule; ashamed of Christ (John vii. 13; xii. 42; Mark viii. 38). 4. Love of the world (Jas. iv. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4; 1 John ii. 15, 16; Prov. i. 24–32). IV. REASONS WHY ALL SHOULD CONFESS CHRIST (Heb. iii. 12, 13; 1 John iv. 15; Rom. ii. 4, 5; Prov. xxvii. 1; John iii. 36). "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. iv. 17; Isa. lv. 7). (*W. H. Van Doren.*) *Confessing Christ*:—I. CONFESSION is——1. To say the same thing with others; to agree with. 2. To promise. 3. To acknowledge, to declare a person or thing to be what he or it really is. II. To CONFESS CHRIST, THEREFORE, IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIM TO BE WHAT HE REALLY IS AND DECLARES HIMSELF TO BE—1. The Son of God. 2. God manifest in the flesh. 3. The Saviour of the world. 4. The Lord. III. THE NATURE OF THIS CONFESSION. 1. It is not enough that we cherish the conviction in our hearts, or confess it to ourselves, to friends who agree with us, or to God. 2. It must be done publicly, or before men—foes as well as friends, amid good and evil report, when it brings reproach and danger as well as when it incurs no risk. 3. It must be with the mouth. It is not enough that men may infer from our conduct that we are Christians, we must audibly declare it. 4. This must be done—(1) In our ordinary intercourse. (2) In the way of God's appointment, *i.e.*, by baptism and the Lord's Supper. 5. It must be sincere. "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven." It is only when the outward act is a revelation of the heart that it has any value. IV. ITS ADVANTAGES. 1. It strengthens faith. 2. It is a proof of regeneration, because it supposes the apprehension of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 3. It is an indispensable condition of salvation because—(1) God requires it. (2) Not to confess is to deny. (3) Denial implies want of faith or devotion. V. ITS OBLIGATION. 1. It is not merely a commandment. 2. It is the highest moral duty to acknowledge the truth, and especially to acknowledge God to be God. 3. It is the most direct means we can take to honour Christ, and to bring others to acknowledge Him. Conclusion. Read Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8; Mark viii. 38; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 John iv. 2, 15. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Confessing Christ, ashamed of*:—A minister in Brooklyn was recently called upon by a business man, who said, "I come, sir, to inquire if Jesus Christ will take me into the concern as a silent partner." "Why do you ask?" said the minister. "Because I wish to be a member of the firm, and do not wish anybody to know it," said the man. The reply was, "Christ takes no silent partners. The firm must be, 'Jesus Christ & Co.,' and the names of the 'Co.,' though they may occupy a subordinate place, must all be written out on the sign-board." *Confessing Christ: decisive*:—A young seaman, who had only a few nights before been converted, laying a blank card before a friend, requested him to write a few words upon it, because, as he said, "You will do it more plainly than I can." "What must I write?" said my friend. "Write these words, sir, 'I

love Jesus—do you?'" After he had written them my friend said, "Now you must tell me what you are going to do with the card." He replied, "I am going to sea to-morrow, and I am afraid if I do not take a stand at once I may begin to be ashamed of my religion, and let myself be laughed out of it altogether. Now as soon as I go on board I shall walk straight to my bunk and nail up this card upon it, that every one may know that I am a Christian, and may give up all hope of making me either ashamed or afraid of adhering to the Lord." (*Clerical Library.*) *Confessing Christ, from gratitude:*—At the battle of Williamsburg a soldier, who had the artery of his arm severed by a fragment of a shell, and was fast bleeding to death, saw a surgeon going to the front for orders, and, lifting his bleeding member, cried, "Doctor, please!" The surgeon dismounted, bound up the vessel, and gave all possible relief. As he started on, the man said, "Doctor, what is your name?" The reply was, "No matter." "But, doctor," said the wounded man, "I want to tell my wife and children who saved me." *Confessing Christ inevitable:*—It is impossible to believe with the heart and not confess with the mouth—this were to have a fire which did not burn, a light which did not illuminate, a principle which did not actuate, a hope which did not stimulate. Genuine Christians are temples of the living God; but think ye to be temples, and yet that no voice shall go forth from the secret shrine? Not so. There must issue a sound from the recesses of the sanctuary, the sound as of a presiding deity, eloquent to all around of the power and authority of the Being that dwelleth within. Therefore, whilst we admit that it is faith which is the instrument of justification, we can understand why confession should also be given as that which issues in salvation; even as we can understand why works should be spoken of as procuring us immortality. Confession is but the necessary result of belief—the demonstration and exhibition. It is but faith showing itself in speech, even as works are but belief showing itself in action. Speech is one of the most distinguishing properties of man. Ought, then, the hand, the ear, the eye, to be pressed into the service of religion, and is the tongue to be exempt? Nay, this best member must do its part, otherwise is the whole man in rebellion against his Maker. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Confessing Christ: its necessity:*—I. CONFESSION IS THE NECESSARY EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN CHRIST. 1. Lively emotions usually find expression. 2. Especially those which deeply affect the whole life. 3. If, then, faith really saves, confession cannot be found wanting. II. COURAGEOUS CONFESSION IS THE TOUCHSTONE OF FAITH. 1. While faith is hidden its operation is hidden. 2. Weak faith, by its want of confession, shows its defectiveness. It has not yet attained to the assurance of salvation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The faith that makes men righteous:*—The late Professor C. S. Harrington, held in such high esteem for his deep spiritual attainments, as well as for his thorough scholarship, wrote near the close of life:—"The faith that makes men righteous is the faith that fastens simply and trustingly on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only, all-sufficient, atoning Saviour. It is that faith in Jesus that blots our transgressions, makes our record clear. It is Jesus that gives spiritual life. It is He that continues it. This faith merges the believer's life into the life of Christ. It dares not, it wishes not, a moment's separation. It knows no historic past; it deals only in present tenses. It echoes Paul's prayer, 'Let me be found in Him.' I cannot tell the process; I cannot explain the power by which the black coal is transformed into the gleaming diamond; how much less can I tell how, by the mystery of the new birth, the lost, dead soul lives by the merit of Jesus! I cannot tell how the living tree gets its flower and fruit from the dead substance in which it is rooted, and on which it feeds; how much less can I tell how the wounds, the blood, the death of Christ gives life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins, and clothes it with the fruitage of holiness! Or how can I tell the end of this Divine work, when the Giver of spiritual life shall crown it with life eternal? when dust and ashes, this body, shall spring from its sepulchre and appear in the glorified body of the resurrection? But it shall be done 'according to the working of the power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.' Enough for me that this is God's way, and the work is worthy of God." *Trusting Christ:*—If a king should give to one of his subjects a ring, and say to him, "When you are in distress or disgrace, simply send me that ring, and I will do all for you that is needful," if that man should wilfully refuse to send it, but purchase presents, or go about to do some singular feats of valour in order to win his monarch's favour, you would say, "What a fool he is! Here is a simple way, but he will not avail himself of it, he wastes his wits in inventing new devices, and toils away his life in

following out plans that must end in disappointment." Is not this the case with all those who refuse to trust Christ? The Lord has assured them that if they trust Jesus they shall be saved; but they go about after ten thousand imaginings, and let their God, their Saviour, go. *Believing with the heart* :—You have only to observe the character of the truths which revelation unfolds, and you may see clearly that belief presupposes the possession, or requires the exercise of those virtues whose seat must be the heart. There must be humility in him who believes, for he must cordially confess himself unclean and undone. There must be submission of the understanding to God, for much which has to be received is not explained. There must be willingness to suffer, for Christianity summons to tribulation. There must be willingness to labour, for Christianity sets man about the most arduous of duties. What then? Is faith nothing more than an involuntary act, depending simply on the quantity of evidence, and therefore wholly unworthy of being exalted into a condition for the bestowment of blessings? Is it nothing that in him who believes there must be candour and freedom from prejudice, sincerity of purpose, an abandonment of all good opinion of himself, an entire resignation of his judgment to God, a willingness to submit to insult, a determination to enter into combat with the world, the flesh, and the devil? Are we to be told that though there must indeed be this great combination in every man who cordially believes in revelation, it is, nevertheless, a surprising thing that faith should be so dignified in the Bible, that it should be used as the test of admission into the privileges of the gospel? For our own part, when we consider what faith presupposes, what obstacles there are in the constitution of man to the belief of Christian truths, we can only feel that if God did not work on the human heart the whole world would be infidel. We do not know any achievement so remarkable, so little to have been expected, from a proud, prejudiced, and depraved creature such as man naturally is, as the believing in a record so humiliating, so condemnatory of lust, so rigid in enjoining difficult duties as the gospel of Jesus Christ. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Redemptive faith* :—I. THE FAITH BY WHICH MAN IS MADE RIGHTEOUS AND SAVED IS THE FAITH OF THE HEART. Faith in general is conviction arising from evidence. 1. The faith of the intellect is based on the evidence of the senses, or on the results of reasoning. Mathematical reasoning, with its definitions, postulates, axioms, &c., metaphysical proofs of the existence of God, the external evidences of Divine revelation, appeal to the mind as distinguished from the heart. Education, prejudice, circumstances, and associations frequently determine the mind to a languid acquiescence in various doctrines. 2. The faith of the heart supposes the assent of the understanding, the approval of the judgment, the submission and choice of the will. (1) It springs from the heart. It is the confidence of love. The heart trusts when the mind cannot explain. It is the heart that trusts in character. Feeling quickens and strengthens the faith of the mind. The emotions of penitence prepare the heart of man to trust in the heart of the Saviour. "Our eyes were made to weep, but also made to see. Our hearts were made to suffer, but also to believe" (V. Hugo). (2) It carries the heart with it. Many of our intellectual beliefs are inoperative. Many men are firmly convinced of the duty and advantages of early rising, but still caress the sluggard's pillow. What the heart believes, puts the whole man in movement. (3) It reacts upon the heart. Sufficient evidence enables the mind to dispel doubt. The faculties are at rest. So when the heart trusts in God, the affections are at peace. The disquietudes of spiritual anxiety are allayed, and the agitation of fear subsides. "I know whom I have believed," &c. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," &c. II. THE OBJECT OF THIS FAITH IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS FROM THE DEAD BY THE POWER OF GOD. The Resurrection is presented—1. As the object of our faith, rather than His death. (1) Because this belief is distinctive of a Christian. Pagans and infidels will easily admit that Christ was born, lived, and died, but they deny His resurrection. Pharisees and philosophers deny the fact (Acts xvii. 32); Sadducees denied its possibility. Hence, belief in it was a capital article of faith in those days. (2) All that Christ did and suffered would have profited us little, unless He had risen again. By His resurrection He triumphed over death and hell, and was enabled to ascend to His throne. (3) The Resurrection pre-supposes all the other facts of Christ's life, such as His incarnation, sacrifice and exaltation. 2. In a special point of view, viz., as having been accomplished by the power of God. In other passages Christ's resurrection is ascribed to His own power, or to the energy of the Holy Spirit. As an act of the Father, it is designed—(1) To recognise and vindicate the claims of Christ to be the Son and the

sent of God. (2) To confirm His teachings. (3) To declare His acceptance of His atonement. (4) To fulfil His promise to Christ. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," &c. III. OPEN CONFESSION OF THE LORD JESUS IS AN INDISPENSABLE ACCOMPANIMENT OF THIS FAITH. 1. What is to be confessed? Jesus, as—(1) Lord. (2) The Lord. (3) Our Lord. 2. Why is this confession enjoined? It is required—(1) By Christ. "Whosoever shall confess Me," &c. (2) By the interests of Christ's cause. "Ye are My witnesses." (3) By gratitude. The instructor to whom you owe your career, the lawyer who has saved your property, the physician who has saved your life, will you not thankfully speak of them? How much more should you speak of the great Physician, Teacher, Advocate. How is it to be made? Avow your principles. Join His Church. Confess Him boldly, sincerely, wisely, meekly, reverentially. Conclusion: 1. The way of salvation is—(1) Not so easy as often represented. The exercise of faith is often found difficult; to confess Christ before men requires moral courage. (2) Nor so difficult; the gospel is easy to be understood; the terms of salvation are simple, &c. 2. A profession of religion is necessary. Christ demands it, and we are not His disciples, and compromise our salvation if we disobey. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." 3. Faith must be attended by confession, and confession by faith. (*W. C. St. Freare.*) *Salvation assured to all believers whether weak or strong*:—In crossing the sea I will suppose that there shall be a good stiff wind, and that the vessel may be driven out of her course, and be in danger. As I walk the deck, I see a poor girl on board; she is very weak and ill, quite a contrast to that fine, strong, burly passenger who is standing beside her, apparently enjoying the salt spray and the rough wind. Now suppose a storm should come on, which of these two is the more safe? Well, I cannot see any difference, because if the ship goes to the bottom, they will both go, and if the ship gets to the other side of the channel they will both land in security. The safety is equal when the thing upon which it depends is the same. So, if the weakest Christian is in the boat of salvation—that is, if he trusts Christ—he is as safe as the strongest Christian; because if Christ failed the weak one, He would fail the strong one too. If the least Christian who believes in Jesus does not get to heaven, then Peter himself will not get to heaven. If the smallest star which Christ ever kindled does not blaze in eternity, neither will the brightest star. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Salvation*:—I. ITS IMPORT. Deliverance—1. From sin. 2. From its consequences. II. ITS CONDITIONS. 1. Confession of Christ as our only Saviour and Lord. 2. Faith in His resurrection. III. ITS PROCESS. 1. Faith brings righteousness. 2. Righteousness prompts confession. 3. Faithful confession ensures salvation. IV. ITS SECURITY. 1. The word and promise of God. 2. Which may be trusted. 3. Without fear of disappointment. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Salvation* is—I. A PERSONAL MATTER. 1. All need it. 2. It is offered to all in Christ. 3. We preach it to you. II. SUSPENDED ON HUMAN CONDUCT. "If thou shalt"—1. Confess. 2. Believe. III. SECURED BY THE PROMISE AND PURPOSE OF GOD. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel of the resurrection*:—I. THE GOSPEL MEETS THE GENERAL NECESSITIES OF MAN, AND BY THE FACT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION THIS MAY BE PROVED. 1. Man is ignorant, and needs authoritative instruction. Not of arts, government, and sciences; they affect not the eternal welfare of man. That only is true wisdom which is suited to our highest nature and eternal destiny. Man, by nature, knows not, nor enjoys God. "The world by wisdom knew not God." But the gospel meets the case. Jesus Christ taught every truth necessary to enlighten the understanding, and direct the conscience, and God raised Him from the dead as His great confirmatory seal to the truth of His doctrines. 2. Man is guilty and needs an acceptable propitiation. Now Christ was raised from the dead; therefore His death is an available atonement. 3. Man is depraved, and needs entire renewal. The gospel meets this case. Christ declares that man must be the subject of a supernatural change, and promises to send forth the Spirit for this purpose. But the Promiser died, but rose again; and "therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, He received of the Father the promise of the Spirit." 4. Man is supine, and needs powerful motives. And the gospel presents motives to rouse the most supine—motives fetched from eternity. Christ declares, "he that believeth not, shall be damned"—"he that believeth not, is condemned already." His strongest motives are derived from His doctrine of the day of judgment. But all His doctrines are founded on the Resurrection, as the grand proof of His Messiahship. And "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). 5. Man is unbelieving, and needs strong evidence. And what evidence can be stronger than that He rose from the dead according to His own prediction. II. THE GOSPEL HAS A SPECIAL PROVISION FOR A SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION,

AND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS A GRAND OBJECT OF HIS FAITH. Let us notice—1. The pre-requisites of faith. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus"—that is, acknowledge Jesus Christ as thy only Saviour. This is one of the most difficult tasks to human nature. We cleave to our own performances and attach merit to them. "I must first reform—weep more—bring a softer heart—pray more," is not "confessing the Lord Jesus." 2. The object of faith. "That God hath raised Jesus Christ from the dead." In Scripture a part is often put for the whole: so here, the resurrection of Christ is put for the whole of His mediatorial work, because by that miracle God gave assurance that Christ was His Son—that His sacrifice was acceptable and efficacious; and that His laws were binding, His doctrines true, and His promises sure. 3. The exercise of faith. "Believe with thine heart." We sometimes use the term, "faith in the head"; by which we mean an instinctive, rational conviction. This is not shut out; but it is only the casket of the jewel—a shell of the fruit. The righteousness of faith is by the heart. The affections have now more to do than the intellect. In this exercise of faith thou art called upon cordially to approve of God's way of saving sinners; not to understand how the death of Christ avails for thee! 4. The encouragement of faith (vers. 12, 13). (*J. A. West.*)

Ver. 10. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—Observe the harmonious relation between—1. The heart and the mouth. 2. Faith and confession. 3. Righteousness and salvation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Faith, and the confession of faith*:—1. It was a saying of Dr. Johnson, that "classical quotation was the parole of literary men," and we can understand how a sympathy similar to that existing among scholars would obtain between Paul and the Jews to whom he wrote, and they found him adapting the words of the law in his exposition of the gospel. A comparison of vers. 6–8 with Deut. xxx. 11–14 will show clearly that they are adapted rather than quoted. 2. In ver. 9, confession comes before believing, there being a play upon the words quoted in ver. 8; but in ver. 10 we have, more logically, belief coming before confession. I. "WITH THE HEART MAN BELIEVETH UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS." 1. Nature of evangelical faith. (1) It is not a mere intellectual faith, as when men believe in Cæsar or Napoleon, for this the devils have when they "believe and tremble" (James. ii. 19). (2) In belief of the heart, the mind as well as the affections is implied, for the heart, in scriptural language, is said to reason (Mark ii. 6), to meditate (Luke iii. 15), and to understand (Matt. xiii. 15). 2. This faith is to be in the resurrection of Christ. (1) Now by this the Divinity of Christ's teaching was demonstrated (chap. i. 4). (2) Again, Christ was the "outshining of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. i. 3). In Him we see incarnate the Divine perfections. (3) True faith, therefore, in the resurrection of Christ implies a belief in the whole mediatorial scheme, and such a realising sense of God as will lead to holy service. 3. Hence it is a belief "unto righteousness;" *i.e.*, (1) The forensic righteousness by which the objective difficulty to man's approach to his heavenly Father was taken away (context and chap. iii. 22). (2) And also the righteousness wrought in us (subjective) as we imitate Christ's holy life (1 John ii. 29; iii. 7, 10). (3) Justification by faith is "the article of a standing or falling Church," but the faith that justifies is the "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). II. "WITH THE MOUTH CONFESSION IS MADE UNTO SALVATION." 1. This has been supposed to have reference to the primitive confession of faith in baptism. If so, the text will correspond to Mark xvi. 16. 2. We may, consistently with what has been said under I. 3, take the "confession" to stand for practical Christianity, since confessing Christ with the mouth is but one of the "works" wrought by loving faith. (1) There is a confession with the mouth to which God calls us. If our hearts be full of Christ, we must needs confess Him (Matt. xii. 34; x. 32; see also John xii. 42 and 1 John iv. 15). (2) But "the Word is nigh us, that we may do it" (Deut. xxx. 14). (*a*) The man of the world finds it hard to understand how professing Christians can believe while their actions remain unaffected by their belief. In commerce, a belief in the dishonesty of any one with whom he has to do, leads him to guard and protect himself against possible wrong. The mariner, again, whose charts disclose rocks and shoals, keeps his ship at a safe distance from them—he makes use of his knowledge. (*b*) But the true Christian must act. His faith brings before him the "things unseen" (Heb. xi. 1), and he no longer walks under the influence of the things of sight, like the children of this world (2 Cor. v. 7). As spiritual health increases, old ways of sin are thrown off, the heart is cleansed

and purified, and the man's daily life has a heavenly fragrance which blesses his fellow-men. Conclusion: The secret of men's unbelief lies for the most part, not in the mind, but in the affections. They cannot bring themselves to forsake their worldliness and sin, and therefore come to the consideration of the gospel message, if they consider it at all, with prejudiced minds. (*J. C. Pilkington, M.A.*) *Faith and confession the subjective condition of salvation*:—I. "WITH THE HEART MAN BELIEVETH UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS." 1. Belief and faith are one. In respect to mundane matters, we receive the testimony of men; while in the matters pertaining to the unseen world, we receive the testimony of God. Faith in man sustains the whole fabric of our secular and scientific knowledge, and faith in God is the support of our spiritual and religious knowledge. If, in order to secure the salvation of our souls, we must have the latter faith, even so, in order to the preservation and comfort of our bodies, we must have the former. "Without faith it is impossible to please God"; and without faith, belief, it is impossible to enjoy the advantages of civilised life. And whether it has respect to man or God, faith is belief in testimony (1 John v. 9–11). 2. The apostle clearly intends by "the heart" the inner, as contrasted with the external man; and not the emotional, as opposed to the intelligent man. For the contrast is not between heart and head, but between heart and mouth. The sacred authors often spoke of bodily organs as if they projected mental values into them. With them the "heart" did not specially denote the affections as distinguished from the understanding (Deut. xxix. 4; 1 Kings iii. 9, 12; Mark vii. 21, ii. 6; Acts xi. 23; Prov. xvi. 21). The heart stood for the very centre of the person, where thought had its fountain, intelligence its post of observation, and the stores of knowledge and experience were treasured up. 3. The testimony to be believed is here spoken of as a "report"; *i.e.*, the thing announced by the witnesses and heard by those to whom it was spoken. It was a report concerning the Saviour, and being given by competent and faithful witnesses, and confirmed by the attesting seal of God, there was no need for any man to go out of or beyond himself for Christ. For the word was nigh him. 4. But why specially believe that God hath raised Christ from the dead? Because the testimony is that He died for our sins, and His resurrection is the proof that the sin is purged; for our Substitute has been discharged and restored to deathless life. Therefore a sure belief that God hath raised Him from the dead carries with it a sure belief that our everlasting life is made certain. 5. But though faith, considered in itself, is simply belief in testimony, it nevertheless serves to awaken various emotions of the heart in accordance with the character of the testimony believed, and the kind and amount of personal interest involved. If we have no conscious interest in that which is the subject of testimony, then no emotion will result from its belief. But if we have, then the belief will give rise to joy or sorrow, hope or fear, triumph or dread, as the case may be. Tidings come of a terrible hurricane in the mid-Atlantic, in which numbers of ships have foundered, and belief of the tidings instantly fills many a hitherto bright and happy home with the gloom of despair and death. But let them presently have the assurance that the particular ships which contained their hopes have escaped and have safely arrived in port, and, believing this, how instantly they find their sorrow and despair give place to gratitude and joy! And here is a poor guilty wanderer, who has long and grievously offended against his heavenly Father. He has come to realise the fearfulness of his danger. Can any one wonder that he should "roar" because of the disquietude of his spirit? But let him now hear and believe that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and that "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," and of what a change from the terrors of despair to the joy of salvation is he at once conscious! II. "WITH THE MOUTH CONFESSION IS MADE UNTO SALVATION." 1. The "salvation" spoken of is not already attained, but one for which, or in order to which, confession is made. It is therefore something which is yet future. Though a Christian man is saved here and now, yet this present salvation is but a thing begun, not completed (1 Cor. xv. 2; Phil. ii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 8; Rom. viii. 24; Heb. i. 14; Rom. xiii. 11; 1. Pet. i. 5; Heb. ix. 28). 2. Now it is in respect to this continued and ultimately completed redemption that confession is made with the mouth unto salvation. "The righteousness obtained by faith would, forsooth, fall to the ground again, and would not be attended by salvation, if faith had not the vital force to produce confession of the mouth, which speaks out of the fulness of the heart." For the confession indicated is not that merely of the lip, but true and bold acknowledgment of Christ both in deed and word. Jesus Christ "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good con-

fession" (1 Tim. vi. 13)—one that cost Him His life; and any union with Him which has not in it the spirit of devoted loyalty to Him, even unto death, if needful, is vain (Matt. x. 28–33; Rev. xxi. 8; Heb. xi. 33). (*W. Tyson.*) *Believing with the heart:*—I. THE OBJECT OF FAITH (ver. 9). There are many who for many a weary month question whether they have the right sort of faith; whereas they would do better if they looked to see whether their faith rested upon a right foundation. Now, soul-saving faith rests upon Christ—1. As incarnate. 2. In His life. Faith perceives that He is perfect in obedience, sanctified wholly to His work, and although "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." 3. But chiefly in His death. Faith hears the expiring sin-bearer cry with a loud voice, "It is finished," and adds a glad Amen, "It is finished!" 4. In His resurrection. Inasmuch as Christ was put into the prison of the tomb as a hostage and bail for His people, faith knows that He never could have come out again if God had not been completely satisfied with His substitutionary work. "He ne'er had been at freedom set." Faith, therefore, perceives that if Christ is risen the soul is justified. 5. In His ascension. Faith beholds Him in His session at the right hand of God, sees Him pleading as the great High Priest, and expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. Mark, not so much as a hair's breadth of faith's foundation is to be found out of Christ. Faith does not build on its own experience, on any knowledge which it has obtained by research, or on merit which it fancies it has procured by long and ardent service. II. THE NATURE OF FAITH. "With the heart man believeth." 1. We generally attribute the act of faith to the mind, but our text makes it to be a work of the affections. (1) In order merely to state that faith must be sincere we must heartily believe it. It must not be a notional faith which a man possesses, because his mother was of the same persuasion, or because he would be singular if he were to be an infidel. (2) To make a distinction between doctrinal faith and the faith which accepts Christ. I know scores who are well read in divinity, who are orthodox to the last turn of the scale, and who fight like tigers for but one hair of the head of a creed, and yet, they will never be saved by their faith, because it is merely a belief of certain abstract propositions which never affected their nature. 2. What is this believing with the heart? (1) The first work of the Holy Spirit in man is not to teach him doctrines, but to make him feel a great hungering and thirsting after a something, he scarcely knows what. His heart, like the needle, touched with the magnet, cannot rest, because it has not found its pole. Now, when Christ is set forth as a complete Saviour, able to give salvation now, then the heart says, "Why, that is just what I have been wanting." Just as the flowers which have been shut up all night, as soon as the sun is up, open their cups as if they felt—"There! that is what we were wanting!" The heart stretches out its arm to Christ, and Christ comes into that heart, and the heart presses Him close to itself. Believing with the heart is the heart's own conviction that Jesus Christ is just what it wants. Many of you have a true faith in Christ and yet you have never read "Paley's Evidences," nor "Butler's Analogy." You hardly know upon what ground the Bible is accepted as true, and hence, cunning infidels give you a good shaking when they get hold of you upon that point. But there is one thing upon which you can never be shaken, you feel the gospel must be true, because it just suits the wants of your heart. If any man should say to you when you are thirsty, "Water is not good," by a process stronger than logic, you could prove that water is good because it quenches your thirst. When you are hungry, if a philosopher should say to you, "You do not understand the ground upon which bread nourishes the human frame," you would say, "One thing I know, bread is good to eat if I am hungry, and I will show you." So the believing heart is hungry, therefore feeds upon Jesus; is thirsty, therefore drinks the living water. (2) Again, is it not man's heart which is led to perceive the difficulty of reconciling the Divine attributes? Do you not remember when your heart said, "God is just; it is right He should be. Yet I know He is merciful, but I cannot understand how He can be both, for if He is just, He has sworn to punish, and if He is gracious, He will forgive." You came up to the sanctuary when your heart was thus perplexed, but you heard the preacher show clearly that Christ became the substitute for man, you understood how God had all His justice satisfied in the death of His beloved Son, and your heart said, "There, this is the very answer I have been wanting." Now, "I see how righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Oh! the joy and gladness with which your heart laid hold upon a crucified Redeemer, saying, "It is enough, my trouble is removed." (3) Believing with the heart implies a love to the plan of salvation. As you are thinking it over, something whispers,

"Why, such a plan as that must be true." Then, the sweet promise flashes across your mind, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed"; and your heart says, "Then, I will believe on Him; that plan so magnificent in its liberality is worthy of my loving acceptance." 3. What is true of us when we commence our spiritual career is true all our lives long. Soul-saving faith is always the belief of the heart. I think I see some grey-headed man rise up and say, "In my young days I gave my heart to Christ, and I had a peace and joy such as I had never known before. Since that time, this brow has been furrowed with many cares, but the Lord has been my heart's stay and confidence. When trouble has come in upon me, I have been able to sustain it. 4. This is the right way to believe in Jesus, because this is the way in which you can believe in Him when you come to die. You have heard of the renowned bishop on his dying bed. His friends said to him, "Do not you know us?" There was a shake of the head. Next, the children beg him to remember them. But he shakes his head. Last, came his wife, and he had forgotten her. At last, one said in his ear, "Do you know Jesus?" The response was instantaneous. "Know Him?" said he, "yes, He is all my salvation and all my desire." Though the heart may know the wife and the child, yet never can the heart know the dearest earthly object as it knows Christ. He that believeth with his heart hath Christ in him, not on him, the hope of glory. 5. It is a very blessed thing that "with the heart man believeth"; because some of you might say, "I have not head enough to be a Christian." Even fools may still believe. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." III. THE RESULT OF FAITH. "Unto righteousness." The man who believes in Christ is righteous; he is righteous at once, in a moment; he is righteous in the germ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Believing with the heart*:—The seat of faith, it deserves to be observed, is not in the brain, but the heart; not that I wish to enter into any dispute concerning the part of the body which is the seat of faith, but since the word "heart" generally means a serious, sincere, ardent affection, I am desirous to show the confidence of faith to be a firm, efficacious, and operative principle in all the emotions and feelings of the soul, not a mere naked notion of the head. (*J. Calvin.*) *Heart judgment*:—1. The popular impression is that argument produces belief, and that no justly founded belief can be entertained unless the man has had clear intellectual reasons for that belief. 2. Life contradicts this view by the wholesale. Men believe thousands of things of which they have had no demonstration, and there are multitudes of things which men can demonstrate that they do not believe. What is evidence? It is that which satisfies intellect, conscience, taste, and the emotions. Some men want evidence that touches the intellect; some evidence that touches the imagination; some evidence that touches the taste; some evidence that strikes the moral sense. The evidence that convinces one man has no effect upon another. 3. Now, in regard to evidence, belief has a wide range. In things material, a man believes upon sense-evidence. But in regard to scientific things, there are no evidences that are less reliable than the obvious operations of what are called the five senses. That Huxley and Tyndall will tell you. Here a trained intellect is the master of evidence. An impassioned investigator is carried away. Men insist upon it that you must discharge all feeling, lay aside all pre-conceived notions, and come with your mind as transparent as crystal to the investigation. 4. But the range of truth that is thus brought within the scope of our investigation is relatively small. The truths that work to manhood, to character, and conduct, are innumerable and immensely more important. The great bulk of the questions about which men are to believe or not have reference to a kind of truth that you can never judge by pure cold intellect. All social and moral truths depend upon the affections. A man who carries a purely mathematical mind to the reading of Milton is a fool. A man who should read Tennyson as a microscopist would examine an insect, how preposterous his conduct would be! In the largest department, then, belief depends upon the feelings. I do not mean that it excludes the intellect, but that the investigating intellect is obliged to be in harmony with the feelings that dominate the department where the truth lies. Truths of beauty—and that takes in the whole realm of art—cannot be conceived of by a purely speculative intellect. The intellect must be struck through and through with the elements of the beautiful in order to appreciate it. There is a great deal of mathematics in the science of music; yet music itself cannot be appreciated by the mere man of science without the sense or faculty of music in him. 5. The great religious truths which determine conduct and character cannot be understood except through the state of the heart. The baser animal passions indulged

in so cloud the moral feeling and the intellect as to preclude the truth and investigation of it. The natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit. A man in a rage cannot understand the emotions of peace. A man that is grasping and unfair is not in a state to consider justice and equity. How can a man who is puffed up with self-conceit have any adequate comparison within himself of his moral states? Selfishness so distorts and disturbs the light of the reason that it cannot form a just judgment of truths nor understand them even when they are expounded by others. Recently, at Cornell University, a professor said, "I hope they will never establish an observatory here." "Why?" "Because the locality is utterly unfit for celestial observations. Cayuga Lake every night fills the atmosphere with so much vapour that it is not until late in the day that you can get a clear view of the sky, and hardly three nights in the whole year have been fit for a critical observation of the heavens." The clouds that go up around the human observatory prevent men from seeing clearly. They cannot make observations of celestial things. 6. Notice how careful men are in forming their beliefs on scientific subjects. Although the truths of science are material, largely, yet men feel the necessity of good health, of a clear eye, and of all conditions which render them secure from various adverse interruptions. So far is this carried that men do not trust themselves; there is what is called a "personal equation" among them. When a star in transit passes a given line, and a man records the time exactly of its striking the line, it will happen that a dull brain did not see it for a measurable period of time after a sensitive and quick brain; and the astronomer has a personal equation of his own peculiarities of quickness or slowness, according to rules that have been established, so that in making the additions or subtractions, he always takes it into account as a part of his calculations. This is for the sake of physical observations. Whoever thought of making a personal equation in the judgment of men on great moral questions? Look at the way in which a judge feels himself bound to come to the consideration of facts, law, and reasoning. If he is a naturally obstinate man, and has the shadow of a previous idea in the case, it will take twice as much evidence and coercive logic to dislodge him from his prejudices. An honourable man would refuse to sit on any case in which he was conscious that he had a foregoing disqualification. Now, see how in regard to justice, science, and every department, men are conscious of the disturbing forces felt in one way or another; and see how they prepare themselves to arrive at right judgments and to correct them as much as possible by review and restatement. But compare the way in which men approach these tremendous themes of religion and sit in judgment upon Divine equity, and upon questions of right and questions of duty. See how young men, being somewhat unsettled from their old foundations, plunge into unbelief. They read their evidence in the newspaper, going from their house to their business. "Oh, I have read on that subject; I know all about it." How little have men read, how little have they pondered, how little have they ever had the slightest idea that their judgments have been influenced by their dispositions, by their conduct, by their wishes and longings, by their self-indulgence—how little have they come to form a judgment against the pulling-down influences that act upon them! 7. Now, it is often the case that a true-hearted, simple-minded man, believing the gospels without a particle of intellectual evidence, but with a hungry heart and with a real love of things that are spiritual, is led to believe, I had almost said, without the operation of his reason at all. He is not able to give a reason for the faith that is in him any more than an artist is able to give the reason why he puts in a bit of red there, except that his eye was hungry for it. It is possible for a man pure in heart to come to a just conclusion in regard to mighty truths, that involve time and eternity, in such a way that he will be the laughing stock and the derision of eminent philosophers, or even eminent theologians. But such simple men believe with their heart. The temperature of the heart was such that it inclined them to accept these things, and, accepting them, they believed in God and felt good. 8. See how this is the doctrine of the Bible. Take, *e.g.*, John i. 1-5, "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Turn to chap. i. 20-25. Our Saviour bears testimony again and again in St. John's Gospel, which records His controversies with the conceited, scholarly men of the temple, when He declared to them that He made known to them the invisible truths of God, which ought to be appreciated by moral sensibility, but that they could not see them, and even denied them, on account of the condition of their hearts. This is the Scripture testimony, and it corroborates the experience of men. In secular life men have come to understand that they must prepare themselves

before they come to a judgment or appreciate a thing accurately. But in religion men are still asking for intellectual proof that shall come like a mathematical demonstration. They are believing this and disbelieving that, on evidence which does not belong to the subject at all. "Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God." Men of distempered heart, unclean and impure, shall never see Him. Beware, then, of the disturbance of your own hearts. Beware of all those judgments that are merely abstract, or factual, as in science. Accept those judgments that come to you from the heart, and report themselves to you irresistibly as true, springing from the highest moral conditions, from conscience, reason, hope, faith, love. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Belief of the heart necessary for righteousness:*—Since the end of religion is obedience, the heart is wanted. To know what we ought to do and to do it are two very different things. For the first, perhaps, the mind is adequate; for the second we have need of the heart. "I see the better and I take the worse way," said one of the ancients. Why? Because there was no force strong enough to impel him to the better way. This is what we all want. What the philosophers call the dynamic force—to constrain us to obey what we see we should. Most of us have got knowledge enough of the right way; what we lack is the impulse to walk therein. The body is like a delicate piece of machinery worked by the heart, which sends the blood pulsating through every vein and artery. Without that all would be in vain. What the heart is to the body the emotions are to the soul—the impelling force. But, it may be said, the heart is, of all parts of our complex nature, the least under our control. Faith springs up spontaneously, or not at all. To bid men believe or love is a waste of breath. God therefore makes Himself visible in His Son Jesus Christ, and when thus we really see Him, faith must spring up in our hearts, as surely as admiration does in the heart of a beholder of a glowing sunset, or the hearer of noble music, or the spectator of some heroic deed. A child is sinking in a stream; you see a man at the risk of his life leap in to save the precious life. It needs no command to make your heart glow with gratitude to such a deliverer. It leaps up at the sight. To look at Jesus Christ touches the heart so that it is constrained by the love of Christ, so as to live, not for itself but for Him. (*W. G. Horder.*) *The faith of the heart:*—We remember to have heard a preacher describe this act of faith as follows:—"Look at that drowning man, hurried down the stream by the furious torrent with which he is convulsively struggling. His looks and cries bespeak the agony he feels. By and by his attention is directed to a life preserver, which his friends are placing in the most favourable position possible. He at once sees that if he is saved at all, it must be by that instrument; and here is the exercise of his understanding. But it is very questionable whether he shall be able to reach it. The current seems to carry him in another direction; yet there is hope; it is taking another turn. He is gradually approaching the instrument of his safety; and now there is hope, mingled with his agony; he comes nearer and nearer: his friends cry 'courage,' and see with what energy he seizes the preserver of his life. There was heart in that grasp. But not more so than when the poor trembling sinner lays hold of Christ. He is pointed to the Cross, but the current of his feelings drives him past it. He weeps and mourns, he groans and prays; his friends reason and encourage; the spirit operates; hope springs up; immediately the direction of the stream is changed; he gets nearer every moment; he looks, weeps, cries, 'Save, for Thy name's sake'; and in an agony—with all his heart—and with all the affections and powers of his soul, he grasps the Saviour." (*Handbook to Scripture Doctrines.*) *Faith and righteousness:*—Look at certain doctrines, and see what they must produce when believed with the heart. It is a portion of Scripture revelation that God is omniscient and omnipotent, that He is ever at hand, to note down human actions, and register them for judgment. Can this really be believed, and yet the believer fail to be intensely earnest to approve himself in God's sight? Rather, will not his faith produce a holy reverence of the Almighty, and make him walk circumspectly, because walking side by side with his Maker and his Judge? The Bible tells him, moreover, of an amazing scheme of rescue planned and executed by God on behalf of himself and his fellow-men. It sets God before Him as giving His own Son, and that Son as giving Himself to ignominy and shame that pardon might be placed within reach of the sinful. Can this be believed, and yet the believer not glow with intense love towards so gracious a God; yea, and towards his fellow-men, seeing that they are objects of the same mercy, and therefore equally precious in the sight of the Creator? But yet further. Along with the revelation of this scheme of mercy the Bible sets forth

conditions apart from which we can have no share in the blessings of Christ's death, imposing duties on the performance of which our future portion is made to depend, and annexing threatenings and promises just as though we were to be judged by our works irrespective of the blood of the Redeemer. It tells us of heaven; it tells us of hell; and, dealing with us as with accountable creatures, it conjures us by the joys of the one state and the terrors of the other to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world." Now tell me who believes this? The man who lives as though there were no heaven, or no hell, doing the very things, obeying the very passions, neglecting the very duties, which are forbidden or commanded, to all who would escape wrath and find mercy hereafter? Impossible. These things cannot be believed by the sensual man, the covetous, the proud, or the ambitious. Faith in these things must lead to effort, to obedience, to self-denial. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Confession of faith*:—THE DIVINE ORDER OF SALVATION. 1. Faith. 2. Confession. II. THE RESULT OF THIS ORDER. 1. Righteousness. 2. Salvation. III. INFERENCES. 1. These requisites are a matter of present duty. 2. Unbelief and silence are sinful. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *Confession with the mouth*:—1. There must be no confession where there is not a believing. To profess what you have not, is to make yourself a deceptive trader, who pretends to be carrying on a very large business, while he has no stock and no capital. To make a profession, without having a possession, is to be a cloud without rain—a river-bed without water, a mere play-actor, a rotten tree, green on the outside, but inwardly, as Bunyan puts it, "only fit to be tinder for the devil's tinder-box." 2. True faith, however, produces works; and, among the rest, confession of Christ. Faith, without works, is a dead root, yielding no fruit; a well filled with deadly vapour; a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots, like some of those forest monsters which block up the navigation of the Mississippi, upon which many a goodly vessel has been wrecked. As you are to flee from profession without faith, so equally flee from a faith which does not bring forth a good profession. I. To CONFESS CHRIST WITH THE MOUTH EMBRACES THE WHOLE LIFE-WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN. It consists in—1. Uniting in acts of public worship. As soon almost as the two distinct seeds of the woman and of the serpent were discernible, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," while those who feared not God went away to their various occupations. When Jeroboam set up the calves at Bethel, the act of standing with the multitude around the courts of the temple was a distinct confession of allegiance to Jehovah. In the apostolic times, those who believed were constant in the apostle's doctrine, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer. In the early Christian days, you may see a picture something like this: There is a low arch, like the opening of a sewer. Yonder comes a maiden, who stoops beneath and emerges into one of the catacombs of Rome. A torch renders darkness visible, and some watchful brother observes her; asks for her pass-word. Her being there proves her a Christian. She would not have been there to worship God among those pariahs of society if she had not loved the Lord. Very much so was it in later times. When the Lollard preached to the handful in some remote farmhouse, with a watcher outside; or in the days of the Covenant, while the dragoons of Claverhouse were scenting out their prey, you might be clear that they were for the Lord of Hosts, who met at peril of their lives. To-day it is so to very few. There are some, perhaps, whose husband's last words were, "If you go to church you will never enter my house again"; but it is not so with nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand. We mingle together saint and sinner. And if this were the only profession, it would not fulfil the intention of my text. In persecuting times it would; but now it is little or no confession to most of us to sit comfortably in our seats and listen to the preacher, and then go our way. 2. A dutiful attention to those two ordinances which are intended by Christ to be the distinctive badge of believers. Under the old Mosaic dispensation, ordinances were only for Israelites. And under the Christian dispensation there are no ordinances for aliens. The Ethiopian travelled all the way from the realm of Candace, in order that he might be present at the distinctive worship of the Jew. You remember how carefully the heads of the Jewish houses were that they and all their children were present at the passover. (1) Baptism is the mark of distinction between the Church and the world. It is the crossing of the Rubicon. (2) The Lord's Supper sets forth the distinction of the believer from the world in his life and that by which his life is nourished. (3) Both these ordinances bring a cross with them to some degree, especially the first. 3. An association with the Lord's people. It was so in the olden times. Moses may, if he wills, live in the court of Pharaoh, but he counts

the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. What a touching illustration of this point we have in Ruth i. 16, 17. We find in the early Church, that as soon as a man became a Christian, he went to his own company. Paul was not content with being baptized; and wherever there were people of God, they were always formed into a Church. Those who speak lightly of Church fellowship do mischief. Suppose, instead of the compact phalanx of this one Church, we were broken into individual Christians, some of the warmest-hearted among you would grow cold; the little ones among us would be subjected to false doctrine; while even the strongest here would feel it to be a most solemn bereavement. 4. The taking up of the cross in the family. It may be you are the first one converted. You pray, and there is a ringing laugh within the walls. Persevere! for now it is that you are to make confession unto salvation. Your faith cannot save you unless you say, "I cannot love father or mother more than Christ." This is hard; but remember the example of your Lord, for whom you do it. 5. Bearing witness in time of temptation. Young Joseph's answer was, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The case of Nehemiah is equally to the point. "Can such a man as I flee?" Christian, some dirty trick in business comes in your way. Now, play the man, and say, "I would rather starve than do it." On a Sabbath morning, when you are invited to waste its holy hours, say, "No, I am a Christian." 6. Testifying whenever we are called into trial for Christ's sake. Remember the three Hebrew children, Daniel, Peter, and John. I have noticed that whenever men are likely to lose anything for Christ, that the most timid generally come out at that time. You do not hear of Joseph of Arimathæa while Jesus lives. But when Christ's body is on the Cross he begs His body. And who shall help to wrap Him in spices? Why, Nicodemus, that came to Jesus Christ by night. The stag flies before the hounds, but when it comes to bay, fights with the bravery of desperation. Erasmus said he was not made of the right stuff to be a martyr. So the papists picture him as hanging somewhere between heaven and hell. He had knowledge of the truth, but he had not the courage to avow it; while Luther smote the triple crown upon the Pope's brow. "If the Lord be God, follow Him," &c. 7. The going out of one's way at times to bear testimony. "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." Every now and then we shall not be able to confess Christ, unless we do something that shall seem harsh and strange. Surely, God's Elijahs cannot be silent while thousands of Baal's priests are kindling their fires. We shall find it needful to intrude upon the dainties of etiquette, and, like the prophet who came to Bethel, we shall have to cry against altars at which others pay their vows. 8. The using of our position as a method of confession. Joshua is the head of a household. He uses that position: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Let the family altar be reared. You have influence, perhaps, where you can help Christ's Church. Esther came to the kingdom "for such a time as this." Some of you are large employers, or members of Parliament. All that influence is so much money given to you to put out to interest for your Lord. 9. Preaching. There are some of you who have ability to speak. You can talk upon politics and science; but if you love Jesus, are you going to give all your attention to these inferior themes? You tell me you are nervous. Never mind. If you break down half a dozen times, try again; you shall find your talents increase. This confession, then, is a life-work. The Christian man is to be something like a physician. There is a brass plate on his door and a big bell. How else does he profess to be a physician? You do not see a box of lancets hanging at his side, nor see him dress in a peculiar costume. His profession is carried on by his practice. This is how a Christian's profession is to be carried on. When we went to school we drew houses, horses, and trees, and used to write "house" under the house, &c., for some persons might have thought the horse was a house. So there are some people who need to wear a label round their necks to show they are Christians, or else we might mistake them for sinners. Avoid that. Let your profession be manifest by your practice. II. DO NOT EXCUSE YOURSELF FROM THIS, FOR NO EXCUSE WILL BE VALID. You will lose your business! Lose it, and gain your soul, and you will be unfashionable! What is it to be fashionable? You will be despised by those who love you! Do you love husband or wife more than Christ? If so, you are not worthy of Him. But you are so timid! Mind you are not so timid as to be lost at last, for the fearful and unbelieving shall have their portion in the lake that burneth. In the silence of the sick or dying hour, no excuse, however specious it may appear to-day, will answer your conscience: and if so answer your conscience, depend upon it it will not satisfy God. Conclusion: 1. Remember how dishonourable

it is to say you believe, and yet not to make confession. You are like a rat behind the wainscot, coming out just now and then when nobody is looking, and then running behind again. What! is Christ to be treated as if His name were a thing to be avowed in holes and corners? No, in the face of the sun let it be said, "I do love Jesus, who gave Himself for me." He died in the face of the sun, with mockers round about Him; and with mockers round about us let us declare our faith in Him. 2. How honourable will the confession be to you. If I had to join an army, and found for my comrades the scrapings of the street, I do not think I should like to be a soldier; but if I found my colonel a great conqueror, and that I had for compeers men who had won renown, I should feel honoured by being allowed to be a drummer-boy. So when I read the list, and find Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Isaac, Jesus Christ Himself, the apostles, Luther, Calvin, &c., I count it an honour if my name shall be found written with theirs, as the humblest soldier in the army. 3. I urge this upon you, because it will make you useful. A secret Christian is a candle under a bushel, salt without savour. 4. Grace is sufficient. If grace put you upon a pinnacle of the temple, depend upon it, grace will keep you there. 5. The reward is splendid. "He that confesseth Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven." There was once a prince who journeyed into a distant part of the king's dominions, where he was little known and cared for. The people said, "This is the heir; let us insult him." Others said he was no heir at all. And they agreed to set him in the pillory. As he stood there they said, "Who dare acknowledge, and stand by him?" One from the crowd, who said, "I dare!" they set side by side with the prince; and when they threw their filth on or spoke hard words of the prince and him, he stood there, smiling, and received it all. Years went by, the king came into those dominions and subdued them; and there came a day of triumph. The prince came to the gates, and the traitors all bound in chains stood before him trembling. He singled out from among the crowd one man only, and he said to the traitors, "Know ye this man? He stood with me in that day when ye treated me with scorn. He shall stand with me in the day of my glory. Come up hither!" And the poor, despised citizen of that rebellious city rode through the streets side by side with his king. This is the parable. Live it out! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Confession of Christ indispensable*:—It is sometimes said that piety should be retiring, and unseen. But why? There is nothing of it in the Bible. Hypocrisy is rebuked; but I ask for a single passage where the manifestation of pure religion is rebuked. "Let your light shine before men," "He that is ashamed of me," &c. Religion is supposed to be manifest, if it exists at all. It is to constitute the character and to distinguish the man. I point you to the example of Christ. Religion is everything in His life. I point you to the example of Paul. You see nothing else in his life but his religion. I point you to David, and Isaiah, and John, and the holy martyrs. The men were modest men; but their religion was open and bold. And thus it is in all the works and doings of God. Does the sun hide his noontide beams under the plea that pure light should not be ostentatious? Is the moon—that, like the Christian, shines by reflected light—or the stars ashamed to send their rays on a darkened world? Light shines not indeed for display, but for use; not for its own glory, but like the light that should radiate from the Christian's life, to illustrate the glory of the great Creator. The ocean that He has made is not ashamed to roll, the lightning of heaven to play, the oak to spread out its boughs, the flower to bloom. The humblest violet is not ashamed to exhibit its beauty, and display its Maker's praise. And if Christian light does not shine forth in the life, we have the highest evidence that it has never been enkindled in the bosom. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Confession of Christ indispensable*:—During a series of evangelistic services in Ireland a young man found peace with God, but three nights after I found him again in the inquiry room. "What's wrong?" I said. "I was too precipitate the other night; there is no change in me." "No, sir, that is not the reason. You have not confessed Christ." He almost jumped up in amazement. "How do you know? Who told you?" "Nobody told me, or needed to tell me. When a man goes away trusting one night, and comes back doubting the next, it is an infallible sign that he has not confessed Christ." He then said, "You are quite right; I live alone with my mother, who is a Christian. I thought as I walked home that I would tell her, but my heart failed. I then said to myself, 'I'll tell her to-morrow morning,' but the next day it seemed more difficult instead of less, and it occurred to me that she would say, 'Why did you not tell me last night?' Then the thought arose, 'If

you had found a five-pound note, you would have told her fast enough. Yet here you have found Christ and eternal life, and you utter not a sound: why it is all a delusion.' And I said to myself, 'I'm not saved at all. If I had been, I could not have helped confessing it.'" I said, "Yes, my friend; instead of the devil tempting you, you tempted the devil, and he began his old game of making you distrust God's Word." He gave his heart anew to the Saviour, and went away to tell his mother. Next night I found him in the inquiry room, pointing a soul to Christ. I touched him in passing, and said, "How is it with you now?" He looked up with a bright smile, and said, "I told my mother!" (*D. L. Moody.*) *Necessity of confession:*—Lieutenant Watson, once a gay young aristocrat, was awakened and converted by means of a few earnest words spoken by a brother officer (Captain Hawtry), when he was preparing for a ball. Growing rapidly in grace, and confessing Christ from the first and constantly, he was soon led, while serving in the Peninsula, under Wellington, to hold meetings in his own quarters for the soldiers, who were spiritually in a very destitute condition. Many of these were converted, but the officers generally mocked, calling Lieut. Watson "Coachie," saying he drove the mail coach to heaven, and crying after him, "Any room for passengers inside or outside to-night?" One officer, however, Lieut. Whitley, a man of refined and scientific mind, behaved differently, and although he reasoned with Watson, he always behaved as a gentleman. The result of quiet conversations was that he became seriously interested in the gospel. "One day," says Mr. Watson, "on his repeating the question, 'How am I to get the Spirit?' I replied, 'The Lord said, "Ask, and ye shall receive."' He said, 'I hope I have asked, though feebly.' I remarked, 'Jesus said again, "If a man will be My disciple, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."' 'What did He mean by that?' he said. I told him, 'You can now have a practical proof. You know we have a public meeting. Will you take up your cross and come to-night?' 'Anything but that,' he said. 'But you must remember the words of Jesus,' I told him, '"Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My doctrine in this sinful generation, of him will I be ashamed when I come in My glory."' 'Oh,' he exclaimed, 'I will go.' And he went under great exercise of mind." Of course the going was greatly blessed to him, and soon after "the Lord filled him with joy and peace in believing. He now became most valiant for the truth, and ceased not, wherever he was, to speak of Jesus." *Power of confession:*—In relating his experience during the Peninsular War, Captain Watson says, "I was nominated to sit on a garrison court-martial. A number of officers of different ranks and regiments were present on the occasion, and before the proceedings commenced, some of them indulged in loose and sceptical observations. 'Alas,' thought I, 'here are many not ashamed to speak openly for their master, and shall I hold my peace and refrain when the honour and cause of Him who has had mercy on me are called in question?' I looked for wisdom and assistance from on high, and I was enabled to speak for a quarter of an hour in a way that astonished my hearers and myself. The Lord was pleased to give what I said a favourable reception, and not another improper word was uttered by them during my stay in that room."

Vers. 11-13. **Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed** (see chap. ix. 33).—*The believer not ashamed:*—That is either—I. SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED BY THE NON-FULFILMENT OF THAT WHICH IS THE OBJECT OF THEIR CONFIDENT EXPECTATION. It is a confidence which they might well cherish and avow—secure as they are from the mockery of any failure or disappointment in their hopes. All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea and amen; and it is because of their certain and punctual accomplishment, that the hope which they inspire is a hope which "maketh not ashamed." When the verse is thus regarded, its reference is to the future, when the promises will all be made good. Then will the believer lift up his head and rejoice. Otherwise, ashamed of the vain and illusory imagination on which he had before rested, he would sink into despair. II. OR SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED NOW WHEN THE PROMISES ARE ONLY AS YET BELIEVED. Even at this stage might faith have a present and powerful effect in repressing shame, and more especially the shame of making the avowal of itself, and so of testifying for Christ. Like every other principle of strong and felt urgency within, it may delight in the vent and forthgoing of its own utterance, and in bearing down the restraints whether of shame or of fear, which might have otherwise intercepted the expression of it (Psa. cxvi. 10, xxxix. 8; Matt. xii. 34). The apostle was not ashamed, because of the certainty he felt in Him whom he believed, and the firm persuasion he had

of His ability to save him. And so he bids Timothy not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, who Himself tells us that whosoever shall be ashamed of Him and of His words, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed. We like this view of the text. It binds so together the belief of its first clause with the confession of its second, and harmonises the saying that "confession is unto salvation" with the saying that "the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls." III. FROM THE PROPOSITION OF THIS VERSE A CERTAIN CONVERSE PROPOSITION MIGHT BE DRAWN that might well be used as a criterion by which to test and to ascertain the reality of our faith. If it be true that whosoever believeth on Him is not ashamed, then it should be true that whosoever is ashamed of Him doth not believe. Or, whosoever maketh not confession of Him with the mouth, believeth Him not with the heart. How comes it, then, that Christ and all which is expressly Christian are so systematically excluded from society as topics of conversation? The general emigration of a whole neighbourhood from one country to another in this world would be the constant talk of all its parties. How is it that we meet with nothing like this on the subject of that universal emigration from one world to another? Is it because there are no outfits, no preparations, and therefore no prospects to talk about?—these having no place in the converse just because they have no place in the business or in the hearts of men? They are seldom or never the subjects of speech, just because they are seldom or never the subjects of thought. Or if there be any who think of them, but are ashamed to speak of them—such we say is the overbearing magnitude of the interest at stake that it needs but a realising sense of them to put to flight both the fear and the shame of this world. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The Christian not ashamed*:—I. OF CHRIST (2 Tim. i. 12; Mark viii. 38). II. OF THE GOSPEL (chap. i. 16). III. AT Christ's COMING (1 John ii. 28). IV. OF GOD'S PEOPLE (Ruth i. 16; Phil. v. 16). V. OF GOD'S REVELATION (Psa. cxix. 6, 31, 46, 80). VI. TO SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN (1 Pet. iv. 16). VII. TO OWN HIS FORMER STATE (Eph. ii. 1–5). VIII. TO BEAR THE REPROACH OF CHRIST (2 Tim. i. 8, 16). IX. IN THE LAST GREAT DAY (Dan. xii. 1–3). X. OF "NOTHING" (Phil. i. 20). "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Thee." (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The believer not ashamed*:—I. WHOSOEVER TRUST IN ANYTHING BUT IN CHRIST SHALL BE ASHAMED. The Jews of their confidence in the law. They also which, with King Asa, trust in the physicians and not in God in the day of sickness, so they which trust in their riches contrary to the commandment of the Spirit, whom Christ calls fools. These also who seek in losses to wizards and not to God. Many trust in outward things without God, but there are few who trust in God without outward things. II. THERE IS MUCH FEAR AND DOUBTING WHERE FAITH IS, BUT IN THE END BELIEVERS SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED. This makes them confident against the reproach cast upon them by the world. Though the gospel be spoken against in every place, yet Paul will not be ashamed of it. This also comforts against the guiltiness of sin, which is the true cause of shame. Faith obtains pardon, and therefore we shall never be put to shame, and the more we believe the less do we fear shame. Peter walked upon the water and shamed himself, for he began to sink. What was the cause? Not the wind or waves, but the defect of faith. Make precious account therefore of thy faith, and labour to increase it. A certain captain, being in a hot skirmish, was stricken down, and taken up for dead. As soon as he came to himself he first asked if his target were safe, being loth his enemies should get that. So look to thy faith, for the devil, thy enemy, will look to it, and thou shalt not be ashamed. III. WICKED MEN AND UNBELIEVERS ARE MISERABLE BECAUSE OF THE SHAME WHICH FOLLOWS THEM. There can be almost no stronger argument against sin than to say it will make ashamed. Some, like shameless beasts, glory in their shame, making a pastime of that with Solomon's fool (Prov. x. 23), which they should bewail with tears of blood. It is a face of brass that is not ashamed of blasphemy, drunkenness, adultery, and pride. Though many of these things be not now ashamed, yet at the day of death or judgment they shall be put to shame, and then there shall be no covering for their shame. If thou be one of these and couldst blush, there were hope of thee. When a thief is taken how doth he hang down his head before men. Alas! if thou believest not, nor repentest, how shalt thou be able to look Christ in the face when He comes to judgment? Let us therefore so live that when He shall appear we may be bold, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The believer not ashamed*:—Faith is a frequent source of shame. How often has unfounded trust in ourselves or others brought disgrace and disappointment? In one direction, and in one direction only, can we with unlimited confidence say that

whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed. I. THE BELIEVER MIGHT BE ASHAMED. 1. Of Christ, were He—(1) Ignoble—were, *e.g.*, He proved to be merely the Nazarene and not the Word made flesh; the Son of Mary and not the Son of God. (2) Morally imperfect. Were He, who declared Himself sinless, shown to be overtaken in a fault. 2. Of His service. Could it be demonstrated to be—(1) Ignominious, involving baseness and servility; (2) Wicked, and against conscience; (3) Grievous and impracticable—then might the believer be ashamed of his credulous compliance. 3. Of His teaching. Were it—(1) Frivolous and unworthy of intelligent study. (2) Immoral and offensive to the moral sense. (3) Impracticable and unsuited to everyday life. 4. Of His influence, if it were—(1) Inoperative; (2) Transient; or (3) Not for good. 5. Of His promised rewards, if they were—(1) Baseless, or (2) Worthless. Tried by these tests, who could come out scatheless? Mention one of whom in all these regards it could be said that he that believeth in him shall not be ashamed? Is Christ an exception? Yes. II. THE BELIEVER CANNOT BE ASHAMED—1. Of Christ. Consider—(1) The dignity of His person. "The brightness of God's glory," &c. (2) The perfection of His character. "He did no sin." "He went about doing good." 2. Of His service. (1) It is of the noblest, as is shown from—(*a*) Its character; (*b*) Those who have engaged in it. (2) It is of the holiest. Its animating motive is perfect love to God and man. (3) It is the most blessed—perfect freedom and fulness of joy. 3. Of His teaching, which is—(1) The most profound. The combined labour of the greatest intellects have failed to exhaust its meaning. (2) The only instruction which meets with the perfect approval of the unbiassed conscience. (3) Perfectly practicable. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." "Ye are My friends if ye do," &c. 4. Of His influence. How can one be ashamed of that which everywhere makes for righteousness. We are ashamed of much that we did before we came under His influence; but we are ashamed now only that we did not come under it before. 5. Of His promised rewards. These are—(1) Pure. We know this because we have already received the earnest. (2) Of the highest and of endless value. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy," &c. III. THEN DO NOT BE ASHAMED—1. To confess Christ. He is worthy. 2. To engage in His service, and that with the utmost earnestness. 3. To study and practise His teaching. It will live when the wisdom of this world is forgotten. 4. To yield utterly to His influence. 5. To fulfil the conditions upon which He has promised His rewards. "Be thou faithful unto death," &c. (*J. W. Burn.*) **For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.**—*True equality*:—There is no difference, for—1. There is the same Lord. 2. He is rich to all. The Jews need not grudge the coming in of the Gentiles; they shall not have the less, for God is able to enrich all. As the sun, though it every day give his light to everybody, yet neither hath it or we the less, so though thousands from one end of the earth to the other flock to the receiving of mercy yet God hath store, and the fountain is above our thirst. 3. An equal condition propounded to all, "If they call on Him," which, if the Gentile do, the gate of mercy was open and free to him as to the Jew. The favours of God concerning justification and salvation are dispensed, without any respect of persons, to them which believe and call upon Him (Act x. 34; Rom. iii. 29, 30; Gal. iii. 28). I. IN THIS WORLD, FOR THE MOST PART, THE POOR ARE CONTEMNED. If there be any favour it falls into the rich man's mouth. If there be any danger the rich man gets through, when the poor is taken in the net of the law. The poor is scanted in the things of this earth, but in the favour of God and heavenly things he shareth with the best. The rich cannot bribe for these. God respected the low estate of Mary His handmaiden; yea, Lazarus went to heaven when Dives went to hell. II. IF THOU BE RICH BE HUMBLE. Do not disdainfully overlook thy poor neighbour. He is heir of the same grace, serves the same Master, and, it may be, in as great favour with Him as thyself. The rich and poor are all one by creation; there is the same entrance into the world and the same way to depart to them both, unless the rich man's fulness open more doors of death than the emptiness of the poor man. In the worst things, as sin and corruption, the richest is equal with the poorest. In the best things, as justification and eternal life, the poorest is equal with the richest. III. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR IN SPIRITUAL THINGS. In civil there is great difference, even by God's ordinance. For the gospel abolisheth not order. We must honour our superiors. We may not say, Wherein is he better than I? We all come of Adam. When the counters are put up into the bag there is no difference between them, but while the account is casting there is great difference. One stands for a pound, another for a penny.

So at the day of judgment and in Christ there is no difference; but while we here live there is difference, and it is to be acknowledged. IV. BE AT UNITY, FOR THERE IS THE SAME LORD. We are all servants to one Master; He will prefer us all; we need not envy one another. We are all of a family, and wear all one livery, and the badge is love. Will any man endure that his servants or children shall be quarrelling? Indeed, if we served divers masters there might sometimes naked swords be seen, but now contentions must needs be odious. A Church in division is like a house on fire. Quench and increase not this flame by thy brainless opinions. V. THE WAY TO BE RICH IN ALL GRACE IS TO ASK IT. Ask, and you shall have; He is rich to all that call upon Him. He gives bountifully, and casts no man in the teeth. Plead not thine own deservings, thou must sue in *forma pauperis*. Beggars obtain; the rich are sent empty away. VI. Every man desires to serve a liberal master, that he may be preferred. SERVE GOD AND THOU SHALT BE MADE RICH. Why dost thou by swearing, lying, &c., serve that beggarly master the devil, that hath nothing to give his followers but hell? If God be thy Master thou art made for ever. No marvel that Paul breaks out into such pathetical thanksgivings because God entertained him into His service. Get into God's service, and, when thou art in, keep thee there. There are two things to be done that we may keep our service. 1. To know our Master well. 2. To do it. And then as God was rich to Abraham for his faith, to David for his zeal, to Stephen for his constancy, so will He be rich to thee. As God is rich in mercy to the good, so in judgments, plagues, woes, curses, is He rich to all ungodly and wicked men. (*Ebnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The universality of the gospel*:—The gospel is admirably adapted to meet the wants of man. At whatever time, in whatever place, and under whatever circumstances, it satisfies his inquiries respecting salvation and a future world. It recognises no differences—I. OF A NATIONAL KIND. The Jew and the Greek are on perfect equality as regards the gospel. Our Saviour says, "Go ye into all the world," &c. Thus the gospel cuts at the root of all national selfishness and animosity, and extends its blessings to all; for "God hath made of one blood all nations of the earth"; and the redeemed sing, "Worthy is the Lamb . . . who hath redeemed us out of all nations." II. OF A SOCIAL KIND. Great as are the differences of social condition amongst men, the gospel recognises none. The gospel says to the prince, "Believe," and if he believes he is saved; but if he does not he is damned, though he be a prince. It just says the same to the slave. The rich and the poor, the master and servant, must partake of salvation by the same faith in the Son of God. III. OF A DENOMINATIONAL KIND. The Independent and the Baptist, the Churchman and the Dissenter, each and all through Christ can be saved. The bigot in religion erects his little barrier, and having enclosed all within it who agree with him, excludes all others and regards them as outside the pale of salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ knocks down all such barriers, and standing on their ruins, proclaims salvation to each and to all who believe in His name. IV. OF A MENTAL KIND. The refined scholar, and the untutored boor; the man of acute intellect, and the one of dull apprehension, each and all through Jesus Christ can be saved. Paul was debtor both to the wise and to the unwise. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the uninstructed despair. Christ offers the riches of His grace to all. V. OF A MORAL KIND. None are shut out from the blessings of the gospel on account of their bad character. (*C. Hargreaves.*) *The gospel and its publication*:—I. THE SALVATION REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL. It consists in a deliverance from the punishment and power of sin, and is effected by the death of Jesus Christ. Notice—1. The richness of its blessings. According to the necessities of the sinner, so are the blessings presented in the gospel. Is he bowed down under a sense of the guilt of his transgressions? The gospel tells him, "God so loved the world," &c. Is he sensible of the deep pollution of his soul? He learns that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." Does he feel his inability to honour God, by keeping the whole law? The gospel shows him that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," &c. Is the soul harassed by the power of temptation, and ready to despair? The gospel reveals the promises of deliverance and support. Does he shudder at the approach of death as the king of terrors? The gospel says, "Christ came to deliver those who, from fear of death, were subject to bondage," &c. Does Satan excite doubts and fears as to the final result? The gospel reveals God as swearing to him by two immutable things, &c., that he might have strong consolation. 2. The extensiveness of its efficiency. Its blessings are confined to no particular nation, but are suited to all, in every place (ver. 12). 3. The means by which its blessings are to

be secured. We must "call upon God." But this must be much more than the address of the lips, which in many is only the result of education and example. The calling upon God here spoken of, is the result of heartfelt convictions of the truth of the gospel, and the importance of salvation. There can be no repentance without a discovery of the awful nature of sin, and without right views of the holiness of God. It is only in proportion as we see the blessings of salvation to be suitable and necessary that we shall call upon God for them. II. THE NECESSITY OF PUBLISHING THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH. This necessity is great, and it is heightened—1. By the natural state of the human mind. Reason brought out great results in arts and sciences, &c.; it has enabled man to trace out the being and attributes of Jehovah (chap. i. 19, 20). By this also the knowledge of sin is attainable (chap. ii. 14, 15). But, great as are the powers of the human mind, they fail to reveal the way in which the wrath of God may be appeased, the way in which man must be just with God (Micah vi. 6, 7). Man is conscious of guilt, of merited punishment: self-preservation induces a wish to escape, but whither he knows not. Christ is set forth as a propitiation for the sins of the world—through faith in Him alone pardon and salvation are to be obtained; but millions of our fellow-creatures have never heard of Him, and therefore how shall they believe in Him? Hence the necessity of publishing it to them. 2. By the Divine appointment of Jehovah. We are blessed with the light of Divine truth; the spirit of true Christian benevolence, therefore, should prompt us to diffuse it. The gospel is designed both for Jews and Gentiles. This doctrine is to be found in the Old Testament as well as in the New. In the accomplishment of his designs, however, God works by means. He has appointed the preaching of His gospel. "Go ye into all the world, and preach," &c. Salvation is by faith; and if faith be essential to salvation, it is necessary to hear; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." And we may well ask, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" &c. Conclusion: Let us learn from this subject—1. The unspeakable privilege of those who profess the gospel. 2. The duties which attach themselves to the possessors of these privileges. (*J. C. Williams.*) **For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.**—*The Lordship of Christ*:—I. CHRIST IS LORD. 1. The word is frequently an equivalent for Jehovah. Whether it is so here or not, the apostle recognised Christ's oneness with God even as Christ professed the same. Upon this is rooted our Lord's claim to the homage of the race. 2. The least that the word can mean is Sovereign. Christ is the King of men. This office is in danger of being overlooked in favour of His priestly and prophetic offices. It is more agreeable to be saved by His sacrifice and to listen to His gracious words than to fight His battles and to do His will. Yet what honour to be the subjects of such a King; what safety to be under His protection; what honour must come from obedience to His rule. II. CHRIST IS LORD OVER ALL. 1. There is but one Lord—"The same Lord." Heathenism had lords many, which entailed religious confusion. Hence moral confusion and unrest. Christ is the only authoritative and perfectly self-consistent moral ruler. 2. He is over all, without distinction. His rights are based on—(1) Creation; (2) Preservation; (3) Redemption. He who created, who preserves, and who redeemed all, must be Lord of all. The inference is the essential equality of the race. Differences of rank, &c., are accidental and will pass away. That rich and poor, &c., are common subjects of the same King will never pass away. Let this soften racial, social, and sectarian asperities. III. CHRIST, being Lord over all, IS RICH UNTO ALL. Rich Himself, He does not use His wealth for Himself. "For our sakes He" once "became poor"; but now, being again highly exalted, He gives gifts to men. 1. This is to be understood in the widest sense. His providential riches are distributed universally. Good and bad, enemies and friends, are partakers of His bounty. 2. This is to be understood in a more limited sense. His choicest favours are indeed offered to all, and the condition of their acceptance is possible to all; but they are confined to those who "call upon Him." (1) Those who acknowledge His Lordship. All can do this, but it is only reasonable that those who do do it should receive the benefit. A monarch may extend the benefit of his government to all his subjects, but he will scarcely confer his court favours on the disloyal. (2) Those who ask for them. What can be more reasonable and easy than this. To ask implies to want, and can we expect Christ to lavish the riches of His grace on those that will not appreciate them? (*J. W. Burn.*) *God's riches*:—The word "rich" is here used in its ethical import, as equivalent to liberal or bountiful. Hence the remarkable expression "rich unto." In the sphere of

ordinary life, when men become rich, they are in general simply said to be rich—at times it may be said that they are rich in this world's possessions, or that they are rich in the possession of devoted friends, or rich in genius, but God is here represented as "rich unto"—*i.e.*, He is abundant in goodness. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *If men are not saved the fault is their own* because—I. GOD IS WILLING TO SAVE ALL. 1. He makes no difference. 2. Is rich unto all. 3. Offers salvation to all who call upon Him. II. GOD PROVIDES MEANS FOR ALL. 1. He sends His gospel to all (vers. 14, 15). 2. Convinces men of unbelief (ver. 16). 3. Makes His word effective in producing faith (ver. 17). III. MEN ROB THEMSELVES OF THEIR SALVATION BY THEIR UNBELIEF. 1. They do not improve the means (ver. 18). 2. Are often more unfaithful than others less favoured (vers. 19, 20). 3. Make the purpose of God of no effect through their disobedience. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**—*The inclusive "whosoever":*—John Berridge once said, after having given out these words as his text, "I would much rather it be written, 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'—than 'If John Berridge shall call out the name of the Lord he shall be saved'; because" said he, "how do I know that there might not be another John Berridge in the world to whom those words were addressed? But when I read, 'Whosoever shall call,' &c., I know I must be included." *Salvation:*—1. Its import. 2. Its conditions. 3. Its universal offer. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Salvation:*—This is the substance of the grand gospel. It implies—1. That we are not saved by our opinions, theories, Churches, or ordinances. 2. That we are saved by Christ. 3. That application to Him for salvation must be made. 4. That in granting salvation Christ is no respecter of persons. How thankful should we be for this simple, comprehensive declaration. How instant and earnest should be our application. How hopeful and assured of a favourable reply. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Salvation* is—I. NEEDED BY ALL. II. IS INTENDED FOR ALL. III. IS WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL. IV. MAY BE SECURED BY ALL. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Salvation, its Author and condition:*—Paul opened this chapter with an expression of heartfelt desire for the salvation of Israel; but the mass of the nation were acting in direct antagonism to the only method of salvation. In his estimation, their rejection of the Divine plan of saving men was a crime which admitted of no palliation. There were no physical difficulties in the way (vers. 6, 7). There were no intellectual difficulties in the way (ver. 8). There were no moral difficulties in the way, save in their own voluntary ignorance and unbelief. Hell is self-chosen, both by Jew and Gentile. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I. MAN WANTS SALVATION—1. From present evil. "The whole world is guilty before God." 2. From future evil. Living to sin, the tendency of his soul is downwards, and no plumb-line can fathom the depths to which he may descend. Perish is the dark dissyllable used to describe the final state of the impenitent. II. THE SALVATION MAN WANTS IS ATTAINABLE. "Shall be saved." Salvation includes—1. Deliverance from the great moral evils of the present. 2. Fitness for the enjoyment of the great realities of the future. The saving power creates a heaven in the heart, ere it introduces a heaven to the eye. III. THE SALVATION MAN WANTS IS ATTAINABLE ONLY BY CHRIST. 1. He procured it as the world's Saviour. "He redeemed us to God with His blood." He could have destroyed; but while we were yet sinners He died for us. 2. He bestows salvation as the world's Sovereign. IV. THE SALVATION MAN WANTS, AND IS ATTAINABLE ONLY BY CHRIST, IS SUSPENDED ON THE CONDITION OF PRAYER. 1. This condition embodies all that is instrumentally necessary to man's salvation. It implies—(1) Self-condemnation. (2) Confession of sin to God. (3) Faith. The prayer of the publican blended these elements. There was self-condemnation. Smiting upon his burdened conscience, he exclaimed, "God be merciful to *me*." . . . There was a confession of sin to God: "God be merciful to" . . . "a sinner." There was faith. 2. This condition is strikingly simple compared with the great results of its exercise. "Whosoever shall call . . . shall be saved." We have not to traverse sandy deserts, and climb rugged steeps with the Mohammedan, nor to endure maceration with the papist, in order to obtain salvation. We have no work of supposed merit to perform; not to purchase, not to suffer, but to beg. 3. This condition is bound up with a name that renders salvation the certain result of its exercise. The condition is, that we pray to Christ. Complying with this condition, the name of Christ is a guarantee of success. 4. This condition may be exercised with success by any one of the race. "Whosoever shall," &c. Christianity invites the confidence of the world. Catholicity appears—(1) In all the Saviour has done for man. (2) In the calls and offers of the

gospel. "Whosoever" is a word utterly neutralising the attempts which men have rashly made to limit the compassion of God, and obstruct the way of the sinner's approach to the mercy-seat. Conclusion: The subject reminds us—1. That only one method of salvation exists. "There is none other name given among men," &c. 2. To perish with a knowledge of this, man must commit soul-suicide. (*G. Wallis.*) *Free salvation*:—I. THE BLESSING. Salvation from—1 The guilt. 2. The power. 3. The results of sin. II. THE DUTY. To call—1. Upon God. 2. Through the mediation of Christ. 3. By the aid of the Spirit. 4. With a disposition to be saved. III. THE PROMISE. To all—1. Nations. 2. Ranks. 3. Conditions. 4. Characters. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *The glad tidings*:—I. THEIR NATURE. II. DISPENSATION. III. RECEPTION. IV. EFFECT. (*Ibid.*) *Calling on the name of the Lord*:—To call upon the name of the Lord implies—I. RIGHT FAITH, to call upon Him as He is. II. RIGHT TRUST in Him, leaning upon Him. III. RIGHT DEVOTION, calling upon Him, as He has appointed. IV. RIGHT LIFE, ourselves who call upon Him being, or becoming, by His grace, what He wills. They call not upon the Lord, but upon some idol of their own imagining, who call upon Him as other than He has revealed Himself, or remaining themselves other than those whom He has declared that He will hear. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Calling in earnest*:—I. This call DOES NOT ALWAYS EXPRESS ITSELF IN WORDS, BUT IS THE SPEECH OF THE SPIRIT, and is well understood by the heavenly Father, who seeks to hear those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. II. It is NOT AN ARTIFICIAL CALL. The mere saying of prayers is an act of gross superstition; the form is useless unless your heart feels and prompts the expression. III. It is NOT A CALL FOR FORM'S SAKE, BUT A DYING CRY FOR HELP. A Frenchman going to the chapel to pray, found that workmen were in the chapel, and the altar covered up with a dirty cloth. So walking quietly up the centre of the chapel and making a courteous bow, he placed his card upon the altar and retired. But there was also in the place a poor woman, who had been led, perhaps by poverty and cruel temptation, into sin. Crouching upon the floor, her tears fell upon the sawdust, and her soul cried to God. In the one case it was a matter of form, in the other it was an earnest desire for the forgiveness and peace of God. IV. It is A CALL THAT IS INTENSELY EARNEST. The call that shall move God to save us is not a mere chaunted prayer, but the cry within the heart, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." V. It is THE CALL OF THE HELPLESS ONE, who is broken down under the load of sin. VI. It is THE CALL OF THE EASILY TEMPTED. VII. It is THE CALL OF A CAPTIVE. VIII. It is A CALL OF THE DESPAIRING SOUL. (*W. Birch.*) *A simple sermon for seeking souls*:—1. Inasmuch as our text talks of men being saved, it implies that men need saving; but if men had been as God created them, they would have needed no saving. We must not, however, throw the blame on Adam; no man was ever yet damned for Adam's sin alone. Children dying in infancy are, without doubt, saved through the atonement. But we are not children. We need not talk just now of Adam's sins. We have our own to account for. 2. Salvation means our escaping from the punishment of sin, and also from the habit of sin. 3. How may men be saved? The answer is in the text. I. EXPLANATION. What is meant by calling upon the name of the Lord? 1. Worship. "When men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," *i.e.*, they builded altars in His name, offered sacrifice, bowed their knee, and lifted their voice. Now, whosoever is enabled by grace to worship God, in God's way, shall be saved. 2. Prayer. Elijah, when the prophets of Baal sought to get rain from their false god, said, "I will call upon God," *i.e.*, "I will pray to God, that He may send the rain." Now, whosoever prayeth to God through Christ, with sincere prayer, shall be saved. Thou canst not pray and perish. It may be a groan, a tear, or a prayer in broken English; but if it be a prayer from the inmost heart, thou shalt be saved. 3. Trust. A man cannot call upon the name of the Lord, unless he trusts in that name, and he that trusteth in Christ, calling on His name, shall be saved. 4. Professing His name. Ananias said to Saul, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." Now some of you say, "We will believe and be secret Christians." Hear this, then—"If any man be ashamed of Me," &c. What would Her Majesty think of her soldiers, if they should prefer not to wear anything that would mark them as being soldiers? II. REFUTATION. There are some popular errors which need to be cured by refutation., viz.—1. That a priest or a minister is absolutely necessary to assist men in salvation. The necessity of a preacher lies in telling what the way of salvation is; but his office goes no further. Neither Paul, nor an angel from heaven, can help you in salva-

tion. We must each of us go to the fountain-head, pleading this promise. 2. That a good dream is a most splendid thing in order to save people. Rowland Hill, when a woman pleaded that she was saved because she dreamed, said, "Well, it is very nice to have good dreams when you are asleep; but I want to see how you act when you are awake; for if your conduct is not consistent in religion when you are awake, I will not give a snap of the finger for your dreams." Some people have been alarmed by dreams; but to trust to them is to trust to a shadow. 3. That a certain kind of feeling must be experienced in order to salvation. Now, the only feeling I want is that I am a sinner and that Christ is my Saviour. You may keep your ecstasies and raptures to yourselves; the only feeling necessary is deep repentance and humble faith; and if you have got that you are saved. 4. That somehow or other salvation is connected with learning. Now, I would advise you to know as much as ever you can; but in regard to going to heaven, the way is so plain, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." All you want to know is, the two things that begin with *S*—Sin and Saviour. III. EXHORTATION. Believe the message. Does it seem hard to believe? Nothing is too hard for the Most High. I will use a few reasons to induce you to believe this truth. If thou callest on Christ's name thou wilt be saved. 1. Because thou art elect. That doctrine which puzzles many and frightens more, never need do so. If you call on the name of Christ you are elect. 2. Because thou art redeemed. Christ has bought thee, and paid for thee. 3. Because Christ says, "In My Father's house there are many mansions," and there is one there for you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The obligation of Christian missions*:—I. THE GOSPEL IS DESIGNED FOR THE WORLD (ver. 13). II. THE WORLD NEEDS IT (ver. 14). III. THE CHURCH IS COMMISSIONED TO DISPENSE IT. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Steps essential to faith*:—I. FAITH IS ESSENTIAL TO WORSHIP (ver. 13). "He that cometh to God must believe that He is," &c. Acceptable worship is not speech, ritual, or bodily service, but the devotions of a soul quickened by a living faith. 1. Not a corporate faith, the current faith of a community to which we belong. 2. Not a traditional faith. 3. But an individual faith which has been reached by our own examination of facts and evidence, and which has become a living power within us. II. INFORMATION IS ESSENTIAL TO FAITH (ver. 14). Faith implies objects known to us. We cannot believe in something, however true, that is unknown. Men know nothing of God until they are informed. The knowledge does not come either as an intuition, or as a truth conveyed by nature. "The world by wisdom knew not God." There must come a special revelation. III. PREACHING IS ESSENTIAL TO KNOWLEDGE. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Let the word "preacher" stand for all who convey from God necessary information—prophets, apostles, and all true modern expositors of the blessed Book. Had not such messengers appeared whom God made organs of communications to men, what should we have known of Him? What to produce a living faith? The publication of the gospel by preaching is God's established instrumentality for giving the world a knowledge of the great things of faith. IV. DIVINE COMMISSION IS ESSENTIAL TO PREACHING. "How shall they preach except they be sent?" The men who give the true knowledge are the men only whom God sends. There are many unsent preachers proclaiming their notions. Who are the sent ones? What are the criteria by which to determine the point—volubility, animal warmth, popularity? Not necessarily so. He is the sent who is divinely qualified by having the right conceptions, the right sympathies, the right speech. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Links in the soul's redemptive chain*:—I. PRAYER. "How then shall they call on Him?" &c. This implies—1. Consciousness of dependence upon Him. 2. An earnest desire after Him. II. FAITH. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" Faith in—1. His personal existence. 2. The entreatability of His nature. III. KNOWLEDGE. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Faith is at the basis of all knowledge—soul redemptive faith requires knowledge, not of the creative, sustaining God, but of the redeeming God, God in Christ. IV. PREACHING. The redeeming God has been made known to man by preaching. Enoch, Noah, Moses, the prophets, the apostles, and Christ all preached. And the subject of all their preaching was the redeeming God. No one can preach this properly unless he be sent. (*Ibid.*) *God's readiness to forgive*:—Macaulay speaks of James II. as being hard and as glorying in the opportunity of crushing another. One of the most affecting pictures in the Royal Academy of this year depicts the king in the act of crushing the poor defeated Duke of Monmouth. In a room hung with tapestry the king stands erect, lank, sickly, and contemptuous. The poor duke whose rebellion had roused the hatred of the king, thought to move

him to pity. His arms were "bound behind him with a silken cord, and thus secured he was ushered into the presence of the implacable kinsman whom he had wronged. Then Monmouth threw himself on the ground and crawled to the king's feet." The artist represents him with face on the smooth floor, eyes swollen with weeping and watching, striving to move the king to pity. It was in vain. The king only crushed with hardness and contempt. No wonder that the historian says strongly, "To see him, and not to spare him, was an outrage on humanity and decency." How many such outrages are committed in a day by those of lower rank! Those who feel that they have sinned and who come imploringly to the feet of Divine mercy, have no need to fear that they will be treated with hardness. God "will not break the bruised reed," He is gentle towards us. He forgives, uplifts, strengthens, and saves. (*Mother's Treasury.*) *Crying for salvation:*—Some years ago a vessel struck on the rocks. They had only one lifeboat. In that lifeboat the passengers and crew were getting ashore. The vessel had foundered, and was sinking deeper and deeper, and that one boat could not take the passengers very swiftly. A little girl stood on the deck waiting for her turn to get into the boat. The boat came and went, came and went, but her turn did not seem to come. After awhile she could wait no longer, and she leaped on the taffrail and then sprang into the sea, crying to the boatman, "Save me next! Save me next!" Oh, how many have gone ashore into God's mercy, and yet you are clinging to the wreck of sin! Others have accepted the pardon of Christ, but you are in peril. Why not, this moment, make a rush for your immortal rescue, crying until Jesus shall hear you, and heaven and earth ring with the cry, "Save me next! Save me next"?

Vers. 14, 15. **How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?**—*Salvation preached:*—I. SALVATION BY GRACE. 1. We all hope to be saved. Salvation cannot be of merit for anybody that you or I have ever known. It must be of grace, if grace be possible: there is no other way. And there is this way—an old way, an eternal way—prepared and opened far back behind all time, when the Lamb was slain. This takes us back into mysterious and awful depths. But revelation leads the way. Surely we narrow God, unless we think of Him as Triune. Surely we slander God, unless we make atonement as much the work of the Father and the Spirit, as of the Son. 2. How to be square and clean, how to be considerate and generous, how not to be selfish and self-willed; how not to be afraid or ashamed to die: this is the great problem of life. Tell me how to do this and you will tell me how to be saved. Grace tramples down no law. Salvation by grace is through faith, working by love, which, like fire, cleanses the heart and cleanses the life. 3. The salvation of society, menaced now, menaced always, by human appetite and passions in their disorganising play, must come by the same road. No one form of government rather than another, no mere selfish forces, is the thing required. Till society shall have become unselfish it has not been saved, nor can it be. And to become unselfish, it must learn, not of socialistic reformers, who pronounce unselfishness impossible, but of Him who was unselfishness incarnate. II. THIS SALVATION MUST BE PREACHED. 1. Christianity is one of the great Book-Religions, of which there are pre-eminently three—Judaism and Mohammedanism being the other two. This word "Book-Religion" means a great deal. (1) It means, that we have something definite and immutable by which to measure whatever calls itself Christian, holding it to the rule. (2) It means that the poor, swearing, shipwrecked sailor that floats ashore on his chest, if he has in that chest the Bible his mother gave him, and dries its leaves in the sun, and reads the third chapter of John's Gospel, with streaming eyes, and breaking, believing heart, may be saved all alone there on the sandy beach of the desert island. And if he dies there all alone, no ship sailing that way to see his signal of distress, he will go as straight to heaven as Whitefield himself went from the sermon he preached in Exeter. 2. And yet Christianity did not start as a volume, but as a voice. Christ Himself probably wrote nothing, not a line. Meanwhile, the kingdom of Christ has been marching and conquering, north and south, towards the rising and towards the setting sun. Its snow-white banners, chasing the Roman eagles, had outflown those eagles beyond the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Indus. What wrought that triumph? The foolishness of preaching wrought it. Christ is no Confucius, or Socrates, or Solon, but God Incarnate. He that saves us spake, and as never man spake. So the sacred message ran, and runs, from lip to lip. It is in the air all the time. 3. A Bible in every human habitation is some-

thing well worth trying to achieve. But I can tell you of something better still. It is Christ Himself, in any one of the humblest of His disciples, casting His shadow on the wall. Breathing men, not breathless books, must carry salvation round the globe. It must be preached; preached by men who have had it preached to them; preached to sinners by men who have sinned themselves; by dying men *to* dying men. III. THE PREACHERS MUST BE SENT. 1. Our text does not say by whom, but the context makes it plain enough. God must send them. 2. Whom God sends to preach, He first converts. And then He kindles in him, beyond the average, what we have been in the habit of calling a love for souls; call it, if you please, enthusiasm, a great, good heart, quick sympathy with men as men, and with the daily wants and ways of men. 3. In the apostolic and early Church, which wrought such wonders, preaching was not exclusively an official prerogative. Strictly speaking, there was no order of preachers. Anybody might preach who had anything to say worth saying. Not till near the close of the fourth century were laymen forbidden to preach. And then the Church had got far along in the bad way. I confess I do not see how Christianity is ever to carry the day, unless the great bulk of our Church membership becomes also a ministry. A Grecian army, with or without leaders, might possibly have stood its ground all the same at Marathon, saving Greece, and saving the civilisation of the Occident. But Miltiades alone there, with his handful of officers, would not have stayed for a moment the Persian march on Athens. (*R. D. Hitchcock, D.D.*) *The necessity of revelation to faith*:—Belief is impossible, where it is impossible to convey any knowledge of the subjects of belief; the body cannot digest without nutriment to engage its digestive functions; the mind cannot believe without facts and propositions to occupy its believing faculty (ver. 17). The voice of God, the hearing of man, the consequent belief, are the three necessarily successive links in the golden chain of revealed salvation. Sever the continuity of any two, and the electric spark cannot be transferred across the interval. (*W. Archer Butler, M.A.*) **How shall they hear without a preacher?**—*Preaching*:—I. ITS ADVANTAGES. 1. Economy of exertion. How much is done with comparatively little speaking. 2. Many receive religious instruction who would otherwise have none. 3. Religion is kept a conspicuous thing. 4. All are made witnesses to all they have heard. 5. There is something in it for popular opinion to lean upon. 6. It tends to secure for religion deep study, at least in some parts of the community. II. ITS REQUISITES. 1. Power of thought. 2. Facility of expression. 3. Knowledge of the Scriptures. (*John Foster.*) *The usefulness and authority of an established ministry*:—I. THE NECESSITY OF A MINISTRY TO OFFICIATE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD. 1. The settling and preserving a ministry to officiate in the Church is an instance of our respect to Almighty God. God is the God of order, not of confusion, and expects that His service should be performed after a regular and decent manner, free from negligence on the one hand and foppery on the other; especially He requires that acts of public adoration should be accompanied with a reverence and solemnity suitable to the majesty of such a presence. Now this cannot reasonably be supposed to be so exactly performable by those who are frequently embroiled in the affairs of the world, and by that means have their thoughts and affections the more estranged from heavenly contemplations. It has therefore been the universal practice of all nations to appoint some peculiar persons to attend upon God's service more immediately, who, by continually applying themselves to such things as were acceptable to Him, were supposed to have some interest in Him, to be qualified to understand His will, and to be authorised to reveal it to others. Now as this was done by the common consent of all heathen nations in relation to their false divinities, so was it more eminently put in practice by those who had a clearer notion of the true Deity; one tribe in twelve being set apart by the Jews and consecrated to the service of God and His Temple, no worldly concerns being suffered to interfere, but the whole employment and business of their lives being to study His will and the methods of His worship. 2. I proceed, next, to enforce the necessity of a ministry to officiate in the Church of God from the great advantages accruing thereby to the other members of Christ's body. (1) Consider it in relation to prayers or intercessions for the obtaining of mercies or diverting of judgments. (2) A second advantage which accrues to the whole Church from the office of the ministry is that of instruction and reprehension, the impartial declaring of their duty to them and seasonably reproving them for the neglect of it. II.

THE AUTHORITY BY WHICH THEY ACT. "How shall they preach except they be sent?" Our blessed Saviour, in order to carry on the universal design of our redemption, thought fit to select a certain number of men to be His missionaries or apostles, investing them with some part of His own authority (Mark iii. 14). From Him, then, "who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" is derived to His ministers a plenitude of power proportionable to the majesty of so august a Founder. We have His own Word for it, who cannot lie (John xvii. 18). Since, therefore, the Author and Finisher of our faith has thus expressly testified in relation to His ministers that as He was sent even so did He send, the questioning that authority by which they act will cast an imputation upon Christ Himself, and a doubting the validness of their mission will unhappily glance and reflect upon His. I shall now close up all that has been said with a word or two of application. Can they not hear without a preacher? Is the necessity and advantage of an established ministry so very great? Let us, then, most heartily pray the great Lord of the harvest that He will still continue to send forth able labourers into His harvest. Let us also consider how many miserable souls are deprived of those benefits which we possess. And let this consideration cause in us gratitude and thanksgiving for the happy enjoyment of such inestimable blessings. Can they not preach except they be sent? Can they not officiate except their calling be from above? Then it extremely stands them upon to make good their mission. And the surest way of proving that to be undeniably true is by accommodating their doctrine to the Word of God and squaring their lives according to their doctrine. But farther—Is their commission so full and their authority so large? This, then, should oblige us to put some distinction between those who come so duly authorised and others who intrude into the same employment. (*N. Brady.*) *Hearing versus reading*:—You take up a book and read a poem. Slowly, carefully you distil the meaning, admire it, appropriate it. Very likely you imagine that you have obtained the author's full significance, and extracted therefrom all the enjoyment and profit possible. But let some friend recite it, enunciating clearly, articulating sympathetically, giving to each line its appropriate expression, and the probability is that you will see and feel more than you did previously. An experienced and able missionary has remarked, "I have never seen a Chinaman weep over a book; but I have seen a Chinaman weep under a sermon. I have myself many times made a Chinaman weep by the proclamation of the gospel." We have the sermons of George Whitfield and the orations of Edward Irving, and what is the first experience of those who peruse them? In the majority of cases it is disappointment. "Can this be the renowned man who moved so mightily the spirits of his contemporaries?" Such is our astonished question. Yes, it is the renowned man; but cannot you see how it is that you are not affected by his discourses as others were? It is because they *heard*, whereas you only read. Wisely, then, is it ordained that the gospel shall be preached. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *Preaching: its necessity*:—1. Preaching is God's ordained method of communicating Divine knowledge. 2. Without Divine knowledge men cannot believe. 3. Without faith men cannot call upon God. 4. Without calling upon God they cannot be saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Missionary obligation*:—The gospel should be preached to every creature—it being a universal message from heaven to earth. A commission thus universal should have had at our hands a universal fulfilment; but we have only to open our eyes and see how palpably short it has come of this. And yet we affect to wonder that the blessings of Christianity are limited to so small a portion of the human family. But surely it is not time to charge the Almighty, or to arraign the methods of His administration—till we have inquired in how far this precept has been carried into operation; and then what the instances are in which, when the precept was fully acted up to, this promise has ever been withheld. Verses 14, 15 give the first and readiest answer to the question—How is it that the whole earth is not Christianised? God could, by an act of sovereignty, achieve this result at the instant bidding of His voice—even as He said Let there be light, and there was light. But God hath, in the exercise of a wisdom, in perfect analogy with the many processes of nature and providence, chosen to ordain an instrumentality for the diffusion of the Christian religion over the world. Now it so happens that men are the chief parts of this instrumentality; and we should first inquire how they have done their part—so as to ascertain whether it be not we the men who are in fault, before daring to lay the fault upon God. It is a sound doctrinal theology which acknowledges, amid the

countless diversity of operations around us, that it is God who worketh all in all. But God worketh by means; and when a certain prescribed human agency enters into that system of means which He hath instituted, it is a sound practical theology to labour as assiduously in the bidden way as if man worked all. God could have worked a saving faith in the heart of Cornelius by an immediate suggestion from His own Spirit, or through the mouth of an angel. And He did send an angel to Cornelius, not however that he might preach the gospel to him, but that he might bid him send for Peter, and receive that gospel at the lips of a fellow-mortal. And God also sent to Peter a communication from heaven to prepare him for the message —thus doubling as it were the amount of miraculous agency, in order that the gospel might be heard by a yet unconverted child of Adam, not through the medium of a supernatural and angelic, but through the medium of a natural and a human utterance. Yet not so as that the natural should supersede or displace the supernatural—for while Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard. The function of Peter was the same with that of a minister or missionary in the present day—it was to tell Cornelius the words by which he and all his house should be saved. And the function of the Holy Ghost for the purpose of giving demonstration and efficiency to the word, is the same now as ever—He falls on us still even as He did on them at the beginning. Let no man put asunder the things which God hath joined. The application of all this to the question of missions, whether home or foreign, is quite obvious. Let these be multiplied to the uttermost, yet all will be useless and effete, if unblest or unaccompanied by the Spirit of God. Some there are, men of devotion, who have a contempt for machinery, and who think to succeed by prayer alone for the extension of our Redeemer's kingdom. Others there are, men of bustle and enterprise, who think to succeed by the busy prosecution of schemes and societies. Both must be conjoined, and it is to this prolific union of devout and desirous hearts with busy hands, that the Church of Christ stands indebted for all its prosperity. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **And how shall they preach except they be sent?**—*The necessity of a proper commission for a minister:*— It is not a man's skill in state affairs that makes him an ambassador, nor ability in the law that makes him a magistrate, but the call to these places: neither do gifts make a man a minister, but his mission. (*W. Gurnall.*) **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!**—This is a picture on the canvas of the imagination. In a time of intense anxiety and imminent peril, many are the earnest and wistful looks that are directed to the mountain pass in the distance. At length when hope deferred was turning into despair, the messenger is descried. He is striding in haste, waving a token of the glad tidings he is commissioned to communicate. The feet, which bear him rapidly along, are beautiful to behold—beautiful to the eyes of the hopeful. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The preacher's feet beautiful:*—Three things make them so: 1. The preciousness of his message. 2. The ardour of his zeal and love. 3. The holy consistency of his life. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The messenger of mercy:*—I. HIS COMMISSION. 1. From God. 2. From the Church. II. HIS MESSAGE. 1. Glad tidings. 2. Of peace. 3. Of good things. III. HIS WELCOME. 1. By the perishing world. 2. By the penitent sinner. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian missionary:*—I. HOW NECESSARY HIS MISSION! II. HOW WELCOME HIS COMING! III. HOW GLORIOUS HIS MESSAGE! IV. HOW BEAUTIFUL HIS TRACK! (*Ibid.*) *The gospel of peace:*—I. THE GENERAL IMPORT OF THE GOSPEL. Good news, or glad tidings. A message which bears this designation—1. Must relate to something that is really and substantially good. Bad news may find the ear open, but the heart will be shut. Now the gospel unfolds what is truly good for our immortal souls. Its promises and provisions are inestimably precious. It lays pipes close to the fountain of goodness, and through them pours a profusion of blessings. 2. Must relate to a good that immediately concerns us. To tell a man in penury, of abundance; or a man in sickness, of healing; or a man in danger, of deliverance, which is placed utterly beyond his reach, is but to aggravate his distress. But the religion of Jesus supplies healing and help and adequate relief. 3. Must be true and certain. What avail great and good things, held out to us in a precarious manner? The good news, which we publish, is well authenticated. Omnipotence has confirmed and ratified it. II. SOME REASONS WHY THE SACRED WORD IS EMPHATICALLY CALLED THE GOSPEL OF PEACE. Peace is a blessing of the highest value. In our text it is used in its most comprehensive acceptation, as denoting—1. Peace with God, or reconciliation (Col. i. 19-21). The terms of this reconciliation are set forth in chap. v. 1-3. 2. Peace with ourselves, or peace of conscience. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." They try a

variety of expedients, which all utterly fail of success. It is necessary that the gospel be actually received, to tranquillise the heart (Heb. x. 19). 3. Peace with our brethren, or the peace of amity. Christianity is a religion of peace. It allays the fury of those passions which are the springs of strife and bitterness. Its doctrines and principles of Christianity breathe a spirit of universal benevolence. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The gospel of peace*:—1. The effect of the preaching of the gospel is joy in them which hear it. So at Antioch there was great joy; so in Galatia, and elsewhere. 2. This effect is set forth under a comparison of the less; for Isaiah (lii. 7) speaks of the royal receiving of the messengers of Israel's deliverance from the captivity of Babylon. If, then, the tidings of such temporal deliverance was so welcome, much more must be welcome the glad tidings of the gospel: and as those messengers were from God, so much more these. In these words are two things. I. A COMMENDATION OF THE GOSPEL. "How beautiful"—as if he were not able to express such beauty—"are the feet!" Some take feet for men; some for the affections, being that to the soul which feet are to the body: these affections appearing in the apostles, by their sweet delivery and utterance; some for the velocity of the apostles in converting the world; some their constancy and courage. Some take beauty for the holiness of the apostles; some for a fleshly beauty by ornaments, as slippers embroidered with gold and pearl; as this Scripture is abused to the consecrating of the Pope's toe. But the plain meaning is that the coming of the apostles with the glad tidings of salvation was acceptable: he saith feet because they are the instruments of going; as we familiarly say of poor men, they get their living by their fingers' ends, which are the instruments of their labour. Beautiful. The Hebrew word may signify to be desired and longed for, or beautiful and welcome. The beauty of a thing causeth it to be desired, as the beauty of Christ makes the Church sick of love. The Greek term comes of a root which signifies—1. Time. Generally time, or seasonable time: and so some read it, "How seasonable!" A word spoken in season is beautiful. Everything is beautiful in his season. Many of our daintiest meats are not, but the gospel is always in season; in the winter of adversity, in the summer of prosperity, in the spring of youth, and autumn of age. 2. The spring: and therefore some have compared the coming of the preachers of the gospel to the spring. For as the fields in the spring begin to be adorned with flowers, in which all creatures rejoice, so the preaching of the gospel turns our winter-like barrenness into fruitfulness, making us to flourish with heavenly graces and virtues. 3. Ripeness, and so some have likened the coming of the apostles to ripe fruit. Unripe fruit is dangerous, and not so well coloured, but that which is ripe is both well tasted and well coloured. No dainty-coloured fruit so beautiful and wholesome as the gospel. 4. Comeliness; that which we call the pride and flowers of life; also youth, wherein is that mixture of white and red which is called beauty. As Christ is said to be fairer, so also is the gospel. II. A REASON. Because it is the gospel of peace and glad tidings of good things. This redundance serves to make us the more to esteem of it. It is the Ghost's spell, a comforting and soul-saving word. 1. Peace. We are by corruption of nature enemies to God; the gospel reveals a threefold peace—with God, with ourselves, with men; according to the song of the angels at the birth of Christ. 2. Good things. Yea, the best in the superlative degree, celestial good things: a freedom from all evil of sin, of punishment. Conclusion: Nothing should be so welcome as the preaching and preachers of the gospel. That Christ came to save sinners is a faithful saying, and worthy of the best welcome (1 Tim. i. 15). It is called the word of life, of salvation, the gospel of the kingdom. Even the key of heaven; for life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel (2 Tim. i. 12). 1. The essential duty of a minister is to preach the gospel. The law is to be preached also, both as an introduction to the gospel, and for a direction how to lead our lives when we have received the gospel, because sin breaks God's peace; but chiefly we are sent to preach the gospel. 2. Not riches, nor dignities, but to preach the gospel is the chief honour and beauty of a minister, who, though highly advanced, if he preach not the gospel, shall be despised. 3. Some love their ministers because they keep hospitality, which is commendable; some because they gain by them, which is carnal; some because they never preach, which is abominable; some because themselves would be well accounted of, which is hypocritical. But to love them for their work's sake is conscionable, and according to the commandment (1 Thess. v. 13). It is an argument of great corruption to esteem meanly a preacher; when he that brings tidings of a good bargain, or is an instrument of our pleasures,

shall be highly welcomed and rewarded. 4. If the minister have weak gifts, yet if he preach the gospel thou must account his feet beautiful. It is not the gifts of men, but the Word of God which works the feat in our conversion. 5. If it be the gospel of peace, the professors are to be peaceable. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The music of the gospel*:—What music is there ever heard in this world to be compared with the music of the gospel? It goes to the heart of universal humanity. It is richer in its tones than all the voices of men. It is more thrilling far than all the symphonies of Handel and Mozart, of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Rossini, and of all the mighty masters of song. It is softer than the murmur of the evening breeze; more soothing than the sound of the distant waterfall. It is sweeter than the warblings of summer birds; more harmonious than the chorus of the forest's rustling leaves. It is grander than the hallelujahs of the waves of the ocean; more overpowering than the organ roll of the reverberating thunder. Aye, and more melting and delicious than the harping of those heavenly intelligences whom God designates as the "morning stars." The gospel steals over the bosom of the desolate and inexpressibly sad. It drops its assuaging balm on the ear of the broken and the weary, the forsaken, the bereaved, the solitary. It charms away the despondency of the labouring and the heavy-laden. Its minstrelsy penetrates within the prison bars of the captive, and floats to the ear of tyranny's fettered victim in the subterranean dungeon. Its solace cheers those who sit in ashes, who are clad in the vestments of mourning, and are swooning under the spirit of heaviness. It comes with resistless force to the bankrupt, the ruined and undone, to the guilty, the betrayed, the despairing, the polluted, and the lost. When all other voices are still, with gentler than a mother's accents, it breathes out hope and retrieval for the fallen and the outcast. No fabled Orpheus ever so affected rocks, trees, and wild beasts, by harp and song, as Christ by the music of the gospel has drawn after Him, in blissful captivity, the dullest, rudest, and most savage of mankind, constraining them to leave their carnal instincts, their habits of depravity, their ways of sin, so that, forsaking all besides, o'er all the world they follow Him. (*J. Somerville.*) *The gospel of peace*:—It is a great mercy to enjoy the "gospel of peace," but a still greater to enjoy the peace of the gospel. (*J. Dyer.*) *The gospel indifferent to the means of its conveyance*:—The meanness of the earthen vessel, which conveys to others the gospel treasure, takes nothing from the value of the treasure. A dying hand may sign a deed of gift of incalculable value. A shepherd's boy may point out the way to a philosopher. A beggar may be the bearer of an invaluable present. (*W. Cecil, M.A.*)

Ver. 16. **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?**—*Obedience to the gospel*:—1. Paul prevents an objection to that which was said concerning the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, that it was of God. As if some Jew should say, No, Paul, God never sent you to preach to them, for if He had He would have sent you first to us, and have blessed your labours; but the greater part obey you not, either of Jews or Gentiles. This Paul answers by a concession, with a correction annexed, as if he should say, Indeed all do not obey the gospel, yet you Jews are not to be offended, because, as our sending was foretold, so your and their incredulity; and the small fruit and effect was foretold also. 2. All have not obeyed, *i.e.*, believed. So called because obedience is an inseparable effect of faith. So we say of the trees in our orchards, this is a pear, that a plum, when they are the trees that bear such fruit; so faith is the tree that bears the fruit of obedience. The obedience of faith is twofold. First, of reason, when it gives place and way to the gospel, though it conceive it not. For the gospel goes beyond reason, as in the point of the Trinity, incarnation of Christ, justification of a sinner before God, resurrection, &c. Abraham believed (2 Cor. x. 5) above or against reason, and the gospel is said to bring into subjection our reason. That of works is when we observe the law, for faith worketh by love (Gal. v. 6), and is to be shown by our works. 3. When the gospel is preached all are not converted by it and believe it (John iii. 32, xii. 37; Matt. xx. 16; 2 Thess. iii. 2). I. FAITH IS CALLED OBEDIENCE. Obey thou in life, and make thy reason obey. No man standing on his own reason ever believed; an unsanctified wit is a great hindrance of faith. The greatest philosophers (Acts xvii. 18) most resisted Paul, as our greatest politicians most scoff at preaching of the Word. II. ALL ARE BOUND TO HEAR, AND NOTHING SO WORTHY TO BE HEARD AS THE GOSPEL. Let us say of hearing, as Paul speaks of knowing it, viz., that he esteemed to know nothing besides (1 Cor. ii. 2). The nurse's song doth not so quiet the babe as the preaching

of the gospel the conscience. It is the hand of God offering us forgiveness of sins. He, therefore, who hath ears to hear, let him hear. If thou wilt not now hear that which may profit thee, thou shalt hear one day that which will make thy heart to ache, even this, "Go, you cursed," &c. III. MINISTERS MUST BE AFFECTED AND GRIEVE WHEN THEY SEE THE COMPANY OF REVERENT HEARERS SO THIN, AND THEIR LABOURS SO FRUITLESS. The prophet here complains of this; so Christ groans for the hardness of the people's hearts, and weeps over the stubbornness of Jerusalem. The shrewdest turn to be done to a minister is to deprive him of the joy of his labours, and the way to rejoice them is to embrace the gospel they preach. IV. ISAIAH AND PAUL GAVE NOT OVER, THOUGH THEY HAD CAUSE TO COMPLAIN. As the physician omits no point of his art, though the recovery of his patient be desperate, so, though we preach to many desperate and scoffing hearers, we must not give over, but rather use the more diligence. V. ALTHOUGH FAITH CANNOT BE WITHOUT PREACHING GOING BEFORE IT, YET PREACHING MAY BE WITHOUT FAITH FOLLOWING IT. As that which is to be known may be without the knowledge of it. There are two things required to faith: the determinatiou of that which is to be believed, and the inclination and persuasion of the heart to believe. Preaching determines, but it is God who persuades by preaching. God can do it without preaching, but preaching cannot do it without God. Our voice can say repent, but it is God only that gives repentance. Paul preacheth to Lydia's care, but God hath the key of her heart. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Disobedience to the gospel:*—1. Man is the same disobedient creature under all dispensations. We bemoan his rejection of the gospel, and so did Isaiah, who spoke in the name of the whole company of the prophets. 2. It is one of the greatest proofs of the depravity of man's heart that he will no more obey the gospel than the law, but disobeys his God, whether He speaks to him in love or in law. Men will sooner be lost than trust their God. 3. When any receive the gospel it is a work of grace—"the arm of the Lord is revealed"; but when they refuse it it is their own sin—"they have not obeyed the gospel." I. THE GOSPEL COMES TO MEN WITH THE FORCE OF A COMMAND. It is not optional to men to accept or refuse it at pleasure (Acts xvii. 30; Mark i. 5). To refuse to believe is to incur great sin (John xvi. 8). There is a death penalty attached to disobedience (Mark xvi. 16). It is so put—1. To secure the honour of God. It is not the offer of an equal to an equal, but of the great God to a condemned sinner. 2. To embolden the proclaimer of it. The minister now speaks boldly with his Master's authority. 3. To remind him of his obligations. Repentance and faith are natural duties from which the gospel does not exonerate a man, although it blesses him by bestowing them upon him. 4. To encourage the humble seeker. He must be at full liberty to believe in Jesus, since he is commanded to do so, and threatened if he does not do so. 5. To suggest to men the urgent duty of seeing to their soul's welfare. Suicide, whether of the body or of the soul, is always a great crime. To neglect the great salvation is a grave offence. The gospel is set forth as a feast, to which men are bound to come, under penalty of the King's displeasure (Matt. xxii. 1–7). The prodigal was right in returning to his father; and if he was right in doing so, so would each one of us be in doing the same. II. WHAT, THEN, ARE THE CLAIMS OF THE GOSPEL TO OBEDIENCE? 1. The authority of the sender. Whatever God commands, man is under bonds to do. 2. The motive of the sender. Love shines in the gospel command, and no man should slight infinite love. To refuse to obey the gospel of salvation is an insult to Divine love. 3. The great gift of the sender: He has given us His only begotten Son. To refuse Jesus is a high affront to measureless love. 4. The reasonableness of the demand of the sender. Should not men believe their God and trust their Saviour? 5. The earnestness of the sender. His whole heart is in the gospel. Note the high position which the scheme of salvation occupies in the esteem of God. Shall we not obey an appeal put before us with such energy of compassion? Ask your own consciences whether you do right to refuse or neglect the gospel of the grace of God. Ask those who are now saved what they think of their long unbelief. Do not incur a world of regrets in after years by long delays. Do not jeopardise your souls by refusing the gospel. III. WHAT IS THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED BY THE GOSPEL? Not mere hearing, crediting, liking, professing, or proclaiming; but a hearty obedience to its commands. It claims—1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Renunciation of self-righteousness and confession of guilt. 3. Repentance and practical quittance of sin. 4. Discipleship under the Lord Jesus; and this means obedience both to His teaching and His example. 5. Public confession of His name, in His own way, namely, by baptism. Conclusion: If you refuse to obey the gospel your

hearts will harden to a deeper unbelief. Others will obtain the blessing which you refuse; and this will deepen your own condemnation (chap. x. 19). You will die in your sins, with your blood on your own heads. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *An incredible rumour*:—About 700 B.C. there was a great revival in Israel. The songs of pure worship were heard again in the temple, and the people bowed at the altars of Jehovah. This return to truth and righteousness was, however, merely temporary. It was as the flashing of Northern Lights: the returning darkness was deeper than ever. King and people went back to their abominations, and the prophet disappeared in the gloom of the gathering night, uttering this sad lament, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Seven hundred years went by, and around the spur of Mount Olivet passed a procession on its way to the Holy City. "Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!" cried those that went before and those that followed after. Jesus entered the temple, and from the porch where Isaiah had vainly besought the people to repent and believe He preached the glorious gospel. But in Him there was no form nor comeliness that men should desire Him. The heart of the people was in no wise changed, as Esaias had written, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is God's arm revealed?" When all was over and the glorious work had been verified by the Saviour's triumph over death, Paul, writing to the people of Rome, bids them believe that their salvation is near; he would have them rejoice in the good news of deliverance from sin. Yet still the message was rejected, and the apostle finds utterance for his disappointment in the prophet's words, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" And here am I, eighteen hundred years after, preaching the same gospel. Has human nature changed in the meantime? There are multitudes who still reject the offer of redemption in Jesus Christ. What is this report which the people so persistently reject? It is the story of God's intervention in behalf of our ruined race. The greatest blunder that a human soul can ever make is to refuse the proffer of salvation in Jesus Christ. And pride is at the bottom of it. I. PRIDE OF INTELLECT. We all know something, and none knows over-much. "A little learning is a dangerous thing." The temptation is to reject everything which does not fall within the grasp of reason. Observe some of the fundamental facts of the gospel over which we stumble because they baffle us. 1. The manger. Not for a moment must it be supposed that a finite mind can comprehend the mystery of the Incarnation. That, however, is absolutely no reason at all why we should reject it. 2. The Cross. How can the innocent suffer for the guilty? How can the Infinite God bear the sins of His creatures? How can justice be satisfied by vicarious pain? But the mystery of God's vicarious death in our behalf is really no more incredible than the lower but like mystery of a mother's love. And a mother's love is the commonest thing in the world. 3. The open sepulchre. He that was dead is alive again. This also is repugnant to our reason. And yet life out of death, the mystery of mysteries, is all around us and ever forcing itself upon us. II. MORAL PRIDE. The worst of us thinks moderately well of himself. 1. The suggestion of sin is abhorrent to us. It disturbs our equanimity; it troubles our sleep. Christ tears away the turf from our assumption of virtue and exposes a graveful of "dead men's bones and uncleanness." Little wonder that a sinner will have none of it. 2. We do not like the notion of repentance. We all would kill John the Baptist could we catch him. 3. The doctrine of free grace is repugnant to us. We would cheerfully pay; but Crœsus himself could not, with all his generous possessions, buy one of the clusters from the king's vineyard. We would be glad to suffer if suffering could expiate the mislived past; but we cannot. Christ has suffered once for all. What then remains? How shall a sinner be saved? By simply accepting the proffer of pardon and life. He that believeth shall be saved. Is this all? Ay; and it is the slightness of it that offends us. We must become nothing in the presence of Christ, to the end that Christ may become everything to us. There are two concluding thoughts. (1) The report that God has loved us and given Himself for us is true. This is the news, the gōd-spel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God. (2) And if it were not true, still let us cherish it. If it be only a fond delusion, let us in any case continue in it. If but a dream, let no rude hand or unkind voice awake us. If there is no God, no Almighty Friend to care for this world and its suffering creatures, still let us dream of a kind Providence and murmur in our sleep, "Abba Father." But the gospel is true. We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen. God's arm hath been made bare for us. (*D. J. Burrell, D.D.*) *The gospel report*:—I. THE GOSPEL IS A REPORT. 1. It is not a new report. It is that which was first heard by

our first parents, "Thou shalt bruise his head." It is the same which was received by the patriarchs and prophets, of whom it is said, "These all died in faith." It is the same which began to be made by Christ, when in the fulness of time He brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. Novelty is sometimes pleaded against the preachers of the gospel. There is, indeed, a sense in which it is new; its excellence can be known only by experience. 2. But, if it be not new, it is full of truth. Your attention might perhaps be excited by a report that is not true, as some of you may have been excited by the mimicry of the stage, or as others may have poured tears of sensibility over a romance. But all is truth, all is reality here. 3. But supposing it to be true, is it interesting? Is this report an important one? Yes, it is as good as it is true, as true as it is good. There is something striking in the scheme of the gospel. Infinite wisdom is displayed in it, infinite grace is manifested in it; it is infinitely glorious in its effects. Drop it in a town, in a village, in a family, its influence will be soon felt. It does more than all the wisdom of the senate—than all the maxims of philosophers—than all the power of armies. II. THIS REPORT IS CONNECTED WITH FAITH. Else it is made in vain. The complaint is, "Who hath believed our report?" I do not mean a family faith, for the exercise of which a man can assign no other reason than that his father believed so before him. Nor do I mean a geographical faith, by which a man makes a profession of Christianity merely because he lives in a Christian country. I speak of genuine faith. This is a Divine principle, and it produces Divine effects. It is of the operation of the Spirit, and it is always accompanied by proper fruits. Wherever the gospel report is carried, it carries the obligation to believe it, for there is—1. Sufficiency of object. Christ, who was "made sin for us, though He knew no sin," and who is as willing as He is able, and as able as He is willing, "to save to the uttermost." 2. A sufficiency of authority to warrant all that the sinner expects. The Saviour came to seek and to save sinners. And is not this your character? 3. A sufficiency of invitation. The language of this report is, "Come." The Old Testament says "Come"—"Come, and let us reason together," &c. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "Come"—"If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink"—"Come unto Me, all that labour," &c. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come," &c. (*W. Mann, A.M.*) *Man's treatment of the gospel*:—I. This quotation is regarded by Dean Vaughan as the citing of A PARALLEL CASE. "The gospel is sent to all; but" (it may be objected) "not all obey. It is true. That complaint is as old as Isaiah's time: who believed? This failure did not stop Isaiah's utterance, nor is the same experience any argument against the universal proclamation of God's message now." II. Dr. Hodge considers it as A PROOF. "The complaint of the prophet was not confined to the men of his generation. It had reference mainly to the general rejection of the gospel, especially by the theocratical people. 'Christ came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' And this was predicted of old." *Hearing and hearkening*:—I. YOU HAVE ALL HEARD. These are the days in which knowledge is increased in the earth, and many run to and fro. The Maories of New Zealand have heard of a Saviour's love, and many of them have rejoiced in it believingly. Throughout the world the gospel is winning its widening way, and on the wings of mighty love it flies, scattering its treasures in its flight. But, apart altogether from the condition of the heathen world, the fact remains that all of you have heard the gospel. I talk to one who, though he sits in darkness still, cannot plead that no day-star has arisen. You remember, doubtless, the touching story of the dying gipsy boy who, being visited by a lady who told him of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, poured this doleful lament into the missionary's ears, "Nobody ever told me! Nobody ever told me!" He died, muttering words which to his mother were altogether unintelligible, but which the good lady understood; for, as his spirit passed away, he shook his head and wept bitter tears, saying, "Nobody ever told me!" My friends, you cannot make that excuse before the throne of God, for you have all heard the gospel. II. Let me try to show you THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEARING AND OBEYING. The fact that the apostle laments that they did not all obey, implies that some did. Wherever the gospel is preached some will receive the truth in the love of it. But, alas, I must confess that in New Zealand, as well as in Old England, there are many who, though they hear it, do not hearken to it. I will try to show you the difference. We have in the Colonies a custom in connection with the Fire Brigade which will illustrate my point. The city is divided into numbered wards, and when the alarm has been sounded, the bell tolls out the

number of the ward in which the conflagration has occurred. By this arrangement those who are from home, attending a service or visiting their friends, are informed of the locality of the fire. Suppose the system could be amplified, so that every street and house were indicated; what eager listening there would be! When the bell had finished clanging its alarm, would not every householder count the strokes? and he who heard the number of his house sounded out, would have wings to his heels immediately, and rush away to save his children and his goods from the fiery element. Now, it is when the gospel comes home to a man like that—when he hears his number rung out, and feels that his soul is in danger of eternal burning—when the finger of God points at him as Nathan's did at David, and a stern voice declares "Thou art the man"—then it is that he has given up hearing for hearkening, and hearkening becomes equivalent to obeying. Then he hastens to the Saviour, saying, "I flee unto Thee to hide me." Perhaps another illustration will make this clearer still. There is a large crowd in the street, and I hear the bellman's ringing, and his stentorian voice crying out, "Oh yes! oh yes! oh yes!" He proceeds to announce that as the inhabitants of the town are perishing for lack of bread, and shivering for want of clothing, certain friends have opened a soup kitchen yonder, and others in another place are giving blankets and clothes away. The starving, shivering people listen with all-eager interest. Oh, what glad tidings it is to them—bread enough and to spare! "Oh," they say, "this is just the thing for us." No, they do not stop to say that. Away they go, without comment, to receive the bounty. They listen first, and then they hearken. They no sooner hear than they obey. But, while the crowd was listening to the bellman, a fine lady in a grand carriage said to the coachman, "John, what is the matter there? Just pull up a minute. I would like to see what is wrong." Thereupon the splendid equipage neared the crowd, but did not remain, for her ladyship was disgusted as soon as she saw so many poor, hungry, ill-clothed folk, and said, peevishly, "Drive on, John; drive home." She did not want any soup and blankets—not she. She could readily have spared half of hers for the poor and needy, so of course she does not obey the bellman. I am persuaded that the great reason why there are so few hearkeners among so many hearers of the glad tidings is that they do not realise their necessities. III. Now, lastly, LET ME URGE YOU TO OBEY. You have heard the tidings. You cannot doubt that it is glad tidings. Procrastinate no longer. Accept the joyful tidings and the Saviour of whom the tidings speak. Why do so many remain disobedient to this heavenly vision? Either they do not realise their need, or else they do not recognise the richness of the supply. It must be one or the other. Stretch yourselves in imagination on a couch. You are lying half asleep in a room on the wall of which is a simple picture. At a cottage door a poor wayfarer sits upon a fallen log. He looks hungry and tired; and just in the porchway there stands a kind-looking country woman with a baby in her arms, and a little child beside her with a basin of porridge or of soup in its hands. The little one is being taught by its mother to be good and kind to the poor. How is it that want and weariness do not eagerly accept kindness and refreshment? The answer is found in the fact that it is not real life at all; it is only a picture. The man has no real needs, he is not actually hungry, nor is it a basin of porridge at all, and the smile on the woman's face is only pictured. There is nothing real in all of it, or the dinner would soon be demolished, the famished fed, and the giver gratified. There are some who do not accept the offered mercy because its glorious reality has never dawned upon them; nor are they aware of the reality of their need, though they may have a dreamy sense of the fact that something is wanting. (*Thos. Spurgeon.*) *Man's treatment of the gospel, indifference:*—How many hear the gospel with unconcern! A telegram on the Exchange—they read it with both their eyes—will there be a rise or fall of stocks? An article from which they may judge of the general current of trade—how they devour it with their minds, they suck in the meaning, and then go and practise what they have gathered from it. A sermon heard, and lo, the minister is judged as to how he preached it—as if a man reading a telegram should say the capital letter was not well inked on the press, or the dot to the "i" had dropped off the letter; or as if a man reading an article of business should simply criticise the style of the article instead of seeking to get at its meaning, and act upon its advice. Oh, how men will hear and think it to be right, to be the height of perfection to say they liked or disapproved of the sermon! As if the God-sent preacher cared one doit whether you did or did not like his sermon, his business being not to please your tastes, but to save your souls; not to win your approbation, but to win your hearts for Jesus,

and bring you to be reconciled to God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Indifference: the cause of discouragement*:—"Why do I sit as if I were asleep when I play?" said Rubinstein, in reply to a question. "I will gladly tell you how that is. Some five years ago I gave a concert in London. My audience seemed very interested, and I myself was well disposed. As I was playing Beethoven's 'Appassionata,' without thinking I looked around, and there, at the other end of the piano, I saw a lady gossiping as fast as possible! It was like a douche of ice-water. I closed my eyes at once, and since then I have never dared to even cast a glance at an audience." *Indifference no reason for despair*:—A minister with a large congregation came home one day in great trouble and told his wife that he was almost out of heart, and felt very much like resigning his place and giving up his work. "And what makes you feel that way?" responded his wife. "Well," said the minister, "everything seems to be going wrong. It is so difficult to keep people interested in religion, and so many seem to be almost wholly indifferent." "So you would like to have everybody and everything just right, would you?" said his wife. "That is it." "Very well," continued the wife, "then you could resign; then your work would not be needed. But as things are you should hold firmly your place, for the reason you have given is just why you should work on." *Indifference: its prevalence*:—Is earnest faith declining? The tendency seems to be decidedly in this direction. Even in secular affairs, *The Times* tells us, "Nothing is more remarkable than the complete extinction of that keen interest, that intense faith, and that eager hope, which manifestly inspired the politicians of half a century ago, and made their influence felt among all classes of the community." In religious circles it is common to hear comments on the indifference of a large number of persons who go to church, the absence from their minds of anything like powerful convictions, and the easy nonchalance with which they pass by great and solemn inquiries, the importance of which used to be felt by nearly all. Ministers of the gospel, therefore, who have the responsibility of guiding the Church, have need to remember that if they would see an earnest faith on the part of their people, nothing is more necessary than that their own hearts be pervaded by it, and if they would see that faith controlling other men's lives it must very really control their own. (*A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.*) *Indifference: the prevalent*:—The grossest form of indifference is cynicism. When one hears certain men talk of Christ and His religion with a half-patronising tone, or reads their writings in which His character and works are subjected to a criticism that is simply insolent, one is appalled by such flagrant indecency. This is an indifference that is not common, however, but yet its infection may quickly spread if ever the poison of a profane irreverence has prepared any section of society for its reception. The indifference that is fashionable is formalist. There are thousands to whom religion is merely the adaptation of a certain conventional habit of respectable observance. They are Christians because they live in Christendom; Protestants because they live in England; Church people because their parents were so. In church there is an indifference about the service, the prayers, the sermon. It is a ceremony performed, not for God's glory, but for custom's sake, as "the right thing to do," not because it is a privilege and a joy. And from one Sunday to the next, unless there is a custom of family prayers, the question of religion simply never once strikes them as forming any part of every-day life. The service, the preacher, the doctrine, the style, may be occasionally discussed in intervals between other topics of the day—politics, amusements, the weather—but that is all. About the things of Christ and of God there is the most supreme indifference. Across the smooth surface of that mental and spiritual unconcern not a ripple is ever stirred by any breath of life from above, or any blast of terror from beneath. (*R. F. L. Blunt.*)

Ver. 17. **So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.**—*How can I obtain faith?*—If I am thirsty, how shall I quench my thirst? By a draught of water. But in what way can I obtain water? It is enough to tell me to go to the tap or the fountain. There is no need to explain that the water is supplied by a reservoir, having been first drawn from the river, which received it from the clouds. To the thirsty all you want to say is, "There's the water, drink." A man is hungry, and he asks you, "How can I get bread?" "Go to the baker's," you say. If he wants to know how bread is obtained, we can give it to him at another time. And when you are dealing with an anxious person, it will suffice to say, "Faith cometh by hearing"; further information can be supplied under happier circumstances. I. THE WAY BY WHICH FAITH COMES TO

MEN. "By hearing." 1. Negatively. It does not come—(1) By hereditary descent. The heirs of salvation are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and nothing more. (2) By sacraments. Is not faith a concomitant of regeneration? and what is that regeneration worth which leaves a person an unbeliever? Faith cannot be sprinkled upon us, nor can we be immersed in it. It is not to be poured into us from a chalice, nor generated in us by consecrated bread. (3) By feeling. Till certain men have felt what they have heard described in religious biography they cannot believe. You may get the best feeling from faith, but you will be long before you will find any faith worth having from frames and feelings. (4) By dreams and visions. The notion is still current that if you dream of seeing Jesus, or if a passage of Scripture strikes you, or if you imagine that you hear a voice speaking to you, you are then a believer. Now, though you should see all the angels in heaven, it would not prove that you would go to heaven, any more than my having seen the Pope's bodyguard would be a proof that I shall be made a Cardinal. Moreover, men saw Christ, and yet blasphemed Him. (5) Through the eloquence, earnestness, or any other good quality of the preacher. If so, being born of the power of the flesh, it will die, and so prove itself unlike the faith which springs from the incorruptible word of God, for that liveth and abideth for ever. 2. Positively: "Faith cometh by hearing." Sometimes faith has come into men's minds by hearing—(1) The simple statement of the gospel. All some have wanted has been merely to be informed of the way of salvation. (2) Of the suitability of the gospel to the individual case. While some have heard it preached as a gospel for sinners, they have felt that they were certainly among that class. (3) Of the condescending pity and the melting love of Jesus. When such texts have been preached on—"This Man receiveth sinners," "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," &c., that strain has touched the heart, and led the most hardened to believe in a Saviour so kind to the undeserving. (4) Of its authority. There are persons who, when they have heard the gospel, have not at first believed it, but if the minister has been led to show that God has set His sanction upon it, they have yielded and given over all further question. (5) Of the veracity of the sacred writers. (6) The explanation of the gospel. When the preacher takes up one by one the soul difficulties which keep a man from looking to Christ, and when a man shows that all his help for salvation is laid upon one that is mighty, it has often happened that faith has come through the hearing of such an explanatory word. (7) The gospel preached with peculiar soul-revealing pointedness. Remember the Samaritan woman. (8) The experience of those who have tasted the word of life; when the preacher tells how he trusted in Jesus, and found peace; when he is able to point to others who have felt the same, then conviction and faith are wrought in the mind. To set the whole matter clearly: Suppose you are labouring under a very serious disease, and a physician professes to heal you, how would you get faith in him? By hearing. You hear him speak, and you perceive that he understands your case, for he describes exactly all your symptoms. He next describes to you as much of the method of cure as you can comprehend. Then you inquire as to the man's character; you find that he is a skilful practitioner. Moreover, suppose that he does everything gratis, moved only by a kind desire to remove pain and save life. But if, in addition, he shows you his case-book, and bids you read case after case similar to your own in which he has effected perfect cure, and if some of these are your own acquaintances, you will not insult him by saying, "I wish I could believe you." In the same way faith in Christ comes. II. THE OBSTRUCTIONS WHICH OFTEN BLOCK UP THIS WAY. 1. A want of intention. Many persons come to hear, but they have no wish to be led into faith. Like the butterflies which flit from flower to flower, they extract no honey because they come not for such a purpose; while the bees dive into the cups and bells of the flowers, and come up loaded with their luscious food. 2. A want of attention. Sleepy hearers are not likely to be led to faith. Wandering hearts lose the benefit of the truth, and vain minds trifle away the privilege of a gospel ministry. 3. A want of candour. If a man hears with a prejudiced heart he is not likely to be convinced. 4. The want of after meditation. The juryman who is most likely to get at the truth of a given case will be the man who, having heard attentively, takes the notes of the evidence, weighs it, and endeavours to sift out the truth. So when you hear us preach, sift the sermon afterwards, pick holes in it if you like, but do search into the truth, and be not content till you find it. Here is a bag, and I drop into it pound after pound, but I find that the bag is just as empty as before; the reason is, there are

holes in it, and the money drops through. Too many hearers are as a bag full of holes, and golden sermons will not bless them because they wilfully forget all. III. THE IMPORTANCE THAT FAITH SHOULD COME TO US BY THIS WAY. If you have been a hearer and faith has not come to you, you are, this moment, in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. The wrath of God abideth on you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The faith hearing the word of God*:—I. WHAT IS FAITH? 1. An historical (James ii 19). 2. A dogmatical (Acts viii. 13, 33; Luke iv. 41). 3. A temporary (Luke viii. 13; John v. 35). 4. A faith of miracles (Luke xvii. 6; 1 Cor. xiii. 2). 5. A saving faith (chap. x. 10; Acts xvi. 31; 1 Pet. ii. 6). II. WHAT IS THE WORD BY THE HEARING WHEREOF FAITH COMES? 1. Not the word of men. 2. Not of angels (Gal. i. 8). 3. But of God. III. WHAT IS MEANT BY HEARING THIS WORD? Hearing it—1. Read. 2. Expounded. 3. Preached. IV. HOW IS FAITH WROUGHT BY THE WORD? Not as by the principal, but only instrumental cause. Thus—1. The minister commissioned by God speaks it to the ear, sometimes of God's mercy, sometimes of man's duty (2 Tim. iv. 2). 2. The ears of the hearer take in what the preacher speaks, and convey it to the understanding. But that cannot receive it (1 Cor. ii. 14), therefore—3. The Spirit goes along with the word, and enables the understanding to receive it. 4. The Spirit having done so inclines the heart to embrace it (Phil. ii. 13; Rom. vii. 15; Heb. iv. 12). V. USE OF REPREHENSION. 1. To those who think themselves above ordinances. 2. To those who will not come up to them. This doctrine meets, as the angel did Balaam, with a drawn sword—(1) Such as will not so much as come to hear. (2) Such as will come, but not to hear, but out of custom, or to stop the mouth of a brawling conscience. (3) Such as will come to hear, but will not hear when they are come (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). They come and bring their ears too, but they are either stopped (Psa. lviii. 4, 5), dull (Matt. xiii. 15), or itching (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4). (4) Such as will hear when they come, but do not mind or understand what they hear (Ezek. xxxiii. 32; Acts ix. 7; *cf.* xxii. 9). (5) Such as mind what they hear, but will not believe what they mind. (6) Such as do believe what they mind, but will not resolve to practise what they believe (Ezek. xxxiii.). (7) Such as will resolve to practise what they believe, but will never practise what they resolve (James i. 23, 24). VI. MOTIVES. Consider—1. Whose word it is. 2. What a word it is (Psa. xix. 7; Rom. i. 16; James i. 21). 3. What thou mayest get by coming to it; what thou mayest lose by staying from it. 4. The time will come when thou wilt curse thyself for every opportunity lost, or bless God for every one embraced (Matt. xxiii. 39). VII. DIRECTIONS. 1. Before hearing—(1) Consider what thou art going about and whom thou art going before. (2) Set aside all worldly thoughts, as Abraham his servants, and Nehemiah (xiii. 19, 20), especially sins (James i. 21). (3) If thou wouldst have God pour forth His blessings upon thee in preaching, do thou pour out thy spirit before Him in prayer (Psa. x. 17; lxv. 2). (*a*) For the minister (Rom. xv. 20). (*b*) For yourselves, that God would assist the word (Isa. viii. 11). (4) Come—(*a*) with an appetite (Matt. v. 6; Job xxix. 23). (*b*) With large expectations. (*c*) With strong resolutions to practise. 2. In hearing. Hear—(1) Reverently. (2) Diligently, with hearts as well as ears. (3) Meekly (James i. 21). (4) With faith (Heb. iv. 2). (5) With self-application (Job. v. 27). 3. After hearing—(1) Meditate (1 Tim. iv. 15). (2) Confer with others. (3) Square thyself according to it, that thy life may be a comment on the sermon (James i. 22; Matt. vii. 24, 25). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The two great instruments appointed for the propagation of the gospel; and the duty of the Christian public to keep them both in vigorous operation*:—I. THE GENERAL LESSON OF THE TEXT. 1. As all is suspended upon God, and as He reigns with as supreme a dominion in the heart of man as in the world around us, all relating to the salvation of the soul is His work. But on the other hand, it is evident that though it be God alone that worketh, yet He worketh by instruments. None were more impressed than Paul with the pious sentiment that all depends upon God; yet he says "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If, in that extraordinary age, when the Author of nature broke in upon the constancy of its operations by miracles, one of His own inspired messengers does not overlook the use of instruments, it would ill become us to overlook them. 2. Now observe that the operation of the two instruments laid before us in the text is somewhat different at present from what it was in the days of the apostles. Those were the days of inspiration; and faith came by the hearing of inspired teachers; and hearing came by the Word of God—for the apostles spake only as God put the word into their mouth.

But whatever is capable of being spoken is capable of being written also; and it was not long before the Christian teachers committed to writing the doctrine of salvation; and if you read what they wrote with the impression that it is the genuine production of inspired men, you are in circumstances likely for receiving faith. Now, however, there is a change in one of the instruments. Instead of the messenger delivering the message in person, you have the substance of it in a written communication. And now faith comes by reading, and reading by the Word of God. 3. We are not to suppose, however, that reading is substituted for hearing. True you can no longer hear the immediate messengers of heaven; but you can hear the descendants of these messengers. And although you have the inspired documents, heaven still gives a saving influence to the living energy of a human voice. 4. In no age of the Church, indeed, does it appear that the one instrument ever superseded the other. Nehemiah not only "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, but gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." And this reading and expounding of the law from the days of Ezra formed a permanent institution among the Jews. We meet with traces of its existence in the New Testament (Acts xiii. 14, &c.; Luke iv. 16, &c.). And it has descended, without interruption, through all the ages of Christian worship. The apostles deemed it necessary to leave something more than the written volume of inspiration behind them. They left teachers and overseers; and to this very day, the readings, and the explanations, and the sermons of Christian pastors, are superadded to the silent reading of Christian people; and both are found to be instruments of mighty operation, for the edifying of the body of Christ. 5. Neither instrument is to be dispensed with. (1) If you have hearing without reading, you lay the Church open to all the corruptions of Popery. You have priests, but you have no Bibles. You take your lesson from the wisdom of man, and throw away from you all the light and benefit of revelation. Keep fast, then, by your Bible. Let not your faith come by hearing alone; but let your hearing be tried by the Word of God. Let it not be said that what you believe is what you have heard merely. (2) But if you have reading without hearing, you throw away the benefit of a public ministry—an institution sanctioned by the Bible. Though you have no knowledge to receive, you have memories to be refreshed; minds which, however pure, need to be stirred up by way of remembrance. II. ITS APPLICATION TO THE EVANGELISATION OF THE WORLD. The propagation of the gospel is a cause the maintenance of which consists of the providing of Bibles, and the providing of human agents. The latter, by teaching them to read, teaches unlettered people to use one of the instruments of the text; and to the latter belongs the exclusive office of bringing the other instrument to bear upon them—the instrument of hearing. The society whose office it is to provide the former is the Bible Society. The society whose office it is to provide the latter instrument is the Missionary Society. It is the duty of a Christian public to keep both instruments in vigorous operation. Each of these societies has mighty claims upon you. The two go hand in hand. The one ploughs while the other sows; and let no opposition be instituted betwixt their claims on the generosity of the public. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Hear and live*:—A poor man being on his death-bed, asked that the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah should be read to him. Though weak and faint, and full of pain, yet when he heard the words, "Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live," he gathered up his strength to say, "What a mercy, sir, that it is not 'Read, and your soul shall live,' for if it had been I could not have been saved, for you know I am no scholar. But, blessed be God, it is 'Hear, and your soul shall live.' I have heard and believed, and trust I shall be saved." *Power to hear, a blessing*:—It is said that a beautiful countess of one of the Orkney Islands was a deaf mute. One day, when her firstborn child was a few months old, as it was sleeping in its cradle, she softly approached its side, to the terror of the nurse, with a large stone in her hands, and dropped it on the floor, eagerly watching the face of the babe to see the effect of the noise. To the inexpressible joy of the fond mother's heart the child started and awoke, so that she knew it had the sense of hearing. She embraced both child and nurse, and wept tears of gratitude to God that her own sad affliction was not transmitted to her offspring.

Vers. 18–21. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth.—Observe—I. THE ORIGINAL APPLICATION OF THESE WORDS—voices in nature. II. THE APOSTOLIC USE OF THEM—the multitude of

the preachers. III. THE ANALOGY ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL—the universality of God's revelation in nature is the promise of the universal spread of the gospel. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Apostolic labours an evidence of Christian truth*:—The general scope of the apostle is sufficiently plain. The Jew is taught his responsibilities in presence of the advancing gospel from the pages of his Hebrew Bible. He learns to contrast the religion of the synagogue with that of the Church, when viewed in its spirit, method, and end. And this, not from the lips of evangelists, but from the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy (Rom. x. 5; Lev. xviii. 5; Rom. x. 6; Deut. xxx. 12–14). Prophets like Isaiah and Joel successively announce to him the reward of faith in Christ, and the intimate and beneficent nearness of the Lord of all to all His true worshippers (Rom. x. 11; Isa. xxviii. 16; Rom. x. 13; Joel ii. 32), and by consequence, the abolition of the Judaic nationalism, and the Catholicity of the religion which was succeeding it. And when the question is asked how there can be such true worship without faith in its object, or faith without a religious education, or this again without a message from heaven, and an authoritative commission to proclaim it, the reply is given in the words of the evangelical prophet (Isa. lii. 7), for whose entranced soul the intervening centuries have neither force nor meaning, and the distant and contingent future is a realised and present fact. Along with the messengers who announce to captive Israel the speedy return of peace and freedom, there mingle, in the prophet's vision, other forms of apostolic mien and greatness, and their footsteps fall on all the mountains of the world, as they carry forward the message which emancipates mankind, and which proclaims an alliance between earth and heaven. Yet more, this greatest of the prophets foresees the partial acceptance of the gospel as accurately as he foretells its universal promulgation (Rom. x. 16; Isa. liii. 1): and prophecy closes around the Jew, who refuses belief to the report of the apostles, by describing not merely the truth which confronts him, but his own attitude towards it. That there may be no mistake as to the weight and pressure of the Jew's responsibility, the apostle asks in the text somewhat abruptly, whether the men of Israel have not heard the gospel-message. And he answers not by pointing to the literal fact, that already the messengers of Christ had penetrated far and wide into either of the great branches of the Dispersion, while Jerusalem itself was the home and focus of Christian doctrine; he quotes a psalmist who is singing of the heavenly bodies, and who tells how they speak for the glorious Creator in terms which all can understand, while from day to day and age to age they hand on their mighty tradition of the truth, which all the languages of man confess, and all the climes and regions of the earth have heard. The apostle reads the history of the Church in the light of his Master's words: "Go, teach all nations." The intervening centuries count for nothing; just as when we gaze at the fixed star, we do not ordinarily reflect upon that scintillation of the rays of its light through almost measureless space which science yet reveals to us in all its wonder with minute precision. And the apostle sees all at a single glance: he ignores the alternation of ebb and flow—the constant play of light and shade—which meet us in the actual history of the Church; we forget, as we read his words, that struggle for life, maintained for centuries,—maintained against overwhelming forces. We seem to be watching a process which has all the beauty and ease of a natural movement; we have before us what is less the history of an accomplished and hard-won triumph than it is the spectacle of a beneficent provision or law of the universe, in which there is no struggle, no effort, no resistance, and in which the Heavenly Wisdom already reaches from one end to another mightily, and smoothly and sweetly ordereth all things. "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world." And here are two points that demand our consideration. 1. OUR LORD'S COMMAND AND THE PROPHECY OF HIS APOSTLE IMPLY FIRST OF ALL THAT THE GOSPEL WOULD STAND THE TEST OF TIME. Of all forms of power, as of all forms of thought that are merely human, time is the great enemy. No sooner has a doctrine or a system taken its place in the arena of human thought, than, like the ocean which imperceptibly fritters away the base of a mountain cliff, time forthwith begins its relentless work of progressive demolition. Again, time brings with it what we term in our ignorance chance; it brings combinations of circumstances, and of agencies to bear, upon which no genius can calculate, and against which no prudence can take its measures. Once more, the lapse of time involves the liability to internal decay: those who have reached power, betake themselves to its enjoyment; those who believe that they are securely masters of the world of thought, are not alive to the decomposition which awaits or preys upon their stagnant system.

And, lastly, as the years pass over a doctrine or a system, they inevitably subject it to the decisive test of opposition. And this not necessarily because it has faults and failings, but because it exists, and by its existence invites hostile criticism, since it drains away something, however little, of the attention, and labour, and substance, which would but for the fact of its existence be bestowed elsewhere. Need I say that He who came from heaven to redeem and save us knew what was before Him. He foresaw the coolness which would succeed to a first fervour of welcome to His truth; He allowed for the unfavourable conjunctions of circumstance, and for the intimidation and the errors of those who might represent Him, and for the opposition which a gospel such as His (making, as it did, no terms with any human feeling or conviction that was inconsistent with the rights of God), could not but encounter in the passions of man. He predicted a time when the love of many would wax cold, &c. (Matt. xxiv. 9, 11, 12, 24). He accepted, He set forth the idea of the intense hatred which His gospel must perforce encounter in the world, so energetically, that He, the Prince of Peace, described Himself as sending not peace, but a sword. Yet foreseeing these elements of destruction gathering around Him, He is calmly certain of the perpetuity of His doctrine (Mark xiii. 31). Surely the event has not falsified the prediction. Since the Incarnation, all else has changed; new races, new moulds of thought, new languages, new institutions, political and social, supplant others which once seemed destined to exist for ever, and which have passed away. But, reigning amid the ruins of the past, reigning amid the progress of the present towards the future, Jesus Christ is here. You may contend that here and there His work is marred or broken; you may insist on the desolating spread of the great heresies of the first ages, or on the loss of the Churches of the East and of the Church of Cyprian and of Augustine—trampled as these are beneath the feet of the infidel. Now, as of old, He is crucified in weakness, while He reigns in power: He is, by the very pressure and fierceness of His foes, uniting friends who have long been sundered; His vast providences enlist the services even of men who know but fragments of His truth; He has more loyal hearts who trust and worship Him than in any previous age. For observe, that He does not merely hold His ground: He is extending His Empire. He is again laying siege to those citadels of superstitious yet of philosophical idolatry—the oriental religions—which have so long resisted Him; He is bidding the islands of the sea wait on His advancing footsteps. II. OBSERVE A SECOND FEATURE OF THE PREDICTED MISSIONARY ENERGY OF THE CHURCH, WHICH, NO LESS THAN THAT ALREADY MENTIONED, WOULD SEEM TO POSSESS AN EVIDENTIAL VALUE. For our Lord did not merely insure His religion against the triumph of those causes which, in the case of human institutions or opinions, must ultimately produce decay and dissolution. The stone which you throw loses force and swiftness as it obeys the impulse you gave to it; it buries itself, we will suppose, beneath the waters of a still lake, and again the ripple which radiates from the point of disturbance, becomes, moment by moment, less clear to the eye, as on this side and on that its widening circles approach the shore. So it is with human religions: they spend themselves while they gain the prestige of antiquity; and our Lord, as we have seen, reversed this law of exhaustion, in the case of His gospel. But He did more: He presumed upon, He appealed to, because He knew Himself able to create and command, an ever-youthful and active enthusiasm, which in the last ages of the faith, no less than in the first, would carry forward His doctrine into all the regions of the earth, and, at whatever risk, would press it closely in its perfectness and its power on the consciences of men. Look at the other great religions which have ruled, or which still rule, the thought or the heart of the human race. Where have ancient priesthoods, like the Egyptian, been missionary agencies? Where have philosophical speculations, like those of the Schools of Greece, been more than the luxury and the pride of the selfish few—where and when have they shown any capacity of becoming the inheritance of the heart and thought of the struggling many? Surely it were not unreasonable to surmise that if the Infinite and the Eternal God has spoken in very deed to us His creatures, He can only so have spoken, as at the first He can only have given us being, out of the free and pure love which He bare towards us. And thus along with the gift of truth would come the accompanying gift of love; and we should anticipate what is in fact the case, that He, our Incarnate Lord, whom we worship as the highest and absolute Truth, is also the most tender and indeed boundless Charity. It is by combining in Himself truth and love so perfectly that Jesus, from age to age, commands the most intelligent and the most heroic devotion of which man has ever been capable. Think not that true devotion to Christ our

Lord is a luxury of the Primitive Church, which can find no lasting home in the midst of our modern civilisation. It may be true that mutilated creeds cannot provoke, and that coward hearts cannot understand, such devotion. But wherever the truth is taught in its integrity to hearts that are "honest and good," the same phenomena of absolute self-devotion will be found to repeat themselves which illustrated so gloriously the first ages and children of the faith. He has indeed made men love Himself; for around Him and His work there mantles such a robe of unfailing and ever-youthful beauty, that in His Divine Person, His human form, His words, His world-redeeming sacrifice, His ceaseless intercession, His gift of the Blessed Spirit, His oneness with His people through the sacraments of His Church, the soul finds that which answers to its highest imaginings no less than to its deepest needs. It finds in Him, as in none else, its rest. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The spread of the gospel:*—In the psalm he speaks of works, here of the Word. 1. Some say that Paul argues from the less. If God teach all by the great volume of the heavens, much more will He teach all by the heavenly doctrine of the gospel. 2. I think that there is here hid a prophecy of the preaching of the gospel, because the latter part of the psalm speaks much in the commendation of it; and Paul here so applies it. And, indeed, there is a most sweet analogy between the heavens found and the gospel. The heavens are the work of God's hand; so is the gospel revealed by God. The heavens show the work of God: so the gospel, that we are justified by the work of God, which is faith, not by the works of man. The doctrine of the gospel is pure and lightsome as are the heavens. The influence of the heavens comforteth and cherisheth inferior things: so doth the gospel the conscience. The diversity of nations and languages is manifold which understand not one another; yet all understand the excellency of the heavens, and the wonderful work of God in them. So God enabled the apostles to teach all nations in their own tongues the wonderful works of God (Mark xvi. 20; Acts i. 8; Col. i. 6). I. THAT IS THE TRUE RELIGION WHICH AGREES WITH THAT WHICH WAS PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD BY THE APOSTLES. II. IT WAS A MIRACLE THAT THE GOSPEL, a doctrine teaching the denial of ourselves and bearing of the Cross, carried by poor and mean persons, oppressed by mighty emperors and kings, should in despite of men and devils, WITHIN THE SPACE OF FORTY YEARS, BE SO PUBLISHED IN ALL THE WORLD. Let all enemies cease to oppose it by the remembrance hereof. III. OBEY THE GOSPEL, LEST HE WHICH SENT IT TAKE IT AWAY, and remove our candlestick for our unbelief and contempt of it. For this cause Turcism and Papism possess many places, which have been heretofore famous for the gospel. Hath the grace of God shined to thee? Make much of this light, and walk in it. Hast thou heard the sound of it? Why dost thou live in lewd practices, as if thou hadst never heard any inkling of it? Where sin bears rule, there is not the gospel received. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The voice of truth:*—I. IS HEARD—1. In nature. 2. In the Word of God. 3. In the gospel. II. DIFFUSES ITSELF—1. Like waves of sound. 2. Through time. 3. Through the world. III. DEMANDS UNIVERSAL ATTENTION. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The world convicted of unbelief:*—I. To whom do THESE WORDS APPLY? To the unbelieving—1. Jews. 2. Gentiles. II. WHAT DO THEY IMPLY? The sufficiency of revelation as respects—1. Its clearness. 2. Its diffusion. III. WHAT MUST WE INFER. 1. The inexcusable guilt of man. 2. The justice of God. (*Ibid.*) *God's dealings with His ancient people:*—I. HIS COMMUNICATIONS TO THEM. 1. Clear. 2. Repeated. 3. Everywhere heard. II. HIS WARNINGS of rejection. 1. By Moses. 2. By Isaiah. III. HIS PATIENT FORBEARANCE. 1. Kindly entreating them. 2. During the long period of Old Testament history. 3. Spite of disobedience. IV. THE FINAL TRANSFER OF HIS FAVOUR TO THE GENTILES. (*Ibid.*) **But I say, Did not Israel know?**—Observe—I. How GOD DISCIPLINES A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE. He—1. Instructs. 2. Warns. 3. Bears patiently. 4. At length transfers His favour to others, whom they despise. II. How THIS APPLIES TO US. We have been—1. Equally privileged. 2. Equally rebellious. 3. If Israel could not escape, how shall we? (*Ibid.*) *Israel's*—1. Privilege. 2. Warning. 3. Persistent disobedience. 4. Punishment. (*Ibid.*) *Gospel chimes:*—I tarried two or three days near the tower of Antwerp. Every fifteen minutes the bells of that tower chime—so sweetly that it seems as if the angels of God flying past have alighted in the tower. But when the full hour comes, then the clock, with heavy tongue, strikes the hour, adding impressiveness and solemnity to the chime of bells. So this great gospel tower chimes every fifteen minutes—nay, every moment. Tones of mercy. Tones of love. Tones of compassion. Tones of pardon. And occasionally, to let you know that the weights are running down, and that the time

is going past, the heavy tongue of this bell comes down with an emphasis, saying, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" "Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **But Esaias is very bold.**—Consider the words—I. IN THEIR PROPHETIC IMPORT AS accomplished—1. In the calling of the Gentiles. 2. The rejection of the Jews. II. AS DESCRIPTIVE OF GOD'S ACTUAL PROCEDURE. 1. He receives sinners and outcasts. 2. But the children of the kingdom are cast out. III. AS ILLUSTRATING THE WHOLE ECONOMY OF THE GOSPEL. 1. It is a system of unmerited grace. 2. Those who do not participate in it have themselves wholly to blame. (*Ibid.*) **I was found of them that sought Me not.**—*God found unsought:*—It is a singular thing to find one inspired writer calling another "bold." But we are not to understand that the apostle doubted what the prophet said, nor that he feared some would think Isaiah had hazarded a perilous statement. He merely recalled two exceedingly commonplace, but most important considerations concerning the time in which Isaiah lived. Then it was a bold thing to say that God had rejected the Jews and chosen the Gentiles; there being then really no signs of a revolution like that. Moreover, such a statement would anger that entire nation, and thus imperil the popularity of the prophet, as well as his life. But Isaiah did say it, and Paul here repeats it. The text is an announcement of a fact in the government of God; namely, that there is a sovereign love of God which goes out after a human soul before that soul has even so far started out for God as to wish for Him. I. GOD HAS NEVER YET RELINQUISHED HIS HOLD UPON THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE. Sin entered the world and ruined the race. But the Almighty has not given it away to destruction, and is going to repossess His own. II. GOD EVEN NOW ASSERTS HIS FULL RIGHT TO A SPECIAL PEOPLE OF HIS OWN IN THE MIDST OF EARTHLY REBELLION AND DISOWNMENT OF HIS SON. His call is, Who is on the Lord's side? and asserts authority in a land, without consulting the poor magnates at the head of it. He commissioned Jonah to go to Nineveh, He sent Moses into Egypt with orders to Pharaoh to dismiss a million of his subjects for ever on a night's notice. It made no difference whatever that the king said he did not know who this Jehovah was; the Maker of the universe assumed that it was the business of all His intelligent creatures to understand the authority which belonged to a monarch like Him. He assumes that same pre-eminence now. The only question that can arise is one of individual bearing, who shall rally first around His standard, and serve Him? And this He decides Himself (vers. 11–13). Nor does He leave this choice to a mere chance acceptance. Does He need a king? Then the ruddy-cheeked son of Jesse is anointed. Does He need a priest? He summoned Melchizedek. Does He need a prophet? Then shall the unwilling lips of Balaam be turned from cursing into blessing. Thus does He gather His agents at His own sovereign will, often unexpectedly to themselves, as well as surprisingly to others. Literally, "He is found of those who sought Him not," &c. III. THE ALL-WISE GOD HAS ORIGINATED AND ANNOUNCED A PLAN BY WHICH HE MAY BRING HIS PEOPLE TO HIMSELF WITHOUT ANY FAILURE. 1. God assumes at the start that men are utterly lost? We are condemned already. The wrath of God abideth on every one of us. 2. That God prefers to save the transgressor rather than punish him. God says He takes no pleasure in the infliction of penalty. He has proffered a way of escape (ver. 4). And this is the only way. 3. That the human will is stubborn, and always refuses free grace. Just here enters the greatest mystery of the gospel. A certain spiritual pressure is exerted by God Himself. The Holy Ghost constrains the surrender of the disobedient heart. IV. IN THE CARRYING OUT OF HIS PLAN GOD SOMETIMES STRIVES DIRECTLY WITH IMPENITENT MEN, WITHOUT THEIR EXPECTING IT, AND EVEN WITHOUT THEIR UNDERSTANDING IT. Thus it is that He is often "found of those who sought Him not." He has a right to everybody, and when He desires a man He sends for him. No actual force is employed, but certain processes of His are put into operation. The sinner does not always know precisely what all this means, but he feels a surprising impelling power, active in the very centre of his being. He is awakened to see his own needs. He is constrained to reflect upon the issues of another life. Now it is God in person who is making Himself to be found, even when the man is not seeking after Him. And He acts very gently. There are, in every-day life, two ways of waking a man out of dangerous slumber. You may shout in his ear, or rudely shake his person; or bring a lamp into the room, and leave it burning. The latter is the way in which God works. Furthermore, Providence sometimes works in with grace. An adversity or a blessing is used as an instrument in the awakening of the soul. But He aims only to lead men to the beginning of

their work; He does not propose to do it for them. He says to those who seek Him not, Seek Me. He calls to the prayerless, Pray—to the thoughtless, Think. V. THIS MOMENT, IN WHICH THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS STRIVING, IS THE MOMENT ABOVE ALL OTHERS IN WHICH TO YIELD TO HIS CALL. For now, if never before, a man has a chance. If God is sincere, He offers personal pardon now. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Sovereign grace and man's responsibility*:—Doubtless these words primarily refer to the casting away of the Jews, and to the choosing of the Gentiles. Yet this is but a type of a universal fact. The system of truth is not one straight line, but two. No man will ever get a right view of the gospel until he knows how to look at the two lines at once. I am taught that what I sow I shall reap: I am also taught that "it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see that man acts as he pleases, and two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. Note then—I. DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY. If any man be saved, he is saved by Divine grace alone. Now, in speaking of God's gracious acts of salvation, notice—1. That they are entirely unmerited. The people here mentioned certainly did not merit God's grace. They found Him, but they never sought for Him; He was made manifest to them, but they never asked for Him. 2. Sovereign, *i.e.*, God has an absolute right to give grace where He chooses, and to withhold it when He pleases. It is mercy, indeed, when God saves a seeker; but how much greater mercy when He seeks the lost Himself! Mark the parable of the lost sheep. How was it you came to seek God? "Why, because He led you to do it." Nature can never rise above itself. You put water into a reservoir, and it will rise as high as that, but no higher if let alone. So there must be an extraordinary pressure of the Holy Spirit put upon the heart to lead us first to ask for mercy. II. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY (ver. 21). Now, these people whom God had cast away had been sought, had been entreated to be saved; but they would not, and inasmuch as they were not saved, it was the effect of their disobedience and their gainsaying. Notice the wooing of God and of what sort it is. 1. Most affectionate. God says He stretched out His hands. You that are not saved to-day are without excuse, for God stretched out His hands to you, and He said, "Come, come." 2. Very frequent. "All the day long," may be translated "daily." From the first dawn of your life He wooed you through your mother. And in your boyhood how your Sunday-school teacher endeavoured to bring you to the Saviour! And you have not yet surely forgotten how many Sabbaths you have spent, and how many times you have been warned. It is probable that God will keep on stretching out His hands to you until your hairs grow grey, still continually inviting you: and perhaps when you are nearing death He will still say, "Come unto Me, come unto Me." But if still you reject Christ, let nothing make you imagine that you shall go unpunished. "How can you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" No one will be responsible for your damnation but yourself, at the last great day. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God found without seeking*:—That was an odd voice, surely the oddest I ever heard of, which came a little time ago in an Italian town to one of God's elect ones there. He was so depraved that he actually fell to worshipping the devil rather than God. It chanced one day that a rumour went through the city that a Protestant was coming there to preach. The priest, alarmed for his religion, told the people from the altar that Protestants worshipped the devil, and he charged them not to go near the meeting-room. The news, as you may judge, excited no horror in the devil-worshipper's mind. "Ay," thought he, "then I shall meet with brethren," and so he went to hear our beloved missionary who is now labouring in Rome. Nothing else would have drawn the poor wretch to hear the good word, but this lie of the priest's was overruled to that end. He went and heard, not of the devil, but of the devil's Conqueror, and before long he was found at Jesus' feet, a sinner saved. (*Ibid.*) **All the day long I have stretched forth My hands.**—*God's conduct and man's*:—I. GOD'S CONDUCT TOWARDS MEN. 1. Kind. 2. Earnest. 3. Forbearing. 4. Patient. II. MAN'S CONDUCT TOWARDS GOD. 1. Ungrateful. 2. Wicked. 3. Obstinate. 4. Insulting. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's entreaties*:—Nothing can be more wonderful. That man should stretch out his hands to God—the dependent and sinful creature supplicating the supremely righteous and holy Creator—this is as it ought to be. But here—the Creator stretches out His hands to the creature; God entreats man; the offended Sovereign beseeches the offending subject! But is there not something still more wonderful, that He should have to complain of want of success? Yet such was the mournful fact! God's entreaties were—I. CONDESCENDING. When a father entreats a child, a master a servant, a monarch a

subject, there is condescension. But what is all the condescension of creature to creature?—of creature the most exalted to creature the most insignificant and mean? But what is the difference between any one creature and any other, compared with the difference between the Eternal God and the highest of them all? II. FORBEARING—for there was a principle in the Divine nature, that drew powerfully in the opposite direction—God's infinite hatred of sin. His whole conduct was but a practical utterance of the pathetic pleading—"How shall I give thee up." (Hosea xi. 8, 9). III. EARNEST. The posture or attitude expresses this. IV. PERSEVERINGLY IMPORTUNATE. "All day long," &c. V. DISINTERESTED. When we hear of "calling" and "stretching out the hands" to another, we naturally think of some deep-felt want, or some suffered or dreaded evil; of which the supply is earnestly desired, or the endurance deprecated. A starving man stretches out his hand for food; the oppressed for deliverance; the slave for freedom; the criminal for pardon; the victim of assassination for life. But does God need anything from His creatures? They needed Him; not He them. The danger was on their part, not on His; the damage resulting from their refusal to hear Him, all their own. The sum of His entreaties is, "Do thyself no harm," and His kind assurance, in beseeching them to obey His voice—"I will do you no hurt." Far was it from His heart to do them hurt. Judgment was His strange work. His threatenings and His solicitations were alike in mercy. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Deafness to God's appeals*:—God offers not only a truce, but a peace, and has been most active in urging a reconciliation. Can He manifest His willingness in clearer methods than that of sending His Son to reconcile the world to Himself? Can He evidence more sincerity than by His repeated and reiterated pressing of our souls to the acceptance of Him? God knocks at our hearts, and we are deaf to Him; He thunders in our ears, and we regard Him not; He waits upon us for our acceptance of His love, and we grow more mad against Him; He beseecheth us, and we ungratefully and proudly reject Him; He opens His bosom, and we turn our backs; He offers us His pearls, and we tread them under our feet; He would clothe us with pure linen, but we would still wear our foul rags; He would give us angels' bread, and we feed on husks with swine. The wisdom of God shines upon us, and we account it foolishness; the infinite kindness of God courts us, and we refuse it, as if it were the greatest cruelty. Christ calls and begs, and we will not hear Him either commanding or entreating. To love God is our privilege, and though it be our indispensable duty, yet it had been a presumption in us to aspire so high as to think the casting our earthly affections upon so transcendent an object, should be dear to Him, had He not authorised it by His command, and encouraged it by His acceptance. But it is strange that God should court us by such varieties of kindness to that, wherein not His happiness, but our affection does consist; and much stranger, that such pieces of earth and clay should turn their backs upon so admirable an object, and be enemies to Him, who displays himself in so many allurements to their souls, and fix their hatred upon that tender God who sues for their affections. (*S. Charnock.*) *Disregarding God*:—I know a mother who has an idiot child. For it she gave up all society, almost everything, and devoted her whole life to it. "And now," said she, "for fourteen years I have tended it, and loved it, and it does not even know me. Oh, it is breaking my heart!" Oh, how the Lord might say this of hundreds here. Jesus comes here, and goes from one to another, asking if there is a place for Him. Oh, will not some of you take Him into your hearts? (*D. L. Moody.*) *Irresponsive to God*:—A man cannot get these Divine blessings if he does not want them. You take a hermetically sealed bottle and put it into the sea, it may float about in mid-ocean for a century, surrounded by a shoreless ocean, and it will be as dry and empty inside at the end as it was at the beginning. So you and I float, live, move, and have our being in that great ocean of the Divine love in Christ, but you can cork up your hearts and wax them over with an impenetrable cover, through which that grace does not come. And you do do it, some of you. (*A. Maclaren.*)

CHAPTER XI.

VERS. 1–10. **God hath not cast away His people.**—*God hath not cast off His people:*—This is proved by—I. THE KNOWN FACTS OF THEIR HISTORY—Paul and his companions in the faith. II. THE SECRET OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD—as exemplified in the case of Elias. III. THE RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED IN THE NATIONAL REJECTION OF ISRAEL. 1. The conversion of the Gentiles. 2. The consequent conversion of the Jews. 3. The completion of the redeeming purpose on earth. IV. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS—the demonstration of His own glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The remnant, the admonition, and the hope:*—1. Distressed though the apostle was that anything should have caused the exclusion of his kinsmen from the benefits of Messiah's kingdom, yet the fact was patent that it was because of their unbelief, and that it had been predicted. Henceforth they should no longer be, as a people, the people of God. Even when admitted into the kingdom of God, which they still might be by "the obedience of faith," they should have no pre-eminence over their believing Gentile brethren (John x. 16). 2. Now all this might well fill the heart of the patriotic Jew with thoughtful sadness. For he had been accustomed to give to the glowing predictions of Israel's prospective glory an altogether national and literal interpretation. How sadly disappointing, then, to be now assured that the Israel there spoken of was, not Israel after the flesh, but after the spirit! He would ask, "How am I to understand the matter? Hath God cast away His people?" "God forbid!" exclaims the apostle. "As a nation, and because that they have rejected the Lord's Christ, He has rejected them, but this only so far, and so long, as they reject Him." Therefore—I. HE HAS NOT CAST THEM AWAY INDISCRIMINATELY; they have not all been rejected; there is still a foreknown remnant. 1. Such a total rejection the apostle had never affirmed. Should any one assert that so he had taught, let him reflect that he also was "an Israelite," &c. But he was not therefore excluded from the benefit of Christ's salvation. No; not even though he had once been a "blasphemer," &c. (1 Tim. i. 16). 2. Nor had the apostle alone from amongst the Jews obtained mercy (Acts xxi. 20). Nor could he have anything like an adequate conception of the number of Jewish believers. These whom God had foreknown He had by no means cast away. Though perhaps unknown of men, they were "known of God" (Rev. vii. 1–8). Such secret ones the Lord has always had (vers. 2–5; *cf.* 1 Kings xix. 9–18; Isa. i. 9, and x. 22). 3. This remnant had obtained that salvation (chap. ix. 27), which the rest refused to accept on the stipulated terms; while that rest, because of their self-righteous and obstinate unbelief, had been judicially blinded and hardened (Deut. xxix. 4; Psa. lxix. 22, 23). Thus it is that God always deals with incorrigible sinners. They persist in loving darkness, and hating light, and He blinds them. They reject the sure foundation, and it becomes a stone of stumbling. Thus He dealt with Pharaoh and his hosts, with the unbelieving Israelites in the times of Moses, David, Solomon, and Isaiah. And thus He deals with them still (Acts xiii. 40, 41; Hab. i. 5). These unbelieving Jews are the cast away; but the believing Jews (a foreknown remnant) are elected and saved. But now—II. WITH RESPECT TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN "CAST AWAY"; have they "stumbled" to a hopeless "fall"? Had God ordained that it should be so? "God forbid!" is the vigorous reply. 1. God did not purpose less mercy for them, but He did intend more for the Gentiles. Indeed, it was this very opening the door of faith to the Gentiles that chiefly caused the offence of the Jews. But by this, which occasioned their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. 2. And now the apostle turns to the Gentile Christians to admonish them against a spirit of exultation over the fallen and rejected Jews. The admonition was probably needed, the persecuting spirit of the Jews being calculated to provoke retaliation. It was still more needed in after times, when Christian rulers and Churches then acted towards that scattered people as though they had been deprived of all the rights of common humanity. But the God of Israel had given no right to any to add one stripe to their chastisement. His severity was intended not for destruction, but salvation; and how much more desirable the latter than the former result! (vers. 12–15). 3. And that their salvation is even yet possible is further evident (ver. 16). The "firstling" of the "dough" and "the root" of the tree—figures to designate the great progenitors of the whole Jewish nation—having believed in God, had obtained salvation, and had become holy to the Lord. Nay, Jehovah had so presented them

to Himself that their descendants also were to be accounted a "holy nation." True, this did not insure their unconditional salvation. It had not prevented great numbers from forsaking the God of Israel (Isa. i. 4); but for their fathers' sakes He would spare no pains to "renew them again unto repentance," and to give them hearty welcome on their return (Isa. liv. 6–8). Many individual Jews had already believed and been saved. These, therefore, might be regarded as, in a secondary sense, the first-fruits unto God, and served to prove that, on like terms, all Israel might be saved. 4. Nay, further, the apostle maintains that the Jews occupied a position more favourable to their salvation. If the Church be symbolised by the olive-tree the Jews were the natural branches as related to Abraham, the father of the faithful, and, as by solemn covenant, separated to the service of Jehovah. Compared with them, the heathen are indeed but branches of the wild and uncultured tree (Eph. ii. 11, 12). And be it that "some of the branches were broken off," and that many from the wild olive have been grafted into the true olive, let them remember that this has been effected "contrary to nature," and therefore not exult over the off-broken branches: forasmuch as the state of neither the off-broken nor engrafted branches is irreversible. If the believing Gentile suffers the spirit of pride to displace that of humble trust in the Saviour, he, too, shall not be spared. And if the now reprobated Jew shall receive Him, then shall he also be re-engrafted into the ancient stock. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (vers. 22–24). 5. And not only so, but however improbable it might seem, the time would arrive when all Israel should acknowledge Christ as Lord, and be thereupon welcomed back into His fold (vers. 25–27). In the meantime, and as far "as concerns the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes." And that which has brought them into this position is the free grace of God, which resolved to include you also. But as touching "the election," the believing remnant, which continues from age to age (vers. 5, 6), "are beloved for the fathers' sakes." For God Himself has given a sure word of promise that, whithersoever they may be dispersed, when they shall make confession of their iniquity, then will He remember His covenant (Lev. xxvi. 40–45). "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." All alike are "by nature" unbelieving and disobedient. To the consciousness of this fact it is that God shuts them up, and that in order that they may be induced to seek and to secure salvation. (*W. Tyson.*) *The rejection of Israel*:—I. NOT ABSOLUTE. 1. A remnant saved. 2. Exemplified in Paul and many known Jewish converts. 3. Confirmed by the history of Elijah. 4. This remnant is of grace (ver. 6). II. NOT ARBITRARY. 1. The rest were blinded. 2. Because of their disobedience. 3. By the just visitation of God. 4. As announced beforehand by their own prophets. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's people*:—I. CANNOT FAIL ON EARTH. 1. Individuals are still converted (ver. 1). 2. The purpose of God is unchangeable (ver. 2). II. IS STILL SMALL. 1. But not so small that we should be discouraged. 2. Great enough to occasion joy and gratitude. III. CONSISTS OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS who—1. Repudiate all human merit. 2. Receive God's mercy as a free gift. 3. Do not harden themselves against the truth. (*Ibid.*) *God's Church wider than man's*:—I. THE CONSPICUOUSLY GOOD ARE THE FEW—NOT THE MANY. The many are the called; the few are the chosen who accept the call. God had not wholly cast away His people (ver. 1). It was then as it had been in the time of Elijah (ver. 4). And how is it now? Let us beware of uncharitable judgments. Nothing is easier than sweeping censures. God is tender in His judgments of men, often justifying many whom we in our severity should condemn. Still, would Christ acknowledge the majority in the churches, or would He have to turn to the minority? Certainly to only a small minority, whose faith is proved by their character and works. For, strip away from the profession of Christianity its accidental accompaniments, and what do you find? Nothing that is perfect, even in the loftiest; and nothing of unmixed evil in the meanest. But you will find in the few, in spite of great faults, a faith in Christ so genuine as to give a sure pledge that the goodness of the man will assuredly conquer the badness in the end. The man in whom the love of truth is a passion, in whom justice is a matter of greater concern than the falling of the heavens, and who burns with shame at the thought of an impure deed, and who has courage enough to suffer in the righteous cause like his Great Master;—why, that man forms part of God's elect remnant, who put to shame the majority of those who cry aloud the name of Christ, but who do not His deeds. II. SOME OF THESE FEW ARE NOT FOUND WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE RECOGNISED CHURCH. They are in Christ's Church, but not in man's. And

that is a cause of jealousy and anger to many of us. When Paul told the Jews that God was founding a Church outside their own nation, he knew that he was wounding their prejudices to the quick. So strongly did he feel this that he had to fortify himself by an appeal to Moses (chap. x. 19). But though fact and prophecy supported his statement, they would not admit that God was working upon lines outside their own. And yet the apostle insists upon it as the great revealed mystery which was to crush their pride and to precipitate their fall (ver. 25). And so now God is wider in His plans than our pride and prejudice think. We find it almost as hard to believe as the Jew did, that God has a Church outside the Church. And yet, are we not confronted by facts? I believe the Church is our right and natural place, and that it is its natural work to be foremost in doing whatever contributes to the highest welfare of men. But has it not been, and is it not so still, that God has other sheep which are not of this fold? Some of these have maintained an outward connection with the Church, though the Church has not identified itself with them. They have worked alongside the Church rather than with it. Wilberforce and Clarkson did not get the sympathy and support of the Church till their cause was triumphant. Who are the true prophets of this generation? For the most part men upon whom the Church looks askance. When we get to heaven we shall find men there whom we never expected to see, and miss others perhaps whom we expected to find in the foremost places. III. THIS OUTER CHURCH OF THE GENTILES WAS TO PROVOKE THE JEWS TO JEALOUSY AND EMULATION. The Jews fell that the Gentiles might rise, and the Gentiles had risen that they might stimulate the Jews to rise too. The Church is evermore in need of this constant renewal and reconstruction. At the time of the Reformation Christian truth had to be rediscovered, and a new Church formed outside the lines of the old Church. But the fundamental principle of the Reformation did not long preserve its supremacy—the right of every man to exercise his own judgment—for the Protestants soon began to persecute men like the Catholics. There is a great cry in our day that religion is in danger, and that the churches are failing; such a cry as must have gone forth among the Jews when Paul first preached. But has the cry any greater warrant now than it had then? Was not religion then really rooting itself in a richer soil, and preparing to bring forth better fruit? The devout Catholic thought that the Reformers were devils, and prophesied the overthrow of all religion. But was it not rather a fresh ploughing and sowing of the human soul, and a new opening of the heavens? And as to the cry in our day, if the Christianity depended on the Roman Syllabus, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Westminster Confession, then we might tremble, but God forbid that we should be overcome by such an ignoble fear. We believe in the religion of Christ, and we can see before it a nobler future. As the Jews had to learn from the Gentiles in order to their recovery, so we have some things to learn from the outer boundaries of God's Church. (*C. Short, M.A.*) **God hath not cast away His people.**—*The glory which will redound to God from the conversion of the Jews:*—I. THEIR NATIONAL PRESERVATION THROUGH SO LONG A TRACT OF TIME WILL FURNISH A WONDERFUL ILLUSTRATION OF THE DIVINE POWER. 1. They can look back along a line of ancestry compared with which that of the Norman and the Saxon are but of yesterday. Nations which did not exist till long after the Jew had acquired a history, have long ago run their course; but he is unchanged. 2. Nor will any of the ordinary means of national preservation account for their continuance. (1) They have not, like the Chinese, been stationary, and built in from the rest of the human family. From about B.C. 740, till the destruction of Jerusalem, they suffered as many dispersions, partial or entire, as there were centuries. (2) Foreign alliances will not explain it. For, besides the fiercest commotions within, they have sustained a quick succession of the most sanguinary invasions from without. (3) Arms, climate, genius, politics, equally fail to explain it. For they have been crumbled and scattered over the face of the earth; and yet they exist. Old empires which oppressed them have fallen; but the Jew has lived on amidst their ruins. Young nations have started into being, and he has been present to mingle with their elements, but never uniting. And, as if to complete the wonder, their number at this moment is very nearly the same as it was on their leaving Egypt. 3. Now, the only way to account for their preservation is the scriptural one, viz., to ascribe it to Divine power. "I am God, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." When, then, they shall be turned to the Lord, with what new emphasis and enlarged meaning will they have to sing Psa. CXXIV. II. God shall be glorified when it shall be seen that THIS

PRESERVATION HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTED BY MERE POWER, BUT THAT, FROM FIRST TO LAST, THAT POWER WAS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF WISDOM, OR WAS exercised according to a plan. A new light is dawning on the mind of men respecting this plan. 1. Formerly the historian only recorded facts. But now it has occurred to him that all the facts of history are connected; that could the principles of this connection be traced history would form one organic whole; and hence, to trace and to expound those principles is now the highest office of the historian—the philosophy of history. 2. Every lover of the Bible, however, should remember that its histories were never written in any other way. It both states the facts, and the principles which unite them. True, after sketching the early history of the race, it confines its history to the Jews. But in that you have, in effect, a type of the whole. And more; in that, you frequently catch glimpses of the others at the most eventful moments of their existence. And more still; the Bible is prophetic as well as historic. Before Herodotus had begun to amass his materials, Isaiah had sung the glory of the latter day; and Daniel had foretold the kingdoms which would arise to the end of time. 3. The Bible never speaks of the course of human events but as conducted on a great plan. And with this peculiarity, that from the time of the promise to Abraham, the entire plan was regulated in relation to his posterity. Nay, ages earlier than that the plan began to evolve (Deut. xxxii. 7, 8). The great principle on which the habitable part of the globe was mapped out was a principle of relation to the chosen people. And, as the great drama of Providence unfolded, the civilised world invariably found itself involved with that people. Read Psalms 78th, 105th, and 106th, and do you not hear Jehovah, as He leads them through the nations, saying, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm"? Are they invaded and oppressed? "Who delivered up Jacob to be a spoil, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not Jehovah?" Does the Assyrian afflict Israel? "The Assyrian, saith God, is the rod of My hand." Does the Persian deliver Israel? God calls Cyrus by name. Did nations change hands in consequence of the Persian movement? "I have given Egypt for thy ransom; Cush and Sheba for thee." Have the ancient persecutors of Israel perished? Their destruction was foretold! And when, at length, "the time shall have come, yea, the set time to favour Zion," what ground will there be for saying, "Ye know . . . that not one thing has failed of all that the Lord your God spake concerning you"! III. God's glory shall be enhanced when it shall appear that THE ENTIRE PLAN OF HIS CONDUCT TOWARDS ISRAEL HAS DIRECTLY TENDED TO PROMOTE THEIR HIGHEST WELFARE BY ILLUSTRATING THE GREAT PRINCIPLES OF HIS MORAL GOVERNMENT. 1. The principle of mediation—of making the conduct or relationship of one a reason for blessing others. "God hath not cast away His people." They are still beloved "for the fathers' sakes," and their conversion will, at length, establish this fact. It will show them that they have never been absolutely renounced, and why Abraham himself was beloved, and that there never was but "one Mediator between God and man," the day of whose coming Abraham saw and was glad. 2. Justice (ver. 22). Looking back on their history they will behold it covered with the memorials of the Divine displeasure against sin, and learn that every stroke of His fatherly chastisement was intended to bring them in penitence to His feet. 3. The bringing of good out of evil. It will be seen that God has made the mutual jealousy of the Jew and Gentile an occasion of good to each. The apostacy of the human race was the occasion of Israel's election at the first. And when, after repeated apostacies, Israel was abandoned, that became the occasion of salvation to the Gentiles (ver. 15). Their slavery in Egypt was a time of merciful visitation for that country. Their seventy years' captivity in Babylon were calculated to enlighten and to bless the people of that empire. And at their conversion they will see with amazement that the very act which completed their guilt—the crucifixion of Christ—has become the means of their own salvation. 4. The timing and distribution of God's judgments and mercies so as to make us feel our entire dependence on Him. Would you know, *e.g.*, why it was that Israel, when brought out of Egypt, was not led straight to Canaan? (Deut. viii. 2, 3). Would you know why it was that the coming of Christ was so long delayed; and why the conversion of the Jews did not take place at the commencement of the Christian dispensation? (ver. 32). God waited for the Gentiles till they had proved that the world by wisdom would never know God. And He is now waiting for the Jews till it shall be evident that all ground for self-dependence has utterly perished. IV. BUT WHAT IF THIS GREAT SYSTEM OF DISCIPLINE SHOULD LEAVE THEM WORSE THAN IT FOUND THEM? Would not their conversion redound, to a degree

inconceivable, to the glory of God? The strength of a mechanical power is estimated by the resistance which it overcomes. And the honour which will accrue to the grace of God in the conversion of the Jews is to be estimated partly by the amount and the duration of their previous resistance to that grace. 1. Viewed in this light their conversion will reflect transcendent honour on the power of the grace which effects it. For we are not now speaking of the conversion of a people who had never before enjoyed the light of revelation, but of a people who, in this sense, have never been in darkness. Nor are we speaking of a people who were merely indifferent to Christianity, but of a people who have ever been actively hostile to all spiritual religion. Nor are we speaking of this people as nominally converted merely, as many of the European nations were. To exchange the form of godliness for the power proclaims the presence of a Divine agent; but to worship the very Being on whom the heart had hitherto vented its bitterest execrations, implies a change so great that it might almost excuse unbelief for saying, "If the Lord would open windows in heaven, might this thing be?" But unbelief itself is silenced by the declaration, "I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." 2. Associated with this display of omnipotent energy there will be the exercise of unlimited grace in forgiveness. When it is remembered that the Jews of that future day will be the descendants and approvers of those who shouted, "Away with Him; crucify Him; His blood be upon us and upon our children!' and that, by their persevering unbelief, generation after generation have virtually crucified the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame, how amazing appears that exercise of mercy which is to cancel such an accumulation of guilt! When they shall see that they owe their forgiveness to that blood which they invoked in guilty imprecations on their own heads, what all-subduing views will they obtain of the prevalence of His intercession, of the unchangeableness and riches of His grace! 3. This change will take place at such a period as shall still further redound to the glory of God. There is a fulness of time for it. As the coming of Christ took place at a crisis when the state of the world demonstrated the necessity for it, and displayed its grace, so doubtless will be His coming in the conversion of the Jews. Probably they will have reached the last stage of guilty unbelief; or they will be sorely pressed by evils from without; or, abandoning all expectation of ever beholding their Messiah, they will have given themselves up to despair; or all these forms of evil will have combined in one. This we know, that the design of the whole gospel constitution is that no flesh should glory in His presence; that the inscription on the topstone of the fabric will be, "To the praise of the glory of His grace." 4. In harmony with the spiritual and Divine character of this event will be the means or manner of its accomplishment. Not that all means will be dispensed with. But these shall be of so humble a character, and their success shall so far exceed all human calculation as to furnish the most glorious exposition of the words, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." V. Another element of the glory which will redound to God will be found in THE NUMBER OF THE CONVERTED. A few here and there will doubtless be renewed, from time to time, prior to that period. But then the change will be so general as to satisfy the large prediction that "all Israel shall be saved." They shall come from the east and from the west, &c., to swear allegiance to the Cross of Christ. And what joy will seize the Gentile Church when it shall be announced, "Then hath God also to the *Jews* granted repentance unto life"! And if there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, who can conceive the rapture when it shall be there proclaimed, "All Israel is saved!" VI. This reminds us of the further accession of glory to God from the conversion of the Jews, resulting from THE EFFECTS OF THE EVENT UPON OTHERS. 1. For what an unsurpassable proof will it furnish of the Divinity of the whole scheme of revelation! As the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was reserved by God for the crowning proof of the new economy, so the greater effusion of the same Spirit, upon the same people, is reserved to complete the proof of its claims as it draws towards a close. 2. What an unsurpassable proof will that event display of the all-sufficiency of the grace of God! At the opening of the Christian economy in the conversion of Saul Christ showed forth all long-suffering for a pattern, &c. In a similar manner God appears to be reserving the richest display of His saving grace till towards the last. 3. What an impulse, too, will be given to the piety of every part of the Christian Church! (ver. 12). The newly-converted Jews will probably exhibit a measure of self-denying zeal for the glory of God, which the Church had come to consider absolutely impracticable. For "he that is feeble

among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." 4. How eminently will this increase of the Church tend to the union of all its parts! That most ancient of all schisms between Jew and Gentile shall then be healed. Every minor distinction in the Church shall cease. And thus it will be seen that an important step has been gained towards the attainment of that "which God hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ." 5. And will not—must not all this inconceivably augment the joy of the Church? (*J. Harris, D.D.*) *God's remainder*:—1. We are living in a time when the reigning influences of society tempt or drive from integrity and purity; and some who were venerated shock the confidence reposed in them by grievous falls. There are dangers in such times that touch conscience and try faith. But God is not changed; moral virtue is not unreal; there are still men good and true. God hath not cast away His people. There are seven thousand reserved amid the general degeneracy. 2. Baal was the idea of prolific reproduction in nature. His was a popular worship ever, and set up its accursed altars in the Holy Land. Pouring light upon the faith of the new kingdom of redeeming grace from ancient history, as was his wont, Paul goes back to that dark spot. He is showing that no matter how many fall away faith lives on. The times are never so bad that they can corrupt utterly the immortal grace that lies hidden in the heart of the Church. Mammon may establish its worship, but there is still a holy place, and an ark of the covenant, sacraments and ministry, and heavenly grace. God does not cast away His people. 3. The apostle recalls the old prophet Elijah, and makes a strong case. Matters in Church and State had come to the worst. Two tottering thrones, on soil soaked with family blood, frowned at one another in anger, but upheld no just law and protected no personal rights. Over one of the fragments of the schism ruled a tyrant—Ahab—consistent in cruelty and persevering in appetite, with Jezebel, who made royalty contemptible and womanhood shameful. Ahab and Jezebel are names of vices almost as much as of persons, and have been for nearly three thousand years. After his victory at Carmel, Elijah's splendid dream of the reformation of God's kingdom was broken. When men animated by great purposes fail, they seem smaller to themselves than ever. It was like the hiding of the face of God. But now there comes a magnificent revelation which shows that true greatness does not stand in great results that can be seen. Success does not lie in the numbers counted. Power is stored up in hidden places and in lonely consciences. Have done with measuring God's power with your geometry, or estimating His army by arithmetic. Do the duty that lies nearest thee. It scatters doubt; overcomes opposition; breaks up despair. The Almighty takes care of His reserves. We want the inspiration of this better faith. Consider two facts—I. THE INROADS OF A SUBTLE AND POPULAR WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS, WEAKENING THE CHURCH DEPLORABLY IN ITS CONSCIENCE AND ITS HEART. There is a power attacking Christianity from without, and corrupting it within. What are the foremost among the objects of the people in business and social life? Duty and righteousness? Do the young enter social life to carry there the influence of Christ? What spirit is in the ascendant in our populations? Is there not here "the man of sin" who is "anti-Christ"? Worldliness is a false god; lying, because it makes promises which are never kept; cruel, because it kills the better life; impious, because it defeats the glorious end for which God put His image in every man. This impious secularism creeps into the Church. It is charged that its converts do not come up to its standard, and that concessions are made of principle, and mercenary treacheries adopted to crowd its seats. Retribution cannot but follow if these things be true. But spiritual power is not to be judged by outward achievements. Granted that the world is as worldly, unbelief as prevalent, inconsistency as widespread, the Church as timid and supple as prophets fear or sceptics declare. "What saith the answer of God? I have reserved," &c. This opens to us the opposite fact—II. THE IMMORTAL SURVIVAL OF THE SECRET LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND OF PERSONAL PIETY, ALTHOUGH IT IS IN A MINORITY, AND COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION. God makes much out of little, and saves by a handful of heroes, calling up His reserves out of obscurity, and never letting His altar fires die out. Seven thousand a slight proportion. They were out of sight, scattered saints crouching in corners. Elijah was looking on things on their earthly side. Not so the All-seeing. There was an unreckoned hope in obscure men and women Elijah did not know. Always a light left burning in Switzerland, in Germany, in England, in Scotland. The gates of hell do not prevail. III. HERE IS, THEN,

A LAW FOR PRACTICAL USE. What God requires of us is personal fidelity, or the earnest training of private Christian character in each one by himself, irrespective of any visible results or any possible discouragements. For this there are the clearest grounds. 1. It follows straight on in the way of the beginnings of the Church under the hand of the Lord. Get one man brave enough to do right against any maxims of a majority; one woman brave enough to lift others into her own pathway of light, and you are working precisely in the line of Him who knows what is in man, and redeems the race. 2. The doctrine is strong in that it is practicable. Every individual has one realm all his own—his conscience. Disappointed, baffled, elsewhere, he can make that all Christian. Pagan pleasures may allure others. You may not know where others—helpers—are. But your own place is in "the munitions of rocks." And the Master will always be there with you. 3. This sphere of personal Christian character touches others wonderfully, but never depends upon them so as to surrender to them if they go over to Baal. Your knees are your own to bend to whom you will. The apostles called no convention. Great reforms are in single souls before they are in parliaments, synods, or constitutions. God's harvests spring from single, solitary seeds. It is not miracle but law. The patient power of the Lord reserves His remnant of faithful hearts. His work is done first by single, then by united hands. Character, steadfast, pure, holy, is at once its force and its fruit. (*Bp. Huntington.*) **Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias?**—*The Old Testament Scriptures*—I. ARE NOT SUPERSEDED. II. OUGHT TO BE CAREFULLY STUDIED. III. ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The prophet's complaint and God's answer*:—I. THE COMPLAINT OF THE PROPHET. 1. Hasty. 2. Erring. 3. Despondings. II. THE ANSWER OF GOD. 1. Exact. 2. Reproving. 3. Inspiring. (*Ibid.*) *Mistakes concerning the number of the righteous*:—Sometimes we make them from—I. THE PECULIAR STATE OF OUR OWN MINDS. This seems to have been the condition of Elijah. His language betrays—1. Severity. 2. Petulance. 3. Despair. II. OBSERVING MULTIPLIED INSTANCES OF FALSE PROFESSION. The apostacy of one pretender excites more attention than the lives of solid, steady Christians. III. THE RIGHTEOUS THEMSELVES. Because of—1. The obscurity of their stations. 2. The diffidence of their dispositions. 3. The manner of their conversion. 4. The diversity of their opinions. 5. The imperfection of their character. Application: I. The use which the apostle makes of his subject. 2. Are you among the number of the saved? 3. Let all true Christians consider the Author and end of their salvation. 4. Remember also for whom you have been saved. (*W. Jay.*) *Despondency*:—I. LOOKS AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN. II. OVERLOOKS THOSE WHICH ARE UNSEEN. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **But what saith the answer of God?**—*The answer of God to Elijah*:—I. ALL DOUBTS IN MATTERS OF RELIGION ARE TO BE DECIDED BY THE WORD OF GOD (John v. 39; Mark xii. 24). Elijah erred because he spake without his book. Remember this—1. In all matters controverted. When it is questioned whether images are to be worshipped, angels and saints prayed to, &c., who shall resolve us? We are to take no man's word, not even the word of Elijah for a matter of faith. What saith the Scripture? Men may err, but the answer of God is according to truth. 2. In matters of practice. If it be questioned whether thou shalt break the Sabbath, deceive thy neighbour, &c. Thy companions, it may be, and thine own heart will entice thee to do such things, but what saith the Scripture? They which do such things shall be damned. II. THE CHURCH OF GOD SHALL NEVER BE BROUGHT TO SUCH AN EXIGENT IN THE MOST DIFFICULT TIMES, BUT THAT THERE SHALL BE MANY THOUSANDS WHICH SHALL WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. 1. The best on earth do err, as Elijah who erred by a passion of anger and fear. Order your passions by the law of grace, for if they be ungoverned they blind the mind, and as unruly horses draw the chariot of our judgment into the bye-paths of error. 2. Elijah erred in his censure concerning true worshippers; be not, then, rash in censuring. It is rashness to censure particular men, much more whole Churches to be antichristian. How darest thou refuse communion with them who have communion with Christ? 3. Neither multitude nor visibility are certain notes of the true Church, for then there had been no Church in Elijah's time, for the multitude was with Ahab and Jezebel, and Elijah could not discern one beside himself. The Papists say the Church was always visible, but the creed confuteth them, for we believe in the holy Catholic Church. But holiness is invisible and so is Catholicity. We may grant that particular Churches are visible, and yet here some cautions are to be remembered. They may be invisible in respect—(1) Of place. As the sun is always visible, but to us only when it ariseth in our hemisphere. So at Jerusalem

the Church was not to be seen when it removed to Pella. (2) Of the time, as in Elijah's and Queen Mary's days. As the sun behind a cloud in some respect is invisible, so may it be said of a Church. (3) Of persons which should discern it. A Church is sometimes invisible through the fault of men's eyes, which are either weak as of Elijah, or blind as of them which hate the Church. III. THOSE WHO IN DANGEROUS TIMES ARE PRESERVED IN GRACE ARE SO PRESERVED MERELY BY THE POWER AND GOODNESS OF GOD (1 Sam. xxv. 39; 2 Thess. v. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Jude 24). 1. Though Jezebel search every corner of the land, yet God reserveth seven thousand which bow not the knees to Baal. God can keep us from our enemies; let persecutors cease their malicious practices, and let us serve God without fear. 2. In regard to the preaching of the gospel these are golden days, but in regard of the overflowing of iniquity these are perilous times. Art thou preserved? glorify God. It is not thy goodness that thou dost not as others, but the goodness of God. 3. Be admonished of two things. (1) Presume not of thine own strength. Peter bragged of his courage, and yet played the coward. Hazael thought great scorn ever to do as Elisha foretold to him, and yet afterwards he did such things. (2) Be not secure and careless. God reserveth some, but those which use the means to persevere in well doing. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*)

Vers. 6-10. **And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.**—*The Christian doctrine of Divine grace*:—I. MAN IS THE OBJECT OF GRACE. 1. The present dispensation is only the perfection of many, and grace is the characteristic of all. But the gospel is emphatically "the gospel of the grace of God." The Father is "the God of all grace." "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Spirit is the "Spirit of grace." This grace is uniformly stated as the cause of the electing purpose—the reason of our personal justification—the germ of the renovating process—the potent motive to all piety, as it is the prolific source of all favour. 2. The atonement is the effect of Divine grace. Jehovah is not merciful because Christ has died, but Christ has died because Jehovah was merciful. 3. "The grace which bringeth salvation," is, in no sense, impaired by any arrangements which had a reference to ourselves. Antecedent questions of justice and satisfaction could not injure the display of that love which was equally in the Father and the Son; which was equally evinced in inflicting and enduring death. 4. The death of the Cross is only a means to the most benevolent end. A benefaction is not commonly reduced in its value by its cost, nor a deliverance by its peril. Is the grace of God the greater, or the less, when encountering no difficulty, or when encountering it to overcome it? Is the grace of God more brightly, or more faintly glorious, when associated with moral principles, or when disregarding them? 5. The gospel, while it upholds the claims of the Divine law, has an exclusive bearing upon us as sinners. Let the awful negotiations between the Father and the Son—who are one—be whatever they were—the sinner has no righteousness or claim. Salvation is a question not of justice but of grace. 6. No blessing of the gospel is in any legitimate sense the subject of purchase. Christians are "the purchased possession"; they are "bought with a price." But the "sure mercies" of the covenant are free gifts. God was ready to forgive, but there was an impediment. The atonement removed that impediment and "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," now flows without check or restriction. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men." II. THE GRACE, WHICH IS SO PRE-EMINENT, CANNOT BE CONFOUNDED WITH ANY INFERIOR OR INCONGRUOUS PRINCIPLE. Let us define —1. Grace is free favour; it can be related to no right, and contained in no law. Whenever bestowed, it depends upon the mere will of him who exercises it. If there is any necessity for it, it "is no more grace." 2. Work is individual action or conduct, and implies those particular qualities which provoke praise or condemnation. This course of accountable behaviour is properly—(1) Personal. We all feel possessed of a something which we cannot transfer. Whatever we have taken part in still attaches to us. We reap what we have sown. (2) Work must be voluntary to be accountable. If I am compelled to do what I disapprove, the hand is mine, but that hand is only a mechanical instrument of another's will. (3) Work, therefore, goes to form the general character of the moral agent. A succession of works forms a habit, a variety of habits mould a character. Such has merit or demerit. 3. But if this be the just delineation of work, it cannot be employed indiscriminately with grace. Grace is opposed to work as it—(1) Is extrinsic of the person. It reaches us from another source. Personal qualities it may inspire—but its origin is supernal and Divine. (2) Is independent of the volition. Man had no desire to be saved in

this manner; it is the "kindness of God our Saviour," "who doeth as it pleaseth Him." (3) Most jealously and tenaciously challenges that merit and honour which virtuous and sinless obedience claims, and the Divine code awards. "To him that worketh, the reward is reckoned not of grace but of debt." III. GRACE AND WORK ARE OFTEN VIOLENTLY TORTURED INTO AN UNNATURAL ALLIANCE. That system cannot reconcile itself to the idea of grace, which—1. Proceeds upon the merits of human conduct. Merit is a relation of justice, and not of favour. 2. Rests human acceptance on a foreknowledge of some attractive qualities of character. For whence do these originate? Foreknowledge is not potential. Who has smitten the rock, and melted it into streams of grief? Who has turned the "wilderness into the fruitful field"? 3. Reckons on the self-determining power of the human will. How is it, in conversion, that the will, which is but the bias of our tainted nature, elects the part of good, but by the grace of Him from whom all good proceeds? 4. Accounts the gospel as a provision of simple facility to man to save himself. By this view we are never to invoke Christ's righteousness and expiation, but when, after our most strenuous self-justifying efforts, we feel that a little more may be required to give our case its perfect recommendation. 5. Varies the universal freeness of the gospel by moral differences in man. Without distorting or forcing into one another the things which differ, Christianity surveys all men in their equal need of salvation, and in their ruin without it. 6. Founds our duty upon a bestowment of grace. IV. THE EFFECTS OF THESE OPPOSING PRINCIPLES. 1. How differently they explain Christianity! If work predominate over grace, the gospel is the republished law, and if the unabated law, is a message of despair; or if the extenuated law changes that glory into whatever is short-sighted and inconsistent; and in the prostration of that law, sinks the standard of our good, falls the pattern of our dignity. But let grace have the pre-eminence. What a change comes over the "great salvation"! It is pardon to the guilty, restoration to the undone. It never pauses until it has found out "our low estate," and never relaxes its effort until it has lifted us from it. 2. How oppositely they affect the mission of Christ! We honour grace in the degree to which we honour the mediation of Christ. But "if it be of works," at once the Saviour's mediation is degraded. For what did He "pour out His soul unto death"? According to this unworthy calculation—to follow in the train of the sinner who strives to save himself, ready to lend His aid, should occasion require it. 3. How inversely they influence the human mind. (1) Which of these two principles is the better fitted to inspire that humility of dependence which every relation of the creature, and much more every adjunct of the sinner, dictate? There is all the difference of claim and suppliance. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are"! "God be merciful to me a sinner"! The gospel repeats "By grace ye are saved"; it adds the reason, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (2) But the spirit of grace, in contradistinction to work, is also the spirit of obedience. (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Salvation by grace*:—Some are all their days laying the foundation, and are never able to build upon it to any comfort to themselves or usefulness to others. And the reason is because they will be mixing with the foundation stones that are only fit for the building. They will be bringing their obedience, duties, mortification of sin and the like, into the foundation. These are precious stones to build with, but unmeet to be first laid to bear upon them the whole weight of the building. The foundation is to be laid in mere grace, mercy, pardon in the blood of Christ; this the soul is to accept of and rest in merely as it is grace, without the consideration of anything in itself, but that it is sinful and obnoxious to ruin. This it finds a difficulty in, and would gladly have something of its own to mix with it; it cannot tell how to fix these foundation stones without some cement of its own endeavours and duty; and because these things will not mix, they spend fruitless efforts about it all their days. But if the foundation be of grace, it is not at all of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. If anything of our own be mixed with grace in this matter, it utterly destroys the nature of grace, which, if it be not alone, is not at all. (*J. Owen, D.D.*) **What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for.**—*The judgment upon Israel* is—I. PARTIAL. II. SELF-OCCASIONED (*cf.* chap. ix. 31, 32). III. A FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY uttered—1. By Isaiah. 2. By David. IV. IS A WARNING TO US. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Israel's failure*:—I. WHAT HE SOUGHT—righteousness. II. HOW HE SOUGHT IT. Not by faith, but by works. III. WHAT WAS THE RESULT? 1. The elect obtained it by faith. 2. The rest failed—were blinded. (*Ibid.*) *Seeking and obtaining salvation*:—So many seek salvation and are not saved because they seek amiss. To seek that we may find, three things are to be observed. I. THE TIME. "Seek *first*

the kingdom of God." If thou seekest it not first but at leisure, it is a thousand to one thou shalt never find it. Usually men postpone this to their age: in their youth nothing but pleasure; old heads must not be set on young shoulders; but when they lie upon their death bed then send for the minister. Is this enough? I should marvel if God should be content with the dregs of thy life when the devil hath had the flower. There is an old saying—He that neglecteth the occasion, the occasion will neglect him, as it appeareth by the example of the five foolish virgins. II. THE PLACE. He that hath lost a ring and seeks a mile from the place where he lost it is not likely to find it. Seek salvation where it is to be found: that is in Christ, in whom are all treasures. The Jews sought it in themselves and missed of it. But where is Christ to be found? In the house of God; not in an alehouse and the meetings of profane men. III. THE MANNER. 1. Seek painfully, as the woman for her groat. The mine of gold lies not in the first spade, it lies deeper, it is well if after all pains we find it at the last. 2. Continue seeking; he that continues to the end shall be saved; it is worth all our pains though all should seek a thousand years, give not over till thou hast found. Israel sought for salvation, in the obedience of the law, but found it not; what shall, then, become of the wicked who seek not at all: of those who seek only vanities. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*)

God hath given them the spirit of slumber.—*The spirit of slumber*:—Blindness of mind and hardness is a spiritual lethargy, when neither the thundering noise of the law nor the sweet sound of the gospel can awake us. 1. The Greek word used by Paul from the Septuagint signifies pricking and compunction (see margin). This meaning may well be retained, dead sleep being called compunction by a figure; the effect being put for the cause because no compunction can awake it, or the cause for the effect because compunction is the cause of dead sleep in the mind. 2. There is a double compunction: one coming from sorrow for sin (Acts ii. 37), another from envy and malice, which was in the Jews, because the gospel of Christ, whom they crucified, was as a dagger at their hearts. This compunction is the cause of such a deadness of mind that, as a man in a dead sleep hears and understands nothing, so an envious mind is impatient to hear or conceive anything for its good. Excess of grief brings a failing of the mind, and envy is a gnawing of the heart against our neighbour. When Stephen preached the Jews gnashed their teeth and stopped their ears. And when Paul preaches at Antioch the Jews rail and contradict, so that a man had as good speak to a dead man as unto them. Chrysostom expounds it as a nailing to their passion, whereby they are unmovable in their perfidiousness. Some translate it ecstasy, for envy makes a man beside himself, capable of no good instruction. Cyprian calls it transpunction, as a vessel having a hole stricken through the bottom, holds not the liquor put in it. 3. The text teaches that God in His just judgment gives over such as are enemies to the gospel to be blinded, that they cannot convert (John ix. 39; 2 Cor. iv. 3). I. MANY IN WORLDLY THINGS ARE OF GREAT APPREHENSION AND JUDGMENT, AND YET AS BLIND AS BEETLES, VERY BLOCKS IN RELIGION. Eyes they have, they are no fools, yet they perceive not the things belonging to their peace. As bats and owls see best in the night, so their chiefest understanding is of worldly matters. As a mole within the ground is nimble and quick, but above the ground can make little shift, so talk or deal with these men of earthly matters, they are cunning, but speak of religion and you pose them as with a strange language. Achitophel, a great statesman, goes home in a dudgeon, and in a sullen fit hangs himself; could any idiot have done more foolishly? Pray that thy wit may be sanctified, otherwise thou mayest prove an enemy and be besotted with the worst folly. It is a fearful state to envy the gospel: such are given over to the devil to be blinded, and what will not the devil bring such unto? Needs must he go whom the devil drives: as he tumbled the swine into the sea, so will he thrust such into all iniquity. II. TO HAVE EYES AND NOT TO SEE, TO KNOW THE TRUTH AND TO HAVE NO POWER TO APPLY IT TO OUR CONSCIENCES, IS FEARFUL. It is uncomfortable to be born bodily blind, much more is spiritual blindness uncomfortable. When Christ came nigh Jerusalem He wept over it for the blindness of the Jews. When He raised Lazarus He groaned in the spirit for the hardness of their hearts. A grievous plague must blindness of mind be when Christ so wept and groaned for them which were stricken with it, when He never cried Oh! for all His own bitter passions. Repent of thy malice to the Word that thou mayest see. (*Ibid.*) *The hardened sinner*:—I. HIS MORAL CONDITION. 1. Insensible. 2. Blind. 3. Prejudiced. II. THE CAUSE. 1. Resistance of grace. 2. Retributive justice. III. THE CONSEQUENCES. 1. Misery. 2. Despair. 3. **Death,** unless God interpose in sovereign mercy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The*

present condition of the Jews:—I. THE RESULT OF LONG-CONTINUED DISOBEDIENCE. II. A LITERAL FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY. Instance—1. Their moral insensibility, blindness, and prejudice. 2. Their exposure to plunder and misfortune. 3. Their intellectual deterioration. 4. Their servility and subjection to oppression. III. A LESSON TO THE WORLD. (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual blindness*:—"My blindness came on very gradually. I first began to notice that I could not see so far as I used to do, and one morning when looking from the window I could only see across the road. As time went on I could see no further than the mantelpiece, and at length I had to grope my way about the room; and now no one knows what that darkness means but one who has experienced the same." As she concluded her sad story, I thought that was just like spiritual blindness. Some sin comes, and gradually obscures the light of God in the soul. By and by the darkness deepens, until at length it is darkness which may be felt. Only the removal of the cause of darkness will secure a return of light; and only when sin is forgiven and abandoned is it possible to walk in the light of God's countenance. **Let their table be made a snare.**—*Abuse of privileges*:—David is speaking both as a prophet and as a type of the Messiah (Psa. lxix. 22, 23). His words are quoted and applied to Jesus (chap. xv. 3; John ii. 17; xix. 28, 29), and applied to Judas (Acts i. 20). Similar denunciations are to be similarly interpreted. They are not the utterances of personal or vindictive feeling, but the denunciations and predictions of God's Spirit. I. TABLE. What would otherwise have been for good. 1. Daily and common mercies. 2. Spiritual privileges. Sin brings a curse which converts food into poison (Mal. ii. 2). "Their table." A believer's table is spread for him by God (Psa. xxiii. 5); the table of the unbeliever is regarded as his own. II. SNARE. Cause of unexpected destruction. Their very mercies are an occasion of sin and misery. To faith the means of grace are salvation; to unbelief, a snare. Table a snare. When the gospel proves a savour of death unto death. The gospel table was spread first for the Jews (Matt. xxii. 28); the preaching of forgiveness began at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 47), and being rejected proved a snare. III. TRAP—a capture. The sinner caught in Satan's trap when he rejects the Saviour. Note the gradation—a snare for the foot, a trap for the whole body. The Old Testament falsely interpreted confirms the Jews in unbelief; the New Testament disbelieved becomes the occasion of deeper sin. In opposing the gospel the Jews filled up their sins (1 Thess. ii. 16). In this sin the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost. Their passover-table was made their trap. Multitudes thus caught in the siege of Jerusalem perished. IV. STUMBLING-BLOCK—that which causes to fall into a snare or trap. The gospel when believed raises men to heaven; rejected it trips them into the bottomless pit. Christ a foundation to some, a stumbling-block to others (chap. ix. 32, 33). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 11-22. **I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?**—*The rejection of Israel*:—I. HOW OCCASIONED. 1. They stumbled at Christ. 2. Were rejected because of their unbelief. II. HOW OVERRULED. 1. For the benefit of the Gentiles. 2. Indirectly for their own. III. HOW FINALLY COMPENSATED. 1. By their fulness. 2. By enlarged blessing upon the world. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The fall of Israel* is—I. TEMPORARY (vers. 11-16). 1. It was overruled for the benefit of the world, because in consequence of their unbelief the preachers of the gospel turned to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 16). 2. Their fulness—(1) Must be the occasion of still greater blessing (vers. 12-15). (2) Must be the reflex effect of the success of the gospel among the Gentiles (vers. 13, 14). (3) Is guaranteed by the firstfruits (vers. 15, 16). II. ADMONITORY. 1. We should not despise but pity them (vers. 17, 18). 2. Their fall—(1) Is a warning to us (vers. 19-21). (2) Should excite admiration of the goodness and severity of God (ver. 22). (3) Should awaken hope and efforts for their recovery. (*Ibid.*) **Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, . . . how much more their fulness?**—*The calling of the Jews the enriching of the world*:—Learn—I. GOD MAKES ALL MUTATIONS OF STATES TO SERVE TO THE GOOD OF THE ELECT. If the Jews stand it is good; so is it if they fall, and shall be in their rising again. The prosperity of Egypt shall serve the good of Abraham; the destruction of Egypt the good of his children. "All His ways are good to such as keep His testimonies." II. THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS SHALL BE THE RICHES OF THE WORLD. The more receive of the treasures of God's grace the greater is every one's part. So is it not in the treasure of princes. If the king bestow a thousand pounds upon one man it is a great gift; if upon two it is the less to each by half; if upon a thousand it is but a small matter to every one. But in God's

treasures multitudes of partakers diminish not but increase another's part. The more drink of the waters of life the more floweth the fountain, the more the merrier. Where two or three are gathered together, there is Christ, but where more, there He is the more graciously. The prayer of one availeth much, how much more the prayers of many righteous? Force united is the stronger. Many streams make a great river, many drops a great flood, many sparks a great flame. How might we prevail with God if our whole people would join with one mind and affection in the service of God! III. THE GOSPEL, FAITH, REPENTANCE, &c., ARE TRUE RICHES. Gold, silver, &c., but shadows to these; therefore the man that had his barns full and his conscience empty, not being rich in God, is called fool. Hast thou silver and gold? But if thou hast not a good conscience, the poorest man that feareth God will not change states with thee. IV. THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS SHALL BE OUR RICHES. It should make us think long for their calling. Gain is pleasing to hear of, but more to have it. Knowledge shall then increase upon us as the waters that cover the sea; the light of the moon shall be as the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold. Zeal and all good graces shall increase. A great light is now risen, but a greater shall arise. Let us pray and long for the revealing of such riches, and in the meantime mourn for the hardness of the Jews, and cry unto God, "Visit Thy ancient people with Thy salvation." V. THE CASTING OFF OF THE JEWS WAS OUR CALLING; BUT THE CALLING OF THE JEWS SHALL NOT BE OUR CASTING OFF, but our greater enriching in grace, and that two ways: 1. In regard of the company of believers when the thousands of Israel shall come in, which shall doubtless cause many Gentiles which now lie in ignorance, error, and doubt receive the gospel and join with them. The world shall then be a golden world, rich in golden men, saith Ambrose. 2. In respect of the graces which shall then in more abundance be rained down on the Church. There shall be more good, and they shall be also more good. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) **Inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.**—*Paul magnifying his office:*—I. PAUL'S OFFICE. The apostle of the Gentiles. Specially—1. Commissioned. 2. Qualified. 3. Successful. II. HOW HE MAGNIFIED IT. 1. Not by boasting of it, but faithfully fulfilling it. 2. Not by confining himself to the Gentiles, but seeking the benefit of all. 3. Not by glorying in the fall of Israel, but anticipating the blessings associated with their recovery. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Church offices and magnifying them:*—In the Church—I. EVERY MAN HAS HIS OWN OFFICE. 1. Higher or lower. 2. Assigned by the Great Head. 3. For which he is specially qualified. 4. Therefore responsible. II. SHOULD MAGNIFY IT. 1. Not by glorying in it, but by rightly appreciating it. 2. Not by assumption, but fidelity. 3. Not by despising others, but encouraging them. (*Ibid.*) *Necessaries of the ministerial office:*—To be prepared for this office we must—1. Seek to possess ourselves with the most just and influential apprehensions of its nature and high designs. 2. Cherish a devout persuasion of its efficacy. 3. Endeavour to imbibe and visibly to cultivate the spirit appropriate to its discharge. 4. Give to its fulfilment the unreserved and constant dedication of our highest powers. This must appear under the form of—(1) Preparation. (2) Public labour. (3) Private assiduity. 5. Continue in the course thus described—(1) With perseverance and watchfulness unto the end. (2) With a meek endurance of every trial and privation to which it may expose us. (3) With cheerful making of every sacrifice necessary to its fulfilment. 6. Cultivate habitual and solemn anticipations of its issues. (*R. M'All, D.D.*) *The dignity of the Christian ministry:*—The word "magnify," employed to express the qualities of an object or pursuit, conveys the idea of something highly esteemed, honourable, glorious. And this is the estimate which Paul put on the office he sustained as a minister of Jesus Christ. The dignity of the Christian ministry may be seen by contemplating—I. THE AUTHORITY BY WHICH IT ACTS. That the Christian ministry has had its origin in an appointment directly from Heaven, it were folly for any to question who bow to the teachings of revelation. This claim has been asserted from the beginning, and in not a single instance has it ever been modified or relinquished. I say not that the ministry of the New Testament is in all respects identical with that of the Old. There is now no official earthly priesthood, for the one great Sacrifice has been offered "once for all." And yet I do say that, as a Divinely appointed agency to meet the spiritual wants of the world, the ministry is not peculiar to the Christian dispensation. The ministry, and, in its most important attributes, the Christian ministry too, has existed under every revelation of the gospel as the medium of spiritual intercourse between Heaven and earth. Change of names, or of forms, or of outward service, does nothing to disturb what is strictly

essential to the great ministerial function, nor to mar the integrity of that gracious system in which it has ever held an indispensable place. II. THE OBJECTS IT CONTEMPLATES. In all the departments of man's social condition we discover ample proofs of the salutary influence which the ministry is fitted to exert. The influence of the pulpit upon the intellectual condition of man is a subject worthy the profoundest thought of all who are lovers of their kind. There is no agency under heaven that can bear with so much power upon the convictions and motives of humanity as the ministry of the gospel. Compared with the attainments of the human mind under the influence of Christianity, all its achievements amid the most favourable auspices of paganism are light and trivial. It was reserved for teachers mightier than those of the Academy or the Lyceum to proclaim to the world those great principles upon which its elevation, purity, and glory are made to rest. In like manner must it be said that the ministry of the gospel constitutes a most essential element in the progress of civilisation. The science of government, the theory of civil and religious liberty, are properly understood and appreciated only where the pulpit is true to its glorious mission. But to the ministry of the gospel appertains still higher honour. The gospel has to do pre-eminently with man's spiritual nature, and has a direct bearing upon interests that affect his eternal destiny. The ministry goes forth on its benevolent mission. It preaches the gospel—the gospel as a source of light, making known a new element in the character of God—an element of mercy. It preaches the gospel as a source of power, by which the bondage of depravity is broken, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the captive is made free. It preaches the gospel as a source of consolation, by which the spirit is cheered amid all the trials of life, till Death itself falls a conquered monster at his feet, and he is away to the bosom of his Father and his God. And I ask, must not the instrumentality that stands connected with such glorious results as these be of all others the most dignified and important? III. THE MEANS WHICH IT EMPLOYS. Though several agencies might be mentioned having a concurrent influence in accomplishing the objects of the ministry, yet there is one that holds such a pre-eminence above all others, that we shall confine our attention to it alone: it is truth—"the truth as it is in Jesus." How comprehensive and profound, how noble and soul-stirring the themes there presented for investigation! IV. THE AIDS THAT ARE PLEDGED TO IT. Among these we specially note the Spirit and Providence of God. Is there anything the mind can contemplate more truly sublime and beautiful than this alliance of the weakness of humanity with the strength of Divinity? thus constituting the ministry associate labourers with the eternal God in the regeneration of the world! But the Providence of God is also pledged to aid in the same great enterprise. Christ, the Author of the gospel and the Founder of the ministry, is "Head over all things to the Church." Not only by Him were all things created, but by Him also are they sustained and controlled and made subservient to the accomplishment of His purposes of grace. (*D. Kennedy, D.D.*) *The ministerial office not an easy one*:—To one who regretted to Dr. Johnson that he had not been a clergyman because the life of a clergyman was an easy and comfortable one, the Doctor replied, "The life of a conscientious clergyman is not easy. I have always considered a clergyman as the father of a larger family than he is able to maintain. No, sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life." **If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh.**—*Provoking to emulation*:—My text calls us to consider—I. THE HEART OF MAN IN A STATE OF INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT OF GOD. 1. The Jew was satisfied with that which ought not to have satisfied him, and he was indifferent towards that for which he should have craved. He had sacrifices, and should have been watching for the Lamb of God. He had a schoolmaster whose mission it was to lead him to Christ, but he was satisfied with the pedagogue. Toward certain national blessings he was anything but indifferent, but for the incomparable blessings of the kingdom he had no heart. 2. All this is not so much Jewish as human. The emulation of our first mother was, by the primitive temptation, misdirected. Abel was provoked to emulation by the promise of redemption, but Cain was excited to anger, and Adam's immediate posterity soon became dead in trespasses and sins. Noah was moved with fear, but the world was immovable. Abraham was inspired to become a wanderer, but his near relatives sought a continuing city. Israel was stirred up by Moses to leave Egypt, but soon they preferred to return. From the time of the dedication of the temple the nation began to decline, and then (Isa. i. 8; Hos. vii. 8; viii. 9) no promise or prophecy provoked them to emulation. 3. In the fulness of time the Son of Man

came to seek and to save that which is lost. But His generation was crooked and perverse toward Him; "His own" slew Him, and His disciples were slow of heart toward Him. An inferior being would not have been slain. Christ was too good for the people. Their emulation was too low to reach such an object. At and after the day of Pentecost, many Jews were provoked to emulation, but this emulation passed away. 4. No sooner had the light of the world begun to shine than a cry arose for the twilight of Judaism and for the night of Paganism. Men asked and received, they sought and found. And the history of the Church is very much the sad story of the substitution of error for truth. The Reformation provoked to emulation, and subsequently Wesley and Whitfield; but now as heretofore we seem to hear a cry, "Not this man, but Barabbas." "Not Christ, but Antichrist." We might speak of millions outside Christendom whose emulation carries them no higher than a senseless idol. We might speak of Christendom content with the human where nothing should satisfy but the Divine. 5. But let us look at "our own flesh." Multitudes in our England live but to gratify the lowest appetites; their emulation does not raise them to the level of the beasts that perish. Many, free from animal lusts, live for light pleasure and for small enjoyments. A large majority live to earn and to eat the bread that perisheth. Some live to climb to dizzy heights in the social scale. Now that which is good among these varied objects is far below the highest good. There is a spirit in man to satisfy as well as a body. There is Godlike blessedness within reach as well as temporary pleasure, bread that endureth unto everlasting life, honour that cometh from God, but toward these things the multitude in this nation have no emulation. 6. And among those who profess to have accepted the highest good we often observe a low emulation. One has the form of godliness without the power. Another has a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Others limit their religion to orthodox opinions, or sensations, or correct conduct. The godly emulation of the people is low. II. BEHOLD ONE WHO HAS HIMSELF RECEIVED THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT, STRIVING TO REMOVE INDIFFERENCE FROM OTHERS. 1. There was much in Christ calculated to arouse. He baptized with fire. He brought not peace only, but a sword. The spirit of His ministry was the spirit of expostulation with those who were satisfied with evil called good, or with a lower kind of good than He offered. He spake as the old prophet (Isa. lv. 2; *cf.* John iv. 13, 14; vi. 27). 2. John Baptist preached in harmony with this spirit of Christ Jesus. The axe is to be laid to the root of the tree; chaff is to be burned with unquenchable fire. And when men were inclined to rest in him, he cried, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I." 3. The manifest tendency of the teaching of Jesus to provoke to emulation led in part to His crucifixion. It was this which imprisoned Peter, and stoned Stephen, and beheaded James, and scourged Paul and Silas. 4. The life and example of Paul wrought upon indifference. He provoked the indolent by his activity, the bigot by his charity, the careless by his consistency, the changeable by his belief, the half-hearted by his zeal, and the cold-hearted by the heat of his enthusiasm and love. Unbelievers and false brethren were not at ease in his presence. He stirred men also by direct endeavours for their salvation. "If by any means I may save some." "Any means"—by preaching and teaching, entreaty, persuasion; wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove, all things to all men to save some. 5. Oh! for Paul-like men to provoke to emulation them which are our flesh! According to our power and opportunity let us try and do it. Our fellow-citizens are near us. We must travel sixteen thousand miles to stir the Japanese and Chinese. Our own flesh are always with us. They see our conduct, and understand our language. To foreigners we may be unable, individually, to set a good example; we cannot address them, but we have opportunity to provoke to emulation our own people. Suffer the example of Paul to provoke you to this good work. But I have something better to present than the example of Paul, even that of Christ. Is this pattern too perfect? Then for the present follow Paul, and let him be your pedagogue unto Christ. (*S. Martin.*) *Concern for kindred*:—I. OUR KINDRED HAVE SPECIAL CLAIMS UPON OUR CONSIDERATION. II. NO MEANS SHOULD BE SPARED TO AWAKEN THEIR RELIGIOUS FEELING. III. NOTHING SHORT OF THEIR SALVATION SHOULD SATISFY US. IV. IF WE CANNOT SAVE ALL, AT LEAST LET US SAVE SOME. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?**—*The conversion of the Jews*:—The rejection of the Jews deeply affected the apostle. But there were three things which afforded him some consolation in the view of it. They were not all cast away; their rejection was the occasion of spreading the gospel among the Gentiles;

they should yet be called in, and made instrumental of enlarging the Church of Christ. I shall show—I. THAT THE JEWS WILL BE CALLED IN. God has dispersed them, and therefore His calling them in must imply not only the taking away of the veil from their hearts, but also His restoring them to their own land. These two things cannot be separated any more than cause and effect. 1. This event is repeatedly foretold (Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Ezek. xi. 16-20; Hos. i. 10, 11; Amos ix. 14, 15; Zech. xiv. 21). 2. The preservation of the Jews confirms these predictions. They have been scattered among all nations for two thousand years, and yet remain distinct, while all other conquered nations have become blended with their conquerors. What other reason can be assigned for this but the Divine purpose of restoring them to their native land? In this view they have been, ever since their dispersion, a standing monument of the truth of God in His predictions, and of the faithfulness of God in His promise to Abraham. 3. This is further confirmed by their peculiar circumstances. They never have been permitted to own any particular country, or to establish any particular government. And though they have generally enjoyed temporal prosperity, yet their wealth has always consisted in personal and not in landed property. So that they have no attachment to any particular place or government, but constantly stand ready to march whenever the promised Messiah shall lead them in triumph to their native land. II. SOME OF THE HAPPY EFFECTS WHICH WILL FLOW FROM THIS EVENT. 1. It will greatly confirm the truth of Divine revelation. There are more particular and express predictions concerning the restoration of the Jews than concerning any other event. And whenever it shall take place it will be more easy to discern the agreement between the predictions and their accomplishment than it has been in any other case whatever. 2. According to the text the restoration of the Jews shall have a greater tendency to convert mankind than their dispersion had. Their dispersion broke down the middle wall of partition, and opened the way for spreading the gospel among the nations. The same effect in a greater degree shall be produced by their restoration. And this may be greatly owing to the methods God may employ to bring it about. It is supposed by many that He will convert them in the places where they are dispersed before He conducts them to Jerusalem. And should this be the case it will have a powerful tendency to awaken the attention of all nations to the gospel (Zech. viii. 20). 3. It will have a direct and happy tendency to bring on the latter-day glory. It is easy to see how it will in many ways facilitate the universal spread of the gospel. And there is no doubt they will be as much engaged to spread the gospel as they ever had been to oppose it. Their return, therefore, the apostle represents as the fulness of the Gentiles who will then be united with them, and so all Israel shall be saved; that is, the whole number of God's elect who are His spiritual Israel. III. IMPROVEMENT. 1. It appears from what has been said that there is a growing evidence in favour of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures by the fulfilling of prophecies. The evidence of miracles has ceased; but the evidence of prophecy has been continued and increased from the day that God foretold that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. 2. The sovereignty of God appears plainly from His conduct towards His peculiar people. He claims a right to give temporal favours to one and not to another, and to give spiritual blessings to one and not to another. He promised to give to Abraham and to his seed such temporal and spiritual blessings as He denied to mankind in general. And though for a long time past He has scattered them through the world, yet He has exercised a particular providence over them by which they are preparing to stand again as His peculiar people at the head of the religious world. 3. If the restoration of the Jews shall produce such effects as have been mentioned, then we may safely conclude that God is as really promoting the prosperity of the Church in general at one time as at another. He was as really fulfilling His promise to Abraham while his seed were four hundred years in bondage as while He was pouring down His blessings upon them in the land of promise. God is never slack, as men count slackness, in carrying into effect the great purposes of His grace. God promotes the fruitfulness of the earth by cold as well as by heat, by darkness as well as by light; just so He promotes the prosperity of the Church by all the opposition made to its growth and enlargement. The friends of Christ have no just ground to despond at the apparently slow movements of the wheels of providence, nor His enemies to hope and triumph. In due time the Jews will be restored and converted, and the gospel will spread and prevail. 4. If the Jews shall be called in, then we cannot expect any long settled peace among the nations till that event shall take place. It cannot be brought about without disturbing the harmony of all

nations where they reside, and through whom they must make their way to Judæa, which is in the possession of the Mohammedans. It is not to be supposed that the Mohammedans can be conquered without spreading war among the whole Eastern world. And should a general war break out there, it would directly or indirectly affect all Europe, if not America. 5. It appears from what has been said that we have as much reason to believe the Jews will be eventually restored to their native country as they had to believe the coming of Christ. There was a multitude of plain predictions in the Old Testament concerning Christ, which the Jews ought to have believed, but there are as many both in the Old and New Testament concerning the restoration of the Jews. And there are no more apparent difficulties in the way of their returning to their native land than there were in the way of Christ's coming into the world. But Christians have been very unbelieving in respect to their return, and this has led Christian nations to despise and abuse that ancient people. 6. Since God has plainly told us that He intends to deliver them we ought to desire and do all we can to bring about that great and happy event. We have received unspeakable benefits from their being for a while cast away, and are promised still greater benefits from their predicted restoration. There is no ground to expect the restoration of the Jews without the aid of the Christian world. It is time, therefore, for Christians to be alive to the great work they have to do. 7. This subject teaches us the indispensable obligation we are under to believe, and love, and obey the sacred oracles which the Jews so long preserved, and at length conveyed to us Gentiles. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The benefit resulting from the conversion of the Jews*:—The calling of the Jews shall bring such an addition of happiness to the world that it shall have more life, spirit, vigour, put into it both in regard to Jews and Gentiles. The world is now like a man taken with the palsy on the one side, for though it live on the side of the Gentile, yet it is dead on the side of the Jew, and therefore in that regard their calling shall be as life from the dead. Also on the side of the Gentile, many that are now seduced by false teachers shall then embrace the gospel in truth. And partly because those that do believe shall so be confirmed and increased, that in comparison their former life shall not come into remembrance. They shall live more. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) **For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy.** —*The holiness of the firstfruit and the lump*:—1. Concerning these firstfruits the law is set down (Lev. xxiii.), where the people may not put sickle into their corn till they have offered a sheaf to the Lord, and then it was lawful for them to reap it. Hence by allusion is our Saviour called the firstfruits of them that sleep, because our resurrection depends upon and is assured by His. Also when they had their corn in, and made ready of it for their use, they might not eat of it till they had offered two loaves to the Lord, and then was their whole lump made lawful for them to eat. 2. God commanded these ceremonies to teach the Jews that they received all blessings from the Lord. So that as princes when they bestow manors upon deserving servants make reservation of some fealty, service, rent, or such like, only to show that they hold of them. So God required this of the Jews. 3. The sanctification of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be the people of God sanctifieth outwardly all their posterity. The Jews therefore are still a holy people, which appears by their evidence and their letters patents, the tenor of the first grant (Gen. xvii. 7; Acts ii. 38, 39, iii. 25). And though some of them have forfeited their estate, yet some cannot forfeit the privilege granted to the whole nation. But—(1) The nation is before called rebellious: how then can it now be called holy? There is a double holiness. (*a*) Of regeneration. (*b*) Of the covenant; in regard of the first they are rebellious, in regard of the second they are holy. (2) We are by nature the children of wrath. How then can the Jews be holy by nature or birth? The former definition of holiness makes it plain. In regard of the first, children of wrath; in regard of the second, holy by nature. The first cannot be conveyed by parents to posterity: the second is, as, for example, a gentleman is chosen to some great office whereby he is a great lord; he begets a son, this son is a gentleman by birth, but not a lord, because the honour of his father was not invested in his blood, but a special grace conferred on his person. I. THE CHILDREN OF CHRISTIANS ARE BORN CHRISTIANS AND HOLY, by virtue of the covenant having right to the initiating seal—baptism, which right, if they were not born Christians, they could not have. Before baptism our children are either heathen or Christians; but not heathens, for then they might not be baptized till they had made confession of Christ. Therefore they are born Christians. Baptism maketh not a Christian, but signifieth. As there are Jews by nature, so Christians.

If any allege that we are not born but reborn Christians, the answer is we are not born regenerate Christians, but to be regenerate. We beget Christians, not believers. II. THE CHILDREN OF CHRISTIANS DYING BEFORE BAPTISM DIE AS CHRISTIANS, therefore they have hope, and their parents may be comforted over them. III. THOU SHALT NEVER HAVE COMFORT THAT THOU ART BORN A CHRISTIAN TILL THOU BELIEVEST AS A CHRISTIAN SHOULD DO. He that is freeborn and will use his freedom must observe some ceremony, and receive some instrument testifying the same; so though we be born of Christian parents we must believe and repent; the sin of the father prejudiceth not the believing, nor the righteousness of the father saveth the unbelieving child. It is a credit to be born of religious parents if we be religious. If a man have a thousand pound land a year left him, and spend it all in riotous living, what credit is it for him to brag that his friends left him such an estate? nay, it is a shame to him. He is truly noble that is good, but a wicked and vicious man, though he came of a worthier father than Abraham, is to be accounted base. Walk in the steps of thy godly parents, and if they were not godly redeem the baseness of thy family by thy holiness and virtues. IV. ART THOU BORN A CHRISTIAN? WHY THEN LIVEST THOU LIKE A HEATHEN? If thou art freeborn why becomest thou by thy wickedness the devil's slave? As thou bearest the name of Christ so live like Him. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*)

Vers. 17–24. **And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert graffed in.**—*The olive-tree:*—I. WHY IT IS A SYMBOL. 1. Of God's faithful witnesses (Zech. iv. 5; Rev. xi. 3). 2. Of the Church, as the channel of grace to men. II. WHY IT WAS CHOSEN BY PAUL. Because of 1. The holy anointing oil produced by it (Exod. xxv. 6). 2. Its beauty (Hosea xiv. 6). 3. Its constant greenness (Psa. lii. 8). 4. Its fruitfulness. 5. Its usefulness. 6. Its long duration. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The parable of the olive:*—This teaches us—1. To compassionate the outcasts of Israel. 2. To watch lest we also fall. 3. To reverence and magnify the goodness and severity of God. 4. To look for the recovery of God's ancient people. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The parable of the olive:*—I. WE WERE BEFORE OUR ENGRAFTING WILD OLIVES. Without God, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel. This Paul bids us remember, that we may praise God for His mercy. II. HAVING RECEIVED GRACE LET US CARRY OURSELVES WITHOUT BOASTING AGAINST THEM THAT WANT GRACE. When thou seest a profane man disdain him not, but pray for him, remembering thy former estate. III. THOSE WHICH PARTAKE OF THE FATNESS OF THE OLIVE ARE ENGRAFTED. This fatness is the grace given to the root. 1. The grace of justification. Oil is good for medicine—healing wounds and assuaging pain. Also it makes the countenance cheerful; so the grace of Christ, which is called the oil of gladness, maketh the righteous joyful. 2. The grace of sanctification. This may be known by its effects, which are—(1) In the heart. If thou art engrafted thou hast the heart of Abraham: thou lovest goodness and hatest evil. The wood of the olive will not rot. This denotes soundness. The nature also of the oil is not to be mixed with other things. You may as soon mix light and darkness as grace and sin. The nature of oil, too, is to keep metal from rusting. So the virtue of this grace preserves the soul from sinning, which would eat in and perish the soul. (2) In the tongue. The blossom of the olive is wonderful sweet; so if thou art of this tree thy speech will be gracious to the hearers. It is a vain thing for a man to seem religious if he refrain not his tongue. (3) In the life if thou art engrafted thou wilt bring forth much fruit, for the olive is exceeding fruitful. (*a*) For God. Oil was consecrated to the Lord, was used in sacrifice, and for the holy lamps. (*b*) For man. It is both for medicine and meat. Our lives must be fruitful and profitable to the Church. 3. Sanctification may also be known by its properties. (1) The olive is a quick bearer; so we must bring forth fruit quickly. (2) An olive branch was a token of peace. If you pour out water it maketh a noise, but oil falls down softly and with great silence. So the servants of God must be peaceable. (3) The olive is always green, and never casts the leaves, noting the constant tenor we should keep in our obedience (Psa. xcii. 14). (4) Our obedience must be cheerful and free. Anointing with oil makes us nimble, for if we have received hereof we shall not be stiff in the joints, but will run in the ways of the commandments. The olive requires no great cost to make it fruitful, nor a man truly sanctified great entreaty to persuade him to do good. (*Elnathan Parr, D.D.*) *The privilege and duty of the Gentile:*—His—1. Past condition. 2. Gracious acceptance. 3. Present privilege. 4. Consequent duty. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Our duty to the*

Jew:—I. THE DUTY. 1. Boast not, &c. 2. Despise not. 3. Insult not. 4. But pity and pray for him. II. THE REASONS. Remember—1. What you were. (1) Wild. (2) Uncultivated. (3) Unfruitful. 2. Your calling. (1) Grafted in. (2) Through grace at his expense. 3. Your privileges; enjoying the blessings of the covenant. 4. Your dependence. (*Ibid.*) *The Gentiles may not despise the Jews*:—They which are advanced by grace are not to boast against them which are in misery (Psa. xli. 1; Exodus iii. 9; Deut. x. 19, 1; Cor. xiii. 4, 5). The Pharisee disdained the publican, but the publican disdains not him, nor is disdained of God. The use of this. I. IN RESPECT OF THE JEW. Some are broken off, not all. The Church of the Jews was never cast away, only the unbelievers. The olive-tree is pruned, but not stocked up. The body and some of the branches remain, among whom we are grafted. We are grafted in among them, and receive of the fatness with them. The Church of the Jews, not of Rome, is our mother Church. We must be the seed of Abraham if we will have the promises, and therefore believing Gentiles are called the children of Abraham, not naturally, but by incision. II. IN REGARD OF THE GENTILES. Thou art made partaker of the fatness. The same fatness nourisheth the natural and ingrafted branches. The Jew is saved by faith in Christ, so are we. There is no difference between the way of salvation in the Old and New Testament, but as this, in grafting there is clay and binding about. The Jew is bound about with a red ligature in regard of circumcision, we with a white in regard of baptism and the white garments then used. Let us not then boast ourselves against the branches, for though they deserve contempt, woe be to them which are instruments to vex them. Let us love them, as we have good cause, for the root's sake. There is no name so honourable as that of a Jew; take heed thou use it not in contempt. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Gentile and Jew*:—I. THE EXHORTATION. Glory not with supercilious contempt. Gentile Christians probably already began to show—1. An overbearing disposition towards the Jews. 2. A policy of complacency in themselves. Such a spirit soon and long manifested by Gentile Churches. Faith excludes boasting either of ourselves or over others, and charity vaunteth not itself. II. THE REASONS. 1. Thou bearest not the root. The Church not sprung from the Gentiles, and the Jews owe nothing to them. 2. But the root thee. Gentiles owe all to the Jews. Salvation is of the Jews (John iv. 22). Christ Himself was a Jew. The Jewish Church was the foundation; Gentiles were built upon it (Eph. ii. 20). The true Christian and Jewish Church but one. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Gentile and Jew*:—*The Gentile*—I. HAS NO GROUND TO EXULT OVER THE JEW. 1. The Jew fell by unbelief. 2. Privileged by His fall the Gentile only stands by faith. II. BUT MUCH MORE GROUND FOR HUMILITY. 1. God, who spared not His chosen people. 2. Will not spare the unbelieving Gentile. 3. Therefore be not highminded, &c. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Boasting*:—Observe—1. The disposition in man to boast of his privileges. 2. The folly of this. 3. Its danger. (*Ibid.*) **Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.**—*The natural branches broken*, and the sinner for whose conversion things are working, spared a time. I. A FACT STATED. 1. These branches were broken off. 2. For a double cause. (1) "That I might be graffed in." (2) Because of unbelief. II. A CAUTION GIVEN—against—1. Pride. 2. Indifference to God. 3. Carelessness. III. AN AWFUL JUDGMENT IMPLIED. If we take not heed we too shall be broken off. Therefore, serve the Lord, and fear and love Him now. (*W. P. Taylor.*) **Well; because of unbelief they were broken off; and thou standest by faith.**—*Standing by faith*:—I. THE JEWS HAVE EVER FALLEN THROUGH UNBELIEF. 1. They came to the confines of the "land flowing with milk and honey"; the Anakims, and the cities fenced and walled up to heaven, stood before them for their prey. They measured the men and the walls accurately, but they did not measure how "He that was for them was greater than all that was against them," and therefore they were sent back to wander and "perish in the wilderness." 2. Presently we see them with God only as their King, but they could not appreciate an invisible King. As they had before shown no "faith" in God's protection, so now they disbelieved His sovereignty. "He gave them a king in His anger, and He took him away in His wrath." 3. In the midst of their distresses they began to lean on idols and arms of flesh, until "unbelief," ripening into apostasy, they were carried away into Babylon. "Because of unbelief they were broken off." 4. But in mercy God brought them back again, and infinite was their privilege and opportunity when Christ walked their streets. But "their eyes were blinded," the living Truth was before their eyes, but "they perceived Him

not." The Holy Ghost descended upon them, they witnessed His wonder-works, they felt the drawings of His grace, but they denied His convictions and blasphemed His glory. And such as was their "unbelief," so is their punishment. They were "broken off," and there they lie, fruitless, despised, but never dead, till they shall be "graffed in again." II. WHAT IT IS TO "STAND BY FAITH." "Faith" is simply a medium to transmit pardon and grace. But every saved man finds "faith" the actual instrument which holds him up. In the one case it is as the wire which conveys the message; in the other it is the invisible chain which holds the planet in its course. 2. There is an inferior sense in which a man "stands by faith," since confidence is always the secret of composure, as composure is the secret of power. The little child will walk, and what is much harder, will "stand" as soon as he has confidence enough. 3. But in its truer signification to "stand by faith" is—1. To have thrown away every other dependence. I am unable, everything in the universe is unable to keep me, "Hold Thou me up and I shall stand." 2. To believe, and not doubt, that you are in a state of full acceptance with God. Without this there never will be firmness of principle enough to make you "stand." 3. To be in continual communication with the Unseen. It is the strength of secret prayer. It is to feel yourself in the deep waters, upheld by an arm that will never, never let you sink. 4. To have the most entire conviction that the work is God's work, and that He will complete it. Conclusion: 1. Let us be very humble, for it is an easy thing to fall, seeing we only "stand by faith," and "faith" is a fine, delicate thing, and we all know how hard it is to believe at all times. 2. Nevertheless, let us have a holy confidence, for Christ says, "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." 3. And by and by the Jews will "stand" as never a nation stood, and then that word will be true to them also, "thou standest by faith." To help along, to help along one single child of Abraham to that "stand of faith" is the present duty. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Be not highminded, but fear.—*Highmindedness:*—1. At every turn remember this saying, Be not highminded. Hath God given thee riches, wit, beauty, &c.? Let this sentence alway sound in thine ears. Hearest thou any say: few have the knowledge you have, or can speak as you do? Let this sentence stand sentinel to keep thee from pride. 2. All other sinners fly from God. The proud man resists Him (Jas. iv. 6). God gives grace to the lowly. The rain stays not on the tops of the mountains, but the valleys are watered and made fruitful. God teacheth the humble. The proud man is empty. Height weakens a thing; and an empty vessel makes the loudest sound. They which brag most have least in them. The chaff is above the corn, not because it is best, but because it is lightest. Observe—I. THE SIGNS OF THIS HIGHMINDEDNESS. 1. Impatience of admonition. The Pharisees take it in great scorn, that Christ reproveth them of blindness, when indeed they were beetle blind. Proud Zedekiah cannot endure Micah's admonition. 2. Diminishing the gifts of others while boasting of our own. The proud Pharisee abased the publican and exalted himself. Dost thou impute unto others coldness, covetousness, &c., saying thou wouldest be ashamed if thou wert no better than they, never looking at thine own infidelity, hypocrisy, &c. 3. Meddling with things above us. Many presently upon their supposed conversion enter into controversies and censure whole Churches. David approved his humility by not meddling with things which were too high for him. 4. Contention (Prov. xiii. 20). II. THE REMEDY. 1. The place to which the remedy is to be applied. The heart, as Peter adviseth, "Deck yourselves inwardly with lowliness of mind." There may be an abatement of pride outwardly, and none within. There may be as much pride under a leather jacket as under a velvet gown: who seemed more humble or was more proud than Diogenes in his tub? 2. The remedy itself—(1) A continual remembrance of this and the like Scriptures. Draw these as a sword to take down this peacock. (2) Remember the example and monition of Christ: Learn of Me (not to walk upon the sea, or to make a world), but to be humble and lowly in spirit. (3) Consider how God hath judged the proud. Pride thrust angels out of heaven; our first parents out of paradise; hanged Haman upon his own gallows; made Nebuchadnezzar a beast, &c. (4) Consider that if thou hast any excellency, it is the gift of God (1 Cor. iv. 6, 7). It is an ass that will be proud of a lion's skin, which is not his own. And God can take away thy knowledge, and make thee an idiot; and if thou beest rich, He can make thee poor. (5) Doth thy heart tickle thee because of thy knowledge, faith, patience, &c.? Cast thy account, thou shalt find that thy wants are more than thy receipts. For one thing thou knowest thou art ignorant of ten. If thou hast one good thought, thou hast a thousand ill

ones. Pliny records a secret of the bee—that in a storm it getteth up a little stone, by the weight of it to fly the more steadily, and to get home in safety. If thou be in danger to be blown away with pride, let the thoughts of thy wants be to thee as this little stone. 3. The parties that stand in need of it. All men, specially those which are extraordinarily graced by God. All other sins are in evil, this is in that which is good, and therefore the harder to be avoided. We are all of his mind, who, being asked what song he delighted most to hear, said that wherein his praises were set forth. Even Paul must be taken down with the buffetings of Satan, lest he be proud. Study and pray for humility, the honour of a Christian. Moses' face shone when he had talked with God, and he wist not. An excellent degree of grace is it to be excellent and not to take notice of it. As boughs the more laden with fruit are the more lowly, and as when the sun is at the highest our shadows are at the lowest, so the more grace would be adorned with the more humility. The devil will tempt thee to all viciousness; if he cannot prevail that way, he will tempt thee to be proud of thy goodness; yea, to be proud because thou art not proud. In the midst of grace pray for a humble heart. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Highmindedness and fear*:—There is no sin so heinous as self-satisfaction, and no virtue so agreeable to God as humility. These words are addressed to Christians, so highmindedness is not confined to worldly men. Notice—I. THE PARTICULARS OF THE FAILING. It includes—1. Presuming on our privileges. The Christian has many privileges above the world. (1) Liberty. But he must not presume on that liberty for egotism. (2) Enlightenment. But he must not make the light to be a pretext for self-assertion. (3) Holiness. This must not cause him to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. 2. Trusting too much in worldly advantages. (1) Wealth will make a man high-minded if not properly used. (2) Ancestry and pedigree. (3) Beauty of person, strength of limb, a high education, even personal liberality or usefulness. 3. Haughtiness towards others. The man who thinks highly of himself will act it, and treat his fellows with contempt. Like the Pharisee. II. THE ANTIDOTE. In this case fear indicates self-mistrust, dread of falling, and reverence for God. 1. Fear is a restraining power. Dread of consequences is an important factor in society. Fear of God is not a slavish torment, but awe and self-abnegation. 2. "But fear." It is the picture of one feeling his way in the gloom, knowing his own weakness and the awful consequences of a fall, and so taking all needful precautions. It induces therefore—(1) Prudence. (2) Watchfulness. (3) Vigilance. III. THE DETAILS OF THE FEAR. Fear what? 1. The natural pride and teaching of the human heart. 2. The effects of self-righteousness. "Pride goeth before a fall." 3. The danger of being a castaway. 4. The danger of perverting truth. (*Homilist.*) *Haughtiness of mind and its antidote*:—I. BE NOT HIGHMINDED is good counsel. Men of "lofty eyes" (Psa. cxxxi. 1), being busy in the pursuit of things out of reach, oversee those more necessary things which are at hand. The malady here aimed at is an overweening conceit of our own worth, in respect of either knowledge or virtue. A disease fatal to the Jew, and to which the Gentile was most obnoxious. Men raised from the dung-hill to great fortunes have commonly all the vices of rich men, and more. 1. The cause of this malady is not in the gospel, or in the riches of the gospel; but in ourselves, who are willing to be deceived; and in the devil, the forger of all error and deceit. For as God, whose very essence is goodness, doth manifest that goodness out of sin itself, so the devil abuseth good unto evil; and when he cannot drive us to despair by reason of our sin, he makes us presume upon conceit of our righteousness. And all this proceeds from our own wilful error: for, "Pride is the daughter of ignorance." We see the gospel *ex uno situ*, but on one side, and that the wrong side. We behold Christ as a Saviour, not as a Lord as well. We entertain prerogatives as prerogatives, and not as obligations also. We contemplate virtues as the work of our own hands, but are blind to their imperfections. We consider ourselves as "branches grafted in," but cannot see that we may "be cut off" (ver. 22). We consider our strength, not our weakness. 2. This haughtiness of mind hinders the very continuance of goodness: it doth not only wither the branch, but it also cuts it off. The Christian may fall, as the Jew; and, if he "continue not in God's goodness, he also shall be cut off" (ver. 22). When we have gone but a sabbath-day's journey with the Jew and done but "what was said to them of old," do we not begin to canonise ourselves? But if we forgive and do good to an enemy; if we fast a day, and give our provision to the poor; then straight, with Absalom, we raise up a pillar and write upon it, "We shall never be moved." A cup of cold water shall answer for our

oppression, an alms at our door for the fraud in our shop, our frequenting of sermons for our neglect of prayer. And all is now quiet within us; we seem to walk on the pavement of heaven, and from thence to behold our brethren (who have more piety, with less noise) as nothing in respect of ourselves. When our hypocrisy hath edge enough to cut us from the olive, our spiritual pride keepeth us in. But one day they will find it true, that doubting out of humility may find heaven-gates wide open, when bold presumption shall be shut out of doors. II. BUT FEAR. Fear and hope are hewed out of the same rock. As hope is an expectation of good to come, so fear is the apprehension of some approaching evil. And seldom is any hope so strong as to be without some tincture of fear; seldom any fear so strong as to admit of no mixture of hope. For if they be alone and *in excessu*, they lose their names. Hope without fear is but confidence; and fear without hope is but despair (ver. 21). Fear of being cut off, if St. Paul's reason be good, is the best means to repress in us all proud conceit. 1. And in a matter so great no care and circumspection can be enough. And the reasons are plain. For—(1) There is an over-easiness to persuade ourselves that we are in favour with God. Men are more apt to presume than to despair, and if despair hath killed her thousands, presumption hath killed her ten thousands. The difference between the sicknesses of the body and of the mind is that in the one we are sensible of our grief, we send for the physician; but in the other we are senseless, and are more afraid of our physic than of our disease. We admit of miserable comforters, that will flatter us to death; and rather than we will want flatterers, we take the office on ourselves. (2) There is the uncertain knowledge we have of the quality of our works. For in our best intentions there may be imperfections which we know not. My devotion may be irregular; my patience, stupidity; my zeal, rage. With what good meaning do many poor souls do evil! "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" (Psa. xix. 12); therefore let us "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." (3) There is the over-ripe conceit and too speedy apprehension of our sufficiency and growth in the duties of Christianity. We are very apt to flatter ourselves that, when we are but newly set forth, we are at our journey's end. All excellency we can put off to others that have more time to learn it. The Jew is content with his ceremonies; and the Christian, with his outward profession, but less significant than they. But this fear is most requisite in respect of those enemies of our souls which are ever in readiness to surprise us (1 John ii. 16). Many men are cut off by themselves and their own folly, when the devil beareth the blame. 2. And, therefore, to keep this jealousy awake in us, the apostle awakes one fear with another, the fear of circumspection with the fear of "being cut off." For, naturally, fear of evil works a fear of circumspection: and this fear ushers in that fear by which we may call, "Abba, Father" (chap. viii. 15). For, seeing evil before us ready to seize upon us, we begin to advise with ourselves how to avoid it (Luke xvi. 3; xiv. 31). Fear is the mother of advice; and consultation dies with fear (Luke xvi. 4). When we presume, counsel is needless; and when we despair, it is too late. The best preservative of a branch new-grafted is the sight and fear of that knife which may cut him off; and for want of it many branches have been cut off and cast away. (*A. Farindon, D.D.*) **For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.**—*All which continue not in grace shall be broken off* (Luke xiii. 3, 5; Rev. ii.):—God is not moved with outward privileges to tolerate in His orchard those which only cumber the ground. Thou art planted in the Church, which is Paradise, and art watered with those rivers of God, the Word and sacraments. If thou bringest forth no fruit, though Christ Himself had come of thy stock, thou shalt be broken off and thrown away. Here is a good take-heed for many. I. FOR ENGLAND, GERMANY, ALL REFORMED CHURCHES. The Jews were the famous people of God, and yet cast away for their faithlessness. Where are those renowned Churches of Asia, of Greece? If we continue not to bring forth fruit we must look for the same measure which God hath meted out to them. II. FOR PROFANE PERSONS. If judgment begin at God's own house, how shall the wicked escape? If an Israelite go to the pot, what should a Canaanite, a hypocrite, a rebel look for? III. FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD. Art thou one? Walk according to thy profession; if thou growest cold as others, take heed. Hast thou faith? keep it. Hast thou a good conscience? better the peace of it every day by righteous living. Hold that thou hast. Remember what is come to the Jews. When thou seest thy neighbour's house on fire, it is time to provide water to save thine own. When two ships set forth, if the foremost run upon a rock and split, her consort will be warned. Thou seest covetousness to be the destruction of

this man, pride of that, whoredom of another; pray thou against these sins and all other, and be careful. (*Ebnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The rejection of the Jews a warning to Christians*:—There are two general remarks suggested by the language of the text. 1. The principle of God's displeasure against sin and sinners is the same, whether it has reference to nations or to individuals. Hence the dismemberment of the Jewish community is adduced as a warning to every professor of the gospel of Christ. 2. The language of the text derives force from the contrast which it involves. Compare it with verse 24. I. IT IS A DREADFUL THING TO ABUSE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. Yes, it is so dreadful that, in the instance referred to, Jehovah, in His fiery indignation, turned the highest favours He could impart to a nation into a tremendous national curse. "God spared not the natural branches." He spared them for a while, 'tis true; just as He spared the old world in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing; but in the end He destroyed them, and that with a sore destruction! The pleading voice of Christ in His gospel, accompanied as I believe it to be in every instance with some degree of Divine visitation, as regards the conscience, tends either to raise the soul to glory, and honour, and immortality, or to sink it into the lowest depths of misery and woe. Men walk in gospel pastures, but they do not feed upon them. The broad sunshine of mercy beams around them, but it finds no avenue to the recesses of their hearts. They approach just so near to the Saviour as to receive from His Spirit an influence, the abuse of which ripens them for destruction, and prepares them as fuel to feed the hottest flames of hell! II. HOW HIGHLY IT BEHOVES ALL THOSE WHO ARE PRIVILEGED TO ENJOY SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS TO LOOK DILIGENTLY TO THEMSELVES LEST THEY SHOULD FALL OF THE GRACE OF GOD. 1. Beware of procrastination, that is of putting off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day. St. Augustine prayed for victory over his besetting sin; but then he acknowledges that he did not wish his prayer to be answered just then. This is human nature; conscience and passion pleading against each other; reason warning and inclination rebelling. To put off coming to Christ until you have tasted more of the pleasures of the world is to create a fearful probability that you will never come to Him at all. If God, when His justice has been insulted, and His patience long tried, has refused to spare others, "O take heed lest He spare not thee." 2. The subject says to us all—Beware of self-imposition. In other words, it says—Beware of a religion which is unable to protect the soul in an hour of emergency. 3. The subject says to each of us—Beware of trifling or tampering with conscience, and that not merely in reference to delays, but in reference to every other point. One will give up everything save a single prohibited indulgence; and another will give up everything except a single unhallowed pursuit; and each is willing to balance accounts by giving an overmeasure of piety in some other point: for example—the covetous man will be scrupulously honest, and the licentious man will be profusely liberal; but neither will yield, to the claims of the gospel, his besetting sin. Here is the solitary leak which sinks the vessel! You cannot compromise with Heaven. It were more easy to alter the laws of nature, to shiver a sunbeam, or to wrench a planet out of its orbit, than to change one iota of the Divine purpose, in regard to the terms of a sinner's salvation. (*W. Knight, M.A.*) **Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.**—*The goodness and severity of God*:—I. IN EVERY REVELATION WE HAVE OF GOD THESE TWO PHASES APPEAR. Look to—1. Nature. 2. Providence. 3. The Bible. 4. The Cross. 5. The Jewish nation. II. THE DISPLAY OF THESE TWO PHASES IS NECESSARY TO MAN IN THIS WORLD. 1. To keep the mind from extremes. 2. To induce sinners to repent. (*T. Levi.*) *The goodness and severity of God*:—Let me endeavour—I. TO EXPOSE THE PARTIALITY, AND THEREFORE THE MISCHIEF, OF TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN OF THE GODHEAD. 1. One is incidental to those who bear a single respect to the attribute of goodness. (1) They look to Him as a God of tenderness and nothing else, and ascribe to Him the fondness rather than the authority of a father. They would admit of no other aspect for religion than that of uniform placidness; and to decorate this bland and beauteous imagination the more, they would appeal to all that looks mild and merciful in the scenery of nature, and it is inferred that surely He, at whose creative touch all this loveliness hath arisen, must Himself be placid as the breeze, and gentle as the zephyr which He causes to blow over it. But Nature has her hurricanes, earthquakes, and thunder, as well as these kindlier exhibitions. (2) This beholding of the goodness, without the severity of God, lulls the human spirit into a fatal complacency to its own state and prospects, and serves, in practice, to break down the fence between obedience and sin, and to nullify all moral govern-

ment. 2. But there is also a mischief in looking singly to the sovereignty of God apart from His goodness. (1) Theologians who have thus erred, and not so much by the views they have given forth of His inviolable sanctity; but rather by the views which they have given forth of such a dread and despotic sovereignty, as to impress the conception of a fatalism, against which all prayer and all performance of man are unavailing. However difficult it may be to adjust the metaphysics of the question, there is one thing unquestionable, and that is an amnesty, offered to all; a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. And, therefore, we would not that so much as one individual should be chilled into hopelessness by the dogmata of a hard or unfeeling theology, against returning to a God who waiteth to be gracious. (2) But independent of all lofty speculations, there is abroad an impression of severity to which much of this world's irreligion is owing, and it is a frequent anomaly that they who at times can take comfort in sin under an impression of His goodness have at all times such a sense of His severity as never to attain a thorough confidence in His favour. And just as a man would shut his eyes against a spectacle that pains them, so will they shrink from a contemplation that only serves to put dread into their bosoms, and there is an habitual distance kept up between the spirits of all flesh and Him who is the Father of them. Just as you would rather avoid than encounter the man with whom you are not perfectly at ease, so you have the same motive for shunning God. But it is our very distance from God that sheds a dimness over His character and ways, over His wrath, as well as over His love. II. TO POINT TO THE WAY IN WHICH THESE TWO VIEWS OF THE GODHEAD ARE SO UNITED IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, AS TO FORM ONE FULL AND CONSISTENT REPRESENTATION OF IT. 1. There is a severity. There is a law that will not be trampled on, a lawgiver that will not be insulted. The face of God is unchangeably set against evil. (1) We cannot light upon a single instance of God so falling back from the severity of His denunciations against sin, as at all to soften the expression of His hatred towards it: not at the Fall, not at the Flood, not at the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, not at the entrance of Israel into the Promised Land, not in the subsequent dealings of many centuries with His own perverse and stiff-necked children, and, lastly, not at that terrible period when the Jewish economy was swept away, and even the tears of a compassionate Saviour did not avert the approaching overthrow. In all this there is an admonition to us. (2) There is an immense delusion on this subject. We estimate God by ourselves —His antipathy to sin by our own slight and careless imagination of Him. Now if we measure God by ourselves, we should have little fear indeed of severity from His hand; for, save when there is gross and monstrous delinquency, we can bear very well, both with our own transgressions and those of others. No man, *e.g.*, would ever think of vehemently denouncing another just because he thought little of God. This is adverted to by the Psalmist, "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself," &c. Not therefore to you who are disgraced by profligacy, but even to you who live in a state of total and practical unconcern about another world, would we ask, "Behold the severity of God." I am perfectly aware of many who look upon such representations as these to be too strong. They can see, and be impressed by it, as a great moral delinquency, when an earthly parent is thus robbed of the love and loyalty of his own offspring; but how then can you miss the more emphatic application of the same principle, though far more intense in degree to our Father who is in heaven? You know how to feel for the wounded feelings of the parents; and is there no reply to the complaining voice of Him who saith to us from heaven, "Behold I stretch out My hand, but no man regardeth"? 2. But along with this severity there is a goodness, and they meet together in the fullest harmony. It is this, in fact, which constitutes the leading peculiarity of the gospel. When God is severe it is never because of His delight in the sufferings of His creatures, but always because of His justice, holiness, and truth. Could a way be devised by which these might be inscribed as legibly in a deed of amnesty, then we may be assured that He who hath no pleasure in the death of His children, but who hath sworn by Himself that He would rather that they should all live, cause it richly to flow over to the utmost limits of this sinful creation. Now it is precisely this which distinguishes the evangelical system. The gospel is a mercy in full and visible conjunction with righteousness. With the pardon which it deals out for sin it makes most impressive demonstration of the evil of it, the mercy of the gospel meets with the truth of the law, and God can at once be a just God and a Saviour. A Saviour has been born, on whom God did lay the iniquities of us all. The Holy One of Israel now sitteth upon a throne of grace. The uncompromising

doctrine of Scripture is this, if you refuse the mercy of God upon this footing, you will receive it upon no other. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by the Son": while all that enter into His presence by the open door of the Son's mediatorship shall be saved. The mighty problem was resolved by God. You will meet with several expressions in Scripture on that subject: "God being just, and a Saviour"; "God being just, and the justifier of them that believed in Jesus"; "Mercy and truth meet each other; righteousness and peace kiss each other." III. APPLICATION. 1. Such is the goodness of God, now that this goodness has been harmonised with the other attributes of His nature, that it overpasses the guilt even of the most daring and stout-hearted offender among you. 2. In every proportion to this goodness will be the severity of God on those who have rejected Him. 3. None truly embrace Christ as their Saviour who do not submit to Him as their Master and Lord. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The goodness and severity of God*:—I. GOODNESS AND SEVERITY ARE ELEMENTS OF A PERFECT CHARACTER EVEN AMONG MEN. 1. Without goodness, the character repels instead of winning. There may be certain qualities which command our respect in a Draco, who ordains death as the penalty for every trifling violation of the law, or in a Brutus, who with tearless eye gives orders, in the way of duty, for the execution of his sons; but from such untempered austerity we recoil. 2. Without severity goodness degenerates into that moral pliancy which, under the name of good-nature, has often made men "consent" to the enticement of sinners, and has given them nothing in return, but the insipid reputation of having been enemies to none but themselves. 3. In a perfect character, if such existed among men, you would see the counterbalancing powers of goodness and severity held in exact equilibrium. And such, the Word of God assures us, is the character of Him with whom we have to do. II. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THIS TWOFOLD ELEMENT OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER MAY BE DRAWN FROM NATURE. "God is light," says the Scripture. Now light is compounded of seven different rays; but it has two main ingredients: the sombre rays (blue, indigo, violet); the bright rays (orange, red, yellow, green). Both are essential to the delicacy and purity of the substance. Without the sombre rays light would be a glare—the eyeball would ache beneath it; without the bright rays light would approximate to darkness, and lose the gay smile which lights up the face of nature, and twinkles on the sea. Similarly, the holiness, justice, and truth of God (attributes which wear an awful aspect to the sinner), are an element of His nature as essential to its perfectness, as mercy, love, and goodness. Suppose in Him, for a moment, no stern defiance against moral evil, but an allowance and admission of it, and you degrade Jehovah to the level of a pagan deity. Suppose in Him, on the other hand, an absence of love, and you supplant the very being of God, for "God is love." But combine both righteousness and love, intensified to the highest conceivable degree, and you are then possessed of the Scriptural idea of the Most High. III. IT IS THIS ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE BEING WHICH FORMS THE BASIS OF THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT. God presents us in this with the highest illustration of both His attributes. He may be conceived as standing by the Cross and pointing to it, saying, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God." (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Severity and goodness*:—Two cases are here set before us. There are those who have fallen, and have consequently been broken off from the olive-tree. There are those too who continue in God's goodness, and who still therefore partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. These are the present most opposite conditions of the two classes of persons described. It is added that, as the former may by God's power and mercy be restored, so the latter must take heed lest they also be cut off. And, finally, as one great means of keeping themselves in their steadfastness, they are counselled to dwell earnestly upon the thought of the goodness of God, and of His severity, as displayed in the two examples brought to their recollection. 1. First, then, there are those who have fallen, and have consequently been broken off from God's olive-tree. Who in our days are they? St. Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, makes a distinction which may assist us here. He says, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment: and some men they follow after." There are some whose sins are so manifest, that they speak for themselves, and almost challenge the judgment which overtakes them. In our own days, amidst a very general toleration of some kinds of sin, there are others which even the world calls scandalous; which the common language of the least religious condemns; and which are visited even by them with a severity which, if not excessive in itself, is at least most inconsistent with their estimate of the criminality of other

transgressions. Of this kind are acts of dishonesty and of meanness, of cowardice and open falsehood. One who has thus fallen meets with no tenderness. His sin goes before unto judgment. He has fallen; and even by the world's sentence he is cut off from God's olive-tree. Now what in such a case says the infallible Word of God? It does not palliate the grievousness of this man's transgression. It echoes the judgment already pronounced upon him by the conscience of his fellow-men; and adds to it, in tones yet more alarming, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But is this all? Has the gospel no word of encouragement for the fallen sinner, none of special warning to those who have cast him out? To him its language is, Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Thou hast lived as if there were no God, no Christ; no death, no judgment, no eternity. Because of unbelief therefore thou hast been broken off. God in His infinite mercy—because He desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live—has cut thee off for a while as it were from His olive-tree. He has brought thee to shame and suffering in this life, if perhaps thy soul may be saved in the day of the Lord. And know now that, if thou abide not still in unbelief: if thou refuse not still to hear the voice of Him who has afflicted thee; thy fall is not final: thou shalt be grafted in: thou shalt be restored to far more than thou hast ever yet known of the enjoyment of the grace of God. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: but in Me is thy help. And then of warning to all those who may be disposed to judge harshly of one who has thus openly fallen. To them, to all of us, the gospel says, Behold in every such example the severity of God. If for you this particular form of sin seems to have no attraction; if you cannot even conceive yourself to have been tempted to its commission; yet consider, to whom is this blessing due? Remember too that, if there be one class of sins which goes before to judgment, which outruns as it were by its open heinousness the adversary who is haling it to the judge, there is yet another kind which ends in the same result with the former, however much in this life it may seem to differ from it. Your sins may be more secret; you may fence them more carefully from the sight and the hearing of men: yet, if this be all, it amounts only to a postponement of the day of exposure; at last it will come, and will not tarry. Or even if your sins be of such a kind that their disclosure in the world's sight would bring with it no disgrace or punishment; yet a day is before each one of us, which will rectify these erring judgments, and in which even they whose only crime has been that they have forgotten God, that God has not been in all their thoughts, will awake from their sleep in the dust of the earth only to shame and everlasting contempt. 2. But we must turn now, in conclusion, to the other class here spoken of; that of those who, continuing in God's goodness, are partaking day by day of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. Who amongst us are these? What is it to continue in God's goodness? It must be something more than merely keeping ourselves from gross transgression; something more than partaking week by week in the ordinances of Christian worship; something more than the merely being appended, as a dead or fruitless branch may be, to the stock of God's Israel: there must be a vitality in our connection with the olive-tree—a communication ever kept up with its root, with the living centre of all its growth and vigour—to give us any place amongst those who are truly continuing in God's goodness. Are we daily applying to Christ Himself, as our living Saviour, for grace and spiritual life? Do we return to Him in hearty sorrow when we have sinned? Do we take refuge in Him when we feel the power of temptation? Do we ask strength from Him to resist sin? Do we day by day commit the keeping of our souls to God through Him as to a faithful Creator and most merciful Redeemer? This and this only is the life of one who continues in God's goodness. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *God's character*:—I. ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF GOD. 1. All goodness. 2. All severity. II. THE EVIL RESULT OF THOSE VIEWS. 1. They are partial. 2. The one leads to presumption. 3. The other to despair. III. HIS TRUE CHARACTER. 1. A Sovereign. 2. A Father. (*W. W. Wythe.*) **And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in.**—*The restoration of the Jews*:—1. Is a matter of promise. 2. Will be effected by Divine power. 3. Is suspended on their reception of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The true hope of Israel*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS—the prospect of restoration to the privileges of God's people. II. WHEREON IT DEPENDS. 1. The power of promise of God. 2. Suspended in faith. III. HOW IT IS CONFIRMED. 1. By the calling of the Gentiles. (1) Once not a people. (2) Now raised to loftier privileges than the Jews ever possessed. 2. How much more, &c. (ver. 24). IV. WHAT FEELINGS THIS HOPE SHOULD AWAKEN IN US. Zeal and prayer for the Jew that he may—1. Relinquish his false hopes. 2. Embrace Christ in faith.

3. Become united with the living Church of God. (*Ibid.*) *Salvation barred by unbelief possible to faith* :—I. THE CHIEF BAR TO A MAN'S SALVATION IS AN UNBELIEVING HEART. Our Saviour told the Pharisees, who exceeded all men in morality, that publicans and harlots should go before them into the kingdom of heaven. Why? Because they believed not. Morality is good, but not good enough to save a man. Faith cannot be without it, but it may be without faith. Morality without faith is like a goodly picture, which is fair to look upon, but a man can have no society with because it wants life. Labour therefore for faith, which is the soul of obedience, and it will save thy soul. II. HERE IS A SINGULAR COMFORT TO CONSCIENCES DISTRESSED FOR SINS. It is a comfort to a sick man if the physician tell him his disease, though dangerous, is yet curable, if it be not driven too long before remedies be appointed. So God is able to save thee if thou deferrest not thy repentance. If we look only to ourselves there is nothing but desperation; but if we look up to see what God is ready to do (only staying for our believing and repenting), there is great hope. Even thou, Jew, which hast crucified Christ, if thou canst cease from unbelief, thou shalt be saved. For as all the promises in the world, so the threatnings are conditional (Jonah iii. 9). III DESPAIR NOT OF THE SALVATION OF ANY, neither finally censure even though never so wicked, for God is able to turn the heart of a Jew. He that converted thee can convert thy neighbour also. IV. GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE, SO HE IS ABLE TO DESTROY. Let His power make thee wary how thou livest. Art thou stronger than He that thou shouldst dare by thy sins daily to provoke Him? (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) **For if thou wert cut out of the olive which is wild by nature . . . how much more . . . the natural branches.** *The Gentiles like a wild olive-tree* :—I. THEY ARE WILD BY NATURE. 1. Nations before Christ were without spiritual culture. 2. The Mosaic law was confined to Israel. 3. The times of this ignorance were winked at by God. II. THEY WERE CHRISTIANISED CONTRARY TO NATURE. Grafting from a different kind of tree not natural. 1. Gentilism was pervaded with idolatry. 2. Gentile notions and practices were all opposed to a Divine life. 3. It is contrary to every man's nature to be a Christian. 4. This contrariety is increased by sin. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *God's grace to the Gentile an argument for the recovery of the Jews* :—I. THE PAST CONDITION OF THE GENTILES. 1. Not a people. 2. Strangers to the covenant of promise. 3. Given up to their heart's lusts. II. THEIR GOSPEL PRIVILEGE. 1. Brought nigh. 2. Accepted. 3. Made children of Abraham. 4. By faith. III. THE CONSEQUENT HOPE OF ISRAEL. 1. Still heirs of the covenant. 2. Beloved for their fathers' sake. 3. How much more, &c., when they believe? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The prospects of Jew and Gentile* :—I. IT IS PROBABLE THE JEWS SHALL BE CALLED (2 Sam. vii. 24). 1. A tree is not dead because it buds not in winter. This is the Jews' winter, there is yet hope of a summer wherein they may yield fruit. The Jew is oft compared to a fig-tree, which buds first, but whose fruit ripens last. The Jews budded before us, the time of their ripe fruit is at hand. 2. Speak honourably of a Jew, for whatsoever he is in regard of his unbelief, yet Paul calls it a natural branch. 3. The Church is called the Jews' own olive, into whom we are grafted; but when they shall be called they shall not be grafted into us, but into their own flock. II. THE GENTILE HATH NOT SO GREAT (THOUGH SO SURE) A PREROGATIVE AND RIGHT TO THE PROMISE AS THE JEW (Acts iii. 25; Rom. i. 16, ii. 10). 1. Our natural condition is miserable. We should have been idolaters or savages if God had not given us His special grace. It is contrary to our nature to be in the right olive, to be worshippers of God, to please Him. We delight in good as a fish to be out of the water, we are out of our element. 2. By creation goodness was natural to us, as now evil, and goodness supernatural. We delight to possess the inheritance of our progenitors in us; let us then strive to recover that grace which our first parents spent in the subtilty of the devil. 3. Our conversion is contrary to our present nature. God will invert the nature and course of things for the salvation of His elect. 4. The state of nature and grace is easily discerned. He that despiseth the gospel and liveth wickedly is natural, but to believe and repent is gracious. 5. Contrary to nature, keep diligent watch over thine heart or else Nature will soon run after her old course. Bend the bough of a tree downward, when thou lettest it go it will strive upward by and by. Waterfowls hatched under a land fowl will quickly to the water by nature. So, though by the warmth of the Spirit we be hatched under the Word, and become God's chickens, as Christ compared us, yet we will be drawing to corruption if we daily mortify it not. By nature boats go down the stream, but by the force of wind and oars they be got up, and if such means cease they go

faster downward than they were forced upward; so to proceed in grace is against the stream of nature. If God's Spirit like a good wind blow not a prosperous gale upon us and we labour at the means, we are easily carried down the stream of our corruption. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*)

Vers. 25–27. **For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery.**—*The mystery of the conversion of the Jews*:—I. To WHAT MYSTERY DOES THE APOSTLE REFER? 1. "That blindness has happened to Israel." This "blindness"—(1) Is national blindness (1 Cor. iii. 14). (2) Is in no wise a contradiction to God's dealings—for God foresaw it, and predicted it (Isa. xxix. 10–14; *cf.* Rom. xi. 7–10). (3) Is but partial (ver. 5). 2. This blindness is temporary. (1) What led to it (see ver. 20; *cf.* Deut. xxviii. 15, 29; John viii. 24). (2) What followed (ver. 11, 15)? Blessings came from the fall of the Jew, but still greater blessings would come from his restoration. (3) Now we readily gather from this, that God is not unfaithful (ver. 29). (4) But furthermore. This blindness is only until the "fulness of the Gentile shall come in." In Luke xxi. 24. the same truth is laid down. Now to see exactly what this "time" is, refer to Acts xv. 13, &c. The Lord is acting with the whole Gentile world in this manner: sending His gospel for a witness. Then men come out of the world and are a people elect—the true Church. And when this work shall have been accomplished, then the Lord will restore Israel. Therefore, from comparing these Scriptures together, we may draw this conclusion, that the time will come when the Jews shall be restored (vers. 11, 23; Jer. xxxii. 37, &c.). Nor is there anything improbable in this. At the present moment there are materials which have only to be put together to form cities which will hold ten, or twenty, or thirty thousand inhabitants. And moreover, the thorns and briars as protecting them from decay and injury. II. WHAT IS SAID OF "THIS MYSTERY." The day is gone by when it was considered absurd to speak of these things; but still there are numbers who think that this is an unnecessary or unimportant study. But the apostle, writing to the Gentiles, says, "I would not that ye should be ignorant of it." Why? 1. Because he "would not, that you should be ignorant" of the Bible; for many passages of Scripture convey no idea whatever till we understand that Jerusalem means Jerusalem, and Israel Israel. 2. But independently of this. If God has mercy in store for these people, may not we also look forward to God's mercy, backsliders and sinners as some of us are? And where do we find this warranted but in God's own Word. III. THE GROUND OF HIS ANXIETY. "Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits." This Epistle was addressed to the Church of Rome? Now, note one or two of the leading features of this Church. 1. They keep the Scriptures back from the people. And what is the consequence of that? Many of them remain in perfect blindness as regards the truth. They keep the traditions of men, and therefore believe what is told them of Rome's power, and of no one but those connected with Rome being safe for heaven; whereas, if they had only the Scriptures before them, they would see what a place Rome will hold in the last great day. 2. Rome upholds a formal religion. How many externals had the Jew! and what did the externals profit him? 3. Rome is completely eaten up, as it were, with its own conceit (Rev. xviii. 7). And therefore the apostle says, "'I would not . . . lest ye should be wise in your own conceits'; for you may indeed speak of your greatness, but you shall fall, while Jerusalem shall stand in that day." Conclusion: 1. Beware—(1) Of trusting to external privileges. (2) Of giving countenance to any unbelief whatever. It was unbelief which led to the fall of Israel. 2. Encourage yourselves with the remembrance that the time is very short for your sojourning in this world. 3. Help forward this blessed work. (*Bishop Villiers.*) *The mystery of the calling of the Jews*:—I. THE CALLING OF THE JEWS IS A MYSTERY. Seek not further than is revealed, and believe that. If thou askest how, and when? I know not, because I find not revealed. God knows, which satisfies me. He that too earnestly looks upon the sun comes in the end to see nothing, and he that stands too near fire may burn himself instead of warming him. Secret things are for the Lord, but things revealed for us and our children for ever. II. THE END OF THE WORLD SHALL NOT BE TILL THE JEWS ARE CALLED, and how long after that none yet can tell. 1. There are certain foolish prophecies dispersed that the world shall end within so many years. In Paul's time there were such, and they would have fathered their brainless toys upon Paul (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2). So also from Paul's time to this day—a note of great folly and rashness. (1) Because there are no plain Scriptures for it but against it. (2) Because the grounds of their

conceit are uncertain, idle and frivolous: as from Peter's saying, that a thousand years is but as a day, and from divers mystical numbers in Daniel and the Revelation. (3) If the last day be unknown (as all acknowledge), then the day before the last, and so by consequence the last week, month, year, age. (4) All the diviners about this point have been hitherto shamed. Such, therefore, that shall yet attempt it must expect the same as a just recompense of their madness. 2. It is not possible to know nor lawful to inquire. If it had been for the Church's profit to have known it God would have revealed it. 3. Whensoever the time comes it shall come well for God's children; prepare for it that it may be a joyful and not a dismal time unto thee. If God should now come to judgment, how ready art thou? III. TILL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN. There is an emptiness among the Gentiles, both in regard of number and of grace, which last is a great impediment to the calling of the Jews. The idolatry of some, and the profaneness of others are a stumbling-block unto them. Let us remove it that we may make a passage for their calling. IV. COME IN. WHITHER? INTO THE CHURCH. All they which believe are within; without are unbelievers. It is our Father's house, where is bread enough; without is nothing but hog's meat. Examine how thou art within, whether as Ham in the ark, as Judas among the apostles, as chaff in flour; for in respect of their bodies many are within, who in respect of faith and obedience are without. It is all one to be without and to deserve to be without. V. BLINDNESS OR OBSTINACY IS IN PART COME TO ISRAEL, BUT IN THE END ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED. An obstinate man is not in the state of salvation. Who have this obstinate heart? The Jews; but we need not seek a Jew to find it. Concerning which note—1. The misery of an obstinate heart. There are two estates of the heart most fearful: to feel sin too much; and to be past feeling. The soft repenting heart is a heavenly heart. 2. The means whereby we come to such a state. (1) Custom in sinning. Even as a path is hardened by the continual trampling of the passengers, so by custom in evil is the conscience by little and little crushed and made insensible. (2) Neglect of the means of grace offered. This shut up the Jews in obstinacy; and ordinarily for this is this judgment of God inflicted upon men. 3. Its effects. (1) A departing from the faith, broaching the doctrines of devils, denying manifest truth, and holding and seeming anything to obtain our own ends (1 Tim. iv. 1–3; Eph. iv. 18). As when men will be Papists, Protestants, neuters, anything, nothing, as they see it best serve their politic plots. (2) Committing and delighting in sin. 4. Its signs. (1) When no judgment. (2) When no mercy can move to remorse. When the word, which is a hammer, a sword, and water can neither by the thundering of judgment, bruise, or make any dent into our hearts, not by the pleasing sound of mercy, molify us and make us relent; there is hardness unspeakable. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *Why do we hope for the conversion of the Jews?*—I. BECAUSE IT IS PREDICTED—1. By Paul (ver. 25). Their blindness is partial and temporary. 2. By the Old Testament prophets (vers. 26, 27). They shall acknowledge Christ and share in the promise of the new covenant. II. BECAUSE THE GIFTS AND CALLING OF GOD ARE WITHOUT REPENTANCE. 1. Their exclusion is for a temporary purpose. 2. Their election permanent. 3. The purpose of God unalterable (vers. 28, 29). III. BECAUSE OF GOD'S PLAN OF PROCEDURE WITH THE GENTILES. 1. Once excluded by their own unbelief. 2. Now accepted through the unbelief of Israel. 3. So they also shall obtain mercy. 4. That God may have mercy upon all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Our duty to the Jew:*—I. HOW WE SHOULD REGARD HIM. 1. Not with contempt, but with respect. 2. Not as cast away, but blinded. II. WHAT WE SHOULD HOPE FOR HIM. 1. His restoration with the fulness of the Gentiles. 2. Not simply the conversion of a few, but of the nation. III. HOW WE SHOULD TREAT HIM. We should—1. Hate his self-righteousness. 2. Love himself. 3. Seek his salvation. (*Ibid.*) **The fulness of the Gentiles.**—*The fulness of the Gentiles and the conversion of the Jews:*—Take as an illustration the case of a river bed nearly dry from long-continued drought. What water there is flows languidly, and produces no effect on an islet in mid-stream. Rain comes and the volume of water is increased and the flow becomes stronger and more rapid. In proportion to the copiousness of the rain, and therefore to the power of the current the islet is affected. By little and little its banks are washed away, and more and more of its surface is covered by the victorious waters which gradually rise. The rain becomes a flood, and the river bed now full, and the river a mighty torrent, the islet, after long resistance, ultimately succumbs, and is covered or washed away. So the

conversion of the Jews will be proportionate to the amount of missionary energy, fed by Divine grace, on the part of the Gentile Churches. And when the fulness of grace shall fill all Christian agencies with a fulness of enthusiasm we may expect Judaism to be submerged. Or to change the figure. A king returns from his journey into a far country and finds his whole kingdom in a state of revolt. He first appeals to that province with which he has the closest and tenderest ties. But his claims are ignored and his overtures treated with contempt. Collecting, however, a loyal few, he marches forth to subjugate his own provinces. The work is a long and arduous one, and the fortunes of the brave band are varied. Victory is followed by defeat. Here a subjugated territory maintains its allegiance, there another revolts as soon as the army is withdrawn, and has to be conquered again. But the army is ever increasing, and year by year there is less and less to conquer, and each conquered territory sends its contingent to reduce the rest. Eventually the work is done, and the whole kingdom brought to subjection with the exception of the province to which the king made his first appeal. All through the campaign individual citizens have come over, but there is now a stubborn residuum left. On this the whole of the now loyal empire concentrates its forces, and partly perhaps from a sense of helplessness, but, mostly from a sense of the rectitude of the conqueror's claims, it yields, and the kingdom is once more united under one rightful head. So Christ, the King of man, made His first appeal to the Jews; but rejected by them, His kinsmen, He with His apostles turned to the Gentiles, and not in vain, as the history of the bye-gone centuries with all their vicissitudes for His cause has proved. Much yet remains to be done, but past successes are prophetic of future triumphs, and Jesus will yet have the heathen for His inheritance, &c. The power of Christian influence will then be irresistible and Israel will yield. I. THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES WILL BE THE RESULT OF A FULL OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The gift of Pentecost was only the earnest of a larger blessing. That equipped the Church for her warfare, this will inaugurate her triumph. Special manifestations of the Spirit have been vouchsafed in every age, and these have been uniformly followed by an outburst of missionary zeal. It is not, then, incredible that God should literally pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and thus bring the fulness of the Gentiles in. II. THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES WILL BE THE FULL CHRISTIANISATION OF THE GENTILES. 1. As yet this is only partial. Vast tracts lie outside Christian influence, but these are being narrowed every year. 2. A great mass of Christianised Gentilism is only nominal. Multitudes have only the form without the power, and wear a name they only disgrace. 3. The time will come when both in name and reality all tribes and kingdoms and tongues will become Christians. III. THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES WILL HAVE AN IRRESISTIBLE EFFECT ON THE JEWS. During the process of filling this effect has been more or less marked, and will, we may well believe, be more marked still as the Galilean goes on conquering and to conquer. But when the Jew looks back and sees religion after religion overthrown, and nation after nation brought into obedience to the faith of Christ and His religion, and his nation the only one left—the time will not be far distant when overwhelming external pressure will combine with overwhelming internal conviction to bring Israel to the feet of Christ. Conclusion: 1. What a glorious outlook! What an argument for Christian missions! (*J. W. Burn.*) **And so all Israel shall be saved.**—*The salvation of Israel:*—I. THEIR PRESENT BLINDNESS. 1. Awful in its character. 2. Partial in extent. 3. Fixed in its period. II. ITS REMOVAL. 1. Complete. 2. General. 3. Certain. Conclusion: Consider—1. Its aspect on the Jews. 2. Its proper effect upon your own kinds. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *The restoration of Israel:*—1. THE EVENT. 1. All Israel, as a nation—2. Shall be saved, delivered from the curse which has so long rested upon them. II. THE MEANS BY WHICH IT SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED. 1. The deliverer, Christ—2. Shall come out of Zion—3. And take away their sin (Isa. lix. 17—21). III. THE CERTAINTY OF IT. 1. The covenant—2. Of salvation (Jer. xxxi. 31). (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For this is My covenant with them.**—*The new covenant:*—I. UNTO WHOM SENT. 1. To all who believe. 2. Not only Jews but Gentile. II. WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE. 1. The promise of the Spirit (Isa. lix. 21; Jer. xxxi. 31). 2. Of eternal salvation (Isa. lv. 3). III. HOW IT IS SEALED. In the pardon of sin. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 28, 29. **As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes.**—*Enemies may be unconscious helpers:*—During the siege of Sebastopol a Russian shell buried itself in the side of a hill without the city, and opened a spring. A

little fountain bubbled forth where the cannon shot had fallen, and during the remainder of the siege afforded to the thirsty troops who were stationed in that vicinity an abundant supply of pure, cold water. Thus the missile of death from an enemy, under the direction of an overruling Providence, proved an almoner of mercy to the parched and weary soldiery of the allies. So often the efforts of men against God's kingdom have been overruled to its furtherance. Every great attack upon the Bible has opened a new fountain of its truth to supply the wants of God's people. *The relation of the Jewish nation to the Gentiles:*—I. PRIOR TO THE PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL. It was the relation of—1. Sole depositories of the Word of God (Psa. lxxvi.; Amos iii. 2). They had a revelation of Jehovah, while the others were in that ignorance at which the apostle declares God "winked." 2. The channels for the transmission of the promised seed, in which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. The tribe of Judah contained within it a sacred deposit, the God-man, the Saviour of the world. In this sense, "salvation is of the Jews," the world was preserved for their sake. 3 The main spring of the politics of the world. Kings and empires were set up and cast down for their sakes. II. SINCE THE GOSPEL. This must be regarded—1. As it respects the remnant of the Jewish people converted to the Christian faith, according to the election of grace. These formed the stem of the Christian Church, Jesus Christ Himself, the founder of the Christian system, being a Jew according to the flesh. They were the first to be taken into union with Him; the first branches from Him the living stem; the first members of the body of which He is the head. They were not taken into fellowship with Gentiles, but Gentile converts were taken into fellowship with them (Eph. ii. 12–22; iii. 10). The relation, therefore, is that of brethen in Christ Jesus. And the relation which the Church, thus formed, bears to the world around is of the same nature as that which the Jews once bare to the Gentiles. The Christian Church—(1) Is the sole depository of the truth. In this Church alone is Christ to be found; and in the Church alone, therefore, can God be known. (2) Has deposited within her the true seed which is to become a blessing to all the earth. (3) Is the main spring of the politics of the world. Can any man think on this subject with the Bible before him, and then deny that such men as Decius, Julian, Charlemagne, Napoleon, and others, were raised up for the promotion, in one way or other, of the interests of the Church. 2. As it respects the Jews as a nation. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes"; not the remnant—they are converted—but the nation. But though thus cast off for our sakes, they are not cast off beyond the reach of God; the same hand which put them off will protect and preserve them, for "the gift and calling of God are without repentance." But they are "enemies for our sakes": they bear the relation to us of poor outcasts—outcasts to make room for us; as if the tree could have but a certain number of branches, as if the body could have but a certain number of members, and God had cast off some of the branches, and removed some of the members, that we might become branches in Him who is the true Vine, and members united to Him who is the only head! III. AFTER THE RESTORATION. 1. Metropolitan pre-eminence (Isa. lx.; Micah iv.). 2. Spiritual blessing (Psa. lxvii.). (*H. M. McNeile, D.D.*) *The mystery of God in relation to His ancient people:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Enemies for your sakes. 2. Beloved for the fathers' sakes. II. ITS IMMUTABLE CHARACTER. 1. Depends on the immutable character of God. 2. And His unchangeable purpose. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Beloved for the fathers' sakes.**—God loves when compelled to punish, and His affection for His ancient people should teach us to love them too. "For the fathers' sakes" is God's own reason for His love (Deut. vii. 7, 8). There was nothing in Israel to attract it, for they were obstinate transgressors from the womb (Isa. xlviii. 4, 8), and a disobedient and gainsaying people (chap. x. 21). So God loves sinners in Christ for His Son's sake. God's love to the fathers remembered in behalf of the children (Lev. xxvi. 42). Blessing of godly ancestors. Children loved for their parents' sakes. How privileged are the offspring of a godly stock; how great their responsibility; how deep should be their gratitude! (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.**—Without change of mind on God's part; subject to no regret or change of purpose (2 Cor. vii. 10; Heb. xii. 17). God gives without variableness or shadow of turning (James i. 17). His gift to Israel only suspended or withdrawn for a season. He has not repented of calling Abraham and his seed as His people, nor regretted the promises made to the fathers. Man's conduct may change God's manner but not His mind. God's dealings may vary, but not His determinings; His providence may alter, but not His purposes. The Strength of

Israel will not lie nor repent (1 Sam. xv. 29). God's unchangeableness the ground of Israel's safety (Mal. iii. 6). God will not cast away His people (Deut. iv. 31; 1 Sam. xii. 22). Israel is not to be permanently deprived of what God has promised them. (*Ibid.*) *The gifts and calling of God without repentance:*—They are so in respect to God the giver; He never repents that He hath called His people into the fellowship of His Son; and they are so on the believer's part, who is never sorry, whatever afterwards he meets with, that he is brought to Christ. (*J. Flavel.*) *The immutability of God: a source of comfort:*—It is a source of comfort to the believer to reflect that that on which he puts his trust is established and immovable. Changes take place above and around the fortress, but its massive buttresses still stand unmoved, and its battlements frown defiance at the strength of the foe. The clouds above are fleeting past, it may be in silvery brightness, or it may be in pall-like gloom; the leaves are budding or fading, according to their seasons upon the earth but there stands the fortress, established and unchanged. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *The constancy of God:*—It has been supposed that the doctrine of God's decrees would repel men, and drive them into infidelity. On the contrary, it draws men. God's decrees may be taught so as to make men feel that they are oppressive; but the thought that the decrees of God run through time and eternity, and that He is true to them, so far from being repulsive, is exceedingly attractive. You might as well say that the laws of nature are repulsive as to say that God's decrees are so. It is constancy that is the foundation of hope, and civilisation, and everything that is blessed in the world. Men are glad that light is always light, that electricity is always electricity, that all forces of nature are always true to their laws. Men are thankful that the stars revolve perpetually in their appointed courses. Men rejoice in the fact that there is fixity in all those methods by which the material universe is controlled. And the immutableness of God in the great elements of His character—truth, justice, goodness, and love—is subject-matter for profound gratulation. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God's purpose uninfluenced by difficulties:*—A man undertakes mining operations in such-and-such a place, he says, "I shall dig for iron." Well, he meets with great difficulties, hard rocks to bore through, and so on. He comes to this conclusion, "If I had known of this labour, and of the expense, I should not have sought for the metal here." But suppose the man to be well aware of everything, and that he meets with nothing but what he foresaw, then you may depend upon it that the man means business, and having commenced operations, he will continue working till he obtains that which he seeks after.

Vers. 30–32. **For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy.**—*The memory of the past* should—1. Promote humility. 2. Awaken gratitude. 3. Soften our censures. 4. Strengthen our hopes of others. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Mercy for the Jew:*—I. WE HAVE RECEIVED MERCY—1. Unmerited. 2. Free. 3. Through the unbelief of Israel. II. WE MUST SHOW MERCY—1. As an expression of gratitude. 2. A debt of justice. 3. A Christian duty. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The gospel given to us as a deposit for the Jews:*—Observe—I. THE MYSTERIOUS WAY IN WHICH GOD HAS DISPENSED HIS BLESSINGS TO MANKIND—first the Jew, then the Gentile; all Israel, then the fulness of the Gentiles. The mysteriousness of this plan—delay, partial bestowment, transfer, final restoration. II. THE DESIGN OF IT. 1. To provoke the Jews to jealousy. 2. To provoke the Christian world to love. (*Ibid.*) *The last argument to prove the conversion and general calling of the Jews:*—The argument is taken from the like dealing of God with the Gentiles. The impiety of the Gentiles was no impediment to their mercy, neither shall the infidelity of the Jews to theirs. I. THE GENTILES WERE INFIDELS (Eph. ii. 12), BUT BY THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS THEY ARE RECEIVED TO MERCY. 1. Forget not what thou wert, for we have all run the race of the prodigal son. It is God's grace if it be otherwise with thee now. Be thankful. How if God had taken thee away in thy sins? Let this bind thee to thy good behaviour for ever (1 Tim. i. 15; *cf.* Tit. iii. 8). 2. Faith is a sweet mercy, so is the Word of God, the means of that faith. Alas for them which, having the means of faith, yet contemn the same! 3. Sin breeds sorrow, and many times sorrow kills the sin which bred it, as a worm breeding in timber consumes it. So the sin of the Jews works to the good of the Gentiles by the goodness of God. Gregory the Great calls the sin of Adam happy, because it was the occasion of salvation; so in some sort may we say of the unbelief of the Jews. 4. God forbid that we should lightly esteem the grace God offers us, it coming unto us at so dear

a rate as is the casting off of His people. 5. When we were infidels, God showed us mercy; much more will He be merciful to us now we believe. II. THE JEWS ARE NOW IN AN ESTATE OF UNBELIEF, BUT THEY SHALL BE RECEIVED TO MERCY (Isa. xlvi. 4; Jer. xxiv. 6, 7). 1. There is yet mercy for the Jews, by the example of the like mercy to the Gentiles. But it is now sixteen hundred years ago since they were cast off; is it likely that after so long time they should be called? Yes; for the Gentiles lay longer under their infidelities, yet at last received grace. 2. Faith is not in the power of man, nor can any means effect it without God's blessing. One would think that this long affliction of the Jews might make them cry *peccavi*, beside other means God hath afforded them. In trouble, then, pray it may be sanctified to thy profit. Pray also for a blessing on the Word, else it will be unprofitable, though the preacher were a son of thunder. 3. Carry thyself meekly toward a Jew, and toward unbelievers among ourselves, considering thyself, who wert in the same condemnation. Judge not thy neighbour for damned; He that converted thee can in His good time convert him also. Play the physician to thy neighbour's soul; show him of the mercy thou hast received, that he also may be stirred up to seek to Him who is merciful. God gave Paul consolation in distress, that he might comfort others; so if He give thee knowledge, faith, &c., use them in like manner. 4. Who, then, is the better for thy gifts? The Jew compasseth sea and land to make a proselyte. The Jesuits wind themselves like serpents into every place to make a papist. Drunkards and other ungodly persons seek to draw others to their practices. 5. Let the Jew follow the faith of the Gentile, so do thou the example of good Christians among whom thou livest. It is a great furtherance to godliness to have an example to the rule. It is a help to the scholar to have a copy to write by, but a greater furtherance to his profiting to see his master make the letters. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) **For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all**—*All are shut up in unbelief*:—I. How? 1. By nature. 2. By providence—first the Gentile, then the Jew. 3. By the appointment of eternal justice. II. WHY? 1. That God's mercy. 2. To all. 3. Might be more gloriously manifested. III. IN WHAT WAY THIS DIVINE ARRANGEMENT CONTRIBUTES TO SUCH A RESULT. 1. By convincing man of his sinfulness and utter helplessness. 2. By preparing him for the reception of mercy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Why God locked up* (so to speak) *Gentiles and Jews in the prison of unbelief*:—1. That their salvation might be manifestly seen to be by grace. 2. That self-righteous boasting might be excluded. 3. That men might duly appreciate the blessings of His redemptive love. 4. That scope might be afforded for the full display of His mercy. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Man's unbelief and God's mercy*:—Here is an elegant similitude. Men unconverted are prisoners—God the Judge, unbelief the prison, the devil the gaoler, the law the sergeant, and natural corruption the fetters. I. GOD HATH SHUT UP ALL IN UNBELIEF. This is the common condition of all men (chap. iii. 9, 19, 23; Gal. iii. 22). 1. Paul hath in the passage of this business ten times told us of our miserable condition by nature. Here we are poor sinners; it is our part to take knowledge of our corrupt nature. 2. Great is the misery that accompanies imprisonment, restraint of liberty, hunger, cold, shame, chains, but no dungeon more loathsome than an unbelieving heart. Oh that we could be sensible of it, that we might sigh to God for deliverance, as did the Israelites in Egypt. When a man is arrested, what lamenting among his friends; but our very souls are imprisoned in the worst of prisons, under the worst of gaolers, and yet we are merry, as though it were but a trifle. 3. We may know whether we be yet in this prison by two things. (1) By faith in God. Hast thou this? If not, there needs no jury to find thee guilty: thou art in the very bottom of the dungeon. But thou sayest there is a God. Thy life condemns thee, for thou actest as if there were no God. (2) By faith in His Word. The Scripture threatens ungodly men with the plagues of God, and promiseth eternal life to the godly. Did men believe this, durst they run on in all profaneness? II. THAT HE MIGHT HAVE MERCY ON ALL (Gal. iii. 22). 1. Our salvation is of mere mercy, but it is a hard thing to be brought to acknowledge it. The Gentiles were 2,000 years before they could learn this lesson, and the Jews have been 1,600 about it, and yet have not learned it; yea, there are many amongst us that cannot say this lesson right. Most men hope to be saved by their prayers and good serving God; we are loth to lose the commendation of our own goodness. 2. Jews and Gentiles should live together, seeing they are both in one prison for one end, and set free by one and the same mercy. 3. If any be set free, it is by the mercy of God, who hath the key of our unbelieving hearts, doth open and shut

them at His pleasure. As a man committed by the king can be set free by none but the king, so God committed us, and none can set us free but Himself. Cry, therefore, to the Lord for mercy. 4. There are two notes whereby we may discern whether we be released out of the prison or no. (1) Our joy. A liberated prisoner leaps and dances, so as no ground will hold him; so birds and beasts escaping from their restraint send about, as sensible of the sweetness of liberty. (2) Our carefulness not to commit anything that may bring us into such bondage. So he that believeth the pardon of sin will for ever hate sin. For the most part, prisoners are of wicked behaviour; so if thy conversation be lewd, it is a manifest sign thou art not yet delivered. (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*)

Ver. 33. **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!**—Like a traveller who has reached the summit of an Alpine ascent, the apostle turns and contemplates. Depths are at his feet; but waves of light illumine them, and then spreads all around an immense horizon which his eye commands. The plan of God in the government of mankind spreads out before him, and he expresses the feeling of admiration and gratitude with which the prospect fills his heart. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The depth of the divine wisdom*:—As a man wading into the sea, when he comes up to the neck and feels the water begin to heave him up and his feet to fail him, cries out, "O the depth!" and goes back, so it fares with Paul in this place, and it is as if he should have said thus: "O you Romans and my countrymen the Jews, I have writ unto you these things as far as I can; for the rest I am swallowed up, being more unable to pass farther into this bottomless, than to wade through the depth of the sea. Cease, therefore, to put more questions, and admire with me the depth of the wisdom of God." (*Elnathan Parr, B.D.*) *The wisdom and knowledge of God*:—The true distinction between knowledge and wisdom is indicated by Theodoret. "He foreknew these things from the beginning, and, having foreknown them, He arranged them wisely." Bishop Lightfoot says, "While *gnosis* is simply intuitive, *sophia* is ratiocinative also. While 'gnosis' applies chiefly to the apprehension of truths, 'sophia' superadds the power of reasoning about them and tracing their relations." To complete the distinction, we must add that, while knowledge is theoretical, wisdom is practical; and while knowledge is purely intellectual, wisdom is also moral; and for that reason is both the most perfect of mental gifts (Aristotle, "Nic. Eth." vi. 10) and the queen of all the virtues (Cicero, "De Off." i. 43). In the present context, "gnosis" seems to refer especially to God's foreknowledge of the free determinations of man's will, both in individuals and nations; while "sophia" denotes the admirable skill with which He includes man's free actions in His plan, and transforms them into so many means for the accomplishment of His good purpose. (*Archdeacon Gifford.*) *The depths of the Godhead*:—I. How they stand revealed before us in His—1. Nature. 2. Works. 3. Ways. II. How we stand overwhelmed before them in—1. Humility. 2. Faith. 3. Hope. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The depth and wealth of Divine grace*:—I. Wisdom conceived the purpose. II. Knowledge devised the plan. III. Judgments prepare the way. IV. Grace achieves the result. (*Ibid.*) *The unfathomable depth of redeeming love*:—I. Wisdom in the plan. 1. In the gift of His Son. 2. In the communication of His righteousness. 3. In the glory of the issue. II. Mystery in the procedure. 1. With the world at large. 2. With individual believers. (*Ibid.*) *The depths of salvation*:—I. Christianity is a system of wonders. 1. The very proposal of salvation for sinners is a matter of wonder. God was not obliged to save. Man deserved to perish; and God could have filled his place instantly with better beings. Moreover, man is the solitary object of saving mercy. When sin broke out in heaven, God hurled the thunderbolt of a just vengeance. Certainly here is ground for amazement. 2. The incarnation of Christ was a miracle beyond any other miracle of God. Deity took upon Himself the form and nature of humanity. Among all God's wonders, you can find no analogy for the person of Christ. 3. Our ordinary idea of the proceedings of justice is confounded by the sufferings of Christ. We connect suffering with sin; at least, we consider that an innocent being cannot justly be treated as a malefactor. Yet the sinless Son of God was a man of sorrows and died as a culprit, abandoned even by the Father whom He always pleased. Reason can only exclaim, "O the depth!" at this. 4. Amazement rises higher at the Bible representation that He suffered the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. How could justice be satisfied by the sufferings of an innocent One? How can it be a just thing that

they should be accepted as a propitiation for our sins? God has taught us the fact, and hence we believe it; but the fact is a wonder. These are only examples. Things of the same marvellous nature run all through the system of redemption. Infidelity is confounded by these depths. But what confounds an infidel comforts a Christian. II. THOSE WONDERS ARE REASONS FOR OUR ACCEPTING IT AND BEING COMFORTED BY IT. 1. They constitute a feature of our religion which comports with our experience on all other subjects. The facts which we have mentioned are all plainly revealed facts. There is no darkness or depth in them. The depth and darkness meet us only as we proceed to philosophise. The further we investigate the things of God anywhere the more deep and wonderful they become. (1) The astronomer finds it so. His wonder grows as he passes the known suns and stars; and now, as he casts his keen eye out upon the illimitable space beyond him, he is compelled to feel that he has not yet passed the porch of the temple of God. All he can say is, "O the depth!" (2) So in the ever-descending field of microscopic study. (3) The providences of God, again, are full of wonders. What a marvel is human history! 2. There are many things of importance, but they are not all of equal value. Unorganised matter lies below the organisms of life. Brute life is of a lower rank than human. The mental kingdom, while superior to the vegetable and animal, is inferior to the moral. Now, we are limited creatures, and cannot have an equal understanding of all subjects, and must expect to meet with the highest wonders in the highest departments. An infidel tells us he meets with the most wonders in Christianity. For that reason he rejects it, and for that we glory in it. Consider two arguments here. (1) God is glorious in everything, but not in everything of equal glory. His highest glory lies in His saving sinners. The angels knew this who sung over Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest." Well, on that high field of wonders, where God is more glorious than anywhere else, shall we not expect Him to be more amazing than anywhere else? (2) Consider the soul. It is immortal, and its capacities will expand for ever. It is to be saved or lost. When a soul is perilled, shall God for its salvation work no more wonders than He does about the petty interests of a world of matter and beasts, and threescore years and ten? 3. It is in these deep things of God only that we find provision for our deepest necessities. Reason cannot hope except before the amazing depths of God's wisdom and mercy. As sinners, we need God to do for us just the wonders He has wrought. Had He not done them, we must have despaired. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *Our proper attitude towards the deep things of God*:—It remains for us dutifully and reverentially to adore that in the Divine counsels and ways which we do not, and, indeed, cannot, understand. There is no government that hath not its *arcana*; and it would be very foolish for us to imagine that there should be no secrets belonging to the Divine government. (*John Howe.*) *The contemplation of God's redeeming purpose* should prompt—I. ADMIRATION of—1. His wisdom. 2. His knowledge. II. THE CONFESSION OF HIS UNSEARCHABLENESS in respect of—1. His purpose and procedure. 2. His all-sufficiency. III. THE PRAISE OF HIS GRACE, which is—1. Free. 2. Undeserved. IV. THE INCREASE OF HIS GLORY. 1. He is the end of all things. 2. To Him be glory for ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's conduct in the salvation of mankind*:—This is the conclusion of Paul's argument on this subject. He seems to be overwhelmed with the sense of its unsearchableness. The depths of God's wisdom and knowledge appear in—I. THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE RESTORATION OF REBELS. Human monarchs have shown their justice in crushing rebels, but God in restoring them. II. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SPIRIT OF REBELLION IN THE RESTORATION OF REBELS. Human monarchs may deliver rebels, but they cannot destroy the spirit of rebellion. God does this. III. THE AUGMENTATION OF THE FORCE OF MORAL GOVERNMENT IN THE RESTORATION OF REBELS. Human monarchs may weaken their government by saving rebels, but God strengthens the force of His moral administration by redeeming transgressors. IV. THE PROMOTION OF ALL THE RIGHTS OF HIS SUBJECTS IN THE RESTORATION OF REBELS. Human monarchs, by delivering rebels, endanger the rights of loyal citizens; God, in the restoration of rebels, promotes the rights of all. V. THE ELECTION OF EARTH INSTEAD OF HELL AS THE SCENE FOR THE RESTORATION OF REBELS. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's praise*:—I. ITS THEME. 1. His wisdom. 2. His knowledge. 3. His judgments and procedure. II. ITS EXPRESSION. 1. Wonder. 2. Submission. 3. Love. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Wisdom of God in redemption*:—No one can be said to meditate aright on redemption by Christ who does not behold God's manifold wisdom, as well as His other perfec

tions, displayed therein. As we conclude him a very unskilful observer of a curious picture or statue who only takes notice of its dimensions in general, or the matter of which it is composed, its colouring, or framework, without considering the symmetry and proportion of all its parts, the mind, the genius, and intelligence shown in its design—so it is unworthy and below a Christian to be able only to say that Christ is a Saviour, or to have a general idea of this scheme of mercy, without having his thoughts suitably affected with the wonders of love and grace which it contains, and the design of all, and the adaptation of every part, to set forth the glory of the triune Jehovah. (*H. G. Salter.*) *Incomplete presentations of the gospel*:—My best presentations of the gospel to you are so incomplete! Sometimes, when I am alone, I have such sweet and rapturous visions of the love of God and the truths of His Word, that I think if I could speak to you then I should move your hearts. I am like a child who, walking forth some sunny morning, sees grass and flowers all shining with drops of dew. "Oh," he cries, "I'll carry these beautiful things to my mother!" and, eagerly plucking them, the dew drops into his little palm, and all the charm is gone. There is but grass in his hand, and no longer pearls. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Limitation of human views*:—There is a striking passage in which a great philosopher, the famous Bishop Berkeley, describes the thought which occurred to him of the inscrutable schemes of Providence, as he saw, in St. Paul's Cathedral, a fly moving on one of the pillars. "It requires," he says, "some comprehension in the eye of an intelligent spectator to take in at one view the various parts of the building, in order to observe their harmony and design. But to the fly, whose prospect was confined to a little part of one of the stones of a single pillar, the joint beauty of the whole, or the distinct use of its parts, was inconspicuous. To that limited view, the small irregularities on the surface of the hewn stone seemed to be so many deformed rocks and precipices." That fly on the pillar, of which the philosopher spoke, is the likeness of each human being as he creeps along the vast pillars which support the universe. The sorrow which appears to us nothing but a yawning chasm or hideous precipice, may turn out to be but the joining or cement which binds together the fragments of our existence into a solid whole! That dark and crooked path, in which we have to grope our way in doubt and fear, may be but the curve which, in the full daylight of a brighter world, will appear to be the necessary finish of some choice ornament, the inevitable span of some majestic arch. (*Dean Stanley.*) **How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!**—*The unsearchableness of God*:—I. WHEN WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND HIS WAYS IT IS ENOUGH TO BE ASSURED—1. That He knows what He does. 2. That He needs no counsellor. II. THEREFORE OUGHT WE TO RESIGN OURSELVES TO HIS WILL, with—1. Resignation. 2. Obedience. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The unsearchableness of God's judgments*:—These words are the close of St. Paul's disputation concerning God's providence towards His ancient people, in rejecting the greatest part of them, on their refusal to embrace Christianity, and in admitting the Gentiles to favour on their compliance; in which proceeding the Jews could not discern God's hand, nor allow such a dispensation to be worthy of Him. The apostle, after an able vindication of it, winds up the contest with the modest intimation that in this and all such cases, for entire satisfaction, we should have recourse to the incomprehensible wisdom of God, who frequently orders things in methods beyond our ability to trace. Note—I. SOME CAUSES AND REASONS OF THAT INCOMPREHENSIBILITY. 1. As the dealings of very wise men sometimes are founded on maxims, and admit justifications not obvious to nor penetrable by vulgar conceit, so may God's. As there are natural modes of being and operation—such as God's necessary subsistence, His eternity without succession, &c.—so there may be prudential and moral rules far above our reach (Isa. lv. 9). Some of these we may be incapable of knowing on account of our finite nature; others on account of our meanness and low rank among created beings. In such cases the absolute will, sovereign authority, and pure liberality of God, supply the place of reasons. 2. As the standing rules of God's acting, so the occasional grounds thereof are commonly placed beyond the sphere of our apprehension. God is obliged to prosecute His own immutable decrees; "working all things according to the counsel of His own will": which how can we anywise come to discover? God also has a perfect foresight of contingent events. He observes in what relation and degrees of comparison things stand towards each other; whereas we cannot tell what things to compare. 3. We are also incapable thoroughly to discern the ways of Providence, from our moral defects, in some measure common to all men; our stupidity, sloth, temerity, impatience, impurity

of heart, &c. 4. Again, the nature of those instruments which Divine Providence uses in administration of human affairs, hinders us from discerning it. The footsteps of Divine wisdom are far more conspicuous in the works of nature than in the management of our affairs, and while the one has confirmed faith, the other has bred doubt. 5. As in nature the influence of heaven and of inferior causes, so in the production of special events among men Divine and human agency are so combined, that it is not easy to discriminate what God performs by natural instruments, and what by superior efficacy. (1) Not seeing the first, we are prone to ascribe too much to the last, which are most obvious. (2) And this we are the more apt to do because the manner of Divine agency is ever soft and gentle. God so fashions the hearts of men, so manages their hands, so guides their steps, that even they who are most acted on by Him cannot feel the touch. 6. God, in His progress towards the achievement of any design, is not wont to go in the most direct and compendious ways, but commonly takes a large compass, enfolding several other coincident purposes; which moves our impatience, &c. 7. Like every wise agent, He is wont to act variously, according to the state and circumstances of things, or to the dispositions and capacities of persons. 8. There are different ends which Providence pursues in various order and measure, which we, by reason of our dim insight and short prospect, cannot descry. (1) God permits things, bad in their own nature, having regard to their instrumental use and tendency. (2) Also the expediency of things to be permitted or crossed, frequently consists, not in themselves singly taken, as particular acts or events, but in their conjunction with or reference to others, with which they may become subservient to a common end. 9. That Providence is sometimes obscure and intricate, may be attributed to the will of God, on many accounts designing it so. He will not glare forth in discoveries so bright as to dazzle or confound our weak sight. (1) He meaneth thereby to improve and exalt our faith. (2) It is fit also that He should thus in many things surpass our understanding, that He may appear to be God indeed. (3) The obscurity of Providence conciliates an awful reverence towards it, as darkness raises a dread of invisible powers. (4) It is also requisite that God should dispose many occurrences, cross to our notions, and offensive to our carnal sense, that we may thus be prompted to think of Him, and to seek Him. (5) It is needful that the present course of Providence should not be perfectly clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future account, and forced in our thoughts to recur thither for a solution of our doubts and difficulties. II. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS GROUNDED ON THE FOREGOING REASONS. 1. It should render us modest and sober in our judgment about providential occurrences, since it is plain arrogance or imposture to assume perfect skill in what passeth our capacity to learn. 2. It should make us cautious in passing judgment or censure on events, since it is temerity to give sentence on what is incapable of evidence. 3. It should repress wanton curiosity, which would only make us lose our time, &c. 4. It should keep us from conceit and confidence in our own wisdom. 5. It should preserve us from infidelity, and despair on account of any cross accidents. 6. It should prevent our taking offence at such. 7. It should guard us against security, or presuming on impunity for our miscarriages; for seeing that God does not always fully discover His mind, it is vain to suppose that, because He is now patient, He will always be so. 8. It should quicken our industry in observing and considering the works of Providence: the fainter our light is, the more attentive should we be in looking. 9. It should oblige us to be circumspect and wary in our conversation. 10. Also constantly to seek God, and to depend on Him for protection, and for the conduct of His grace, the only clue in this labyrinth. 11. In fine, it should cause us humbly to admire and adore that wisdom which governs the world in ways no less great and wonderful than just and holy. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *Man's inability to find out God's judgments*:— 1. That which first brought both a present guilt, and entailed a future curse upon mankind, was an inordinate desire of knowledge. And from the fall to this very day, this fatal itch has stuck so close to our nature, that every one is eager to know where he is called only to adore and obey. 2. The Scripture is in nothing more full and frequent than in representing the transcendency of God's ways above all created intellectuals (Psa. cxxxix. 6; xxxvi. 6; xviii. 9; lxxvii. 19). If we consult its reports, or those of our own experience, about the amazing events of Providence, we shall find the result of our most exact inquiries in the text. I shall demonstrate that the most advanced wisdom of man is incompetent to

judge of—I. THE REASON OR CAUSE OF GOD'S WAYS. The causes men assign of the passages of Providence are—1. For the most part false, as *e.g.*, (1) That the prosperous are the objects of God's love; and the miserable of His hatred. And all this in defiance of the Spirit of God Himself who (Eccles. ix. 1) assures us that "no man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him"; nor consequently can conclude himself in or out of favour with God by anything befalling him in this life. Otherwise Lazarus would have been in flames, and the rich man in Abraham's bosom. God sometimes curses men with prosperity, and casts His Jobs upon dunghills, and sells His beloved Josephs into slavery. (2) That the good only must prosper and the bad suffer. A most absurd assertion, for how is it that the good suffer and the bad prosper?—a fact which staggered Asaph (Psa. lxxiii. 2), and so confounded Jeremiah (Jer. xii. 1), that he could almost have offered to dispute the point with God Himself. And from the same topic it was that Job's friends argued, until they were confounded by God's verdict on the whole matter. 2. Always imperfect. Who would assign an adequate reason of anything which God does, must see as far into it as God sees. There is no action of God but there is a combination of impulsive causes concerned in it, one or two of which man may light upon, but the weakness of his discerning powers keeps him inevitably a stranger to far the greater part of them. God, by one and the same numerical lot of providence, may intend to punish one nation, to advance another; to plant the gospel in a third, and to let in trade into a fourth; likewise to make way for the happiness of one man's prosperity, and for the extinction of another's; to reward the virtues of sober and industrious people, and to revenge the crimes of a vicious and rebellious; and we are no more able to search into these than we are to govern the world. II. THE ISSUE AND EVENT OF ACTIONS. Men usually prognosticate—1. According to the measure of the wisdom of second agents. And it must be confessed that it is the best rule were it not controlled by two better, viz., Scripture and experience. The former of which brings in God laughing at the wisdom of the wise; taking and circumventing the crafty in their own wiles (Job v. 12, 13). And for the latter, history so abounds with instances of the most artificially-spun contrivances dashed in pieces by some sudden and unforeseen accidents, that to ascertain the event of the most promising undertaking, if we trust but our own eyes, we shall have little cause to trust another's wisdom. 2. From success formerly gained under the same or less probable circumstances. But remember (1) That it is hard, and perhaps scarce possible to repeat any action under perfectly the same circumstances. (2) That in most actions there are still some circumstances not observed, which may have a surer and more immediate influence upon the event than those which, coming more into view, are more depended upon. (3) That the success of every action depends more upon the secret hand of God than upon any causes or instruments visibly engaged in it. 3. According to the preparations made for it, and the power employed in it. And yet we find that it is not always the bigger weight, but sometimes the artificial hand managing the balance which turns the scale. And in like manner, when we have raised armies and manned our fleets, we are still in the hand of that Providence which sometimes sets the crown of victory upon the weak and the few, and disappoints the hopes and breaks the force of the confident and numerous. Could anything look more invincible than the Spanish Armada? But we find that there is no commanding the sea without being able to command the winds too. And what a painful defence is multitude on the one side, where Omnipotence takes the other! III. THE USE AND IMPROVEMENT. We may infer—1. The vanity of making the future event, or presumed success of any enterprise, the rule of our present actings about the same. 2. The absolute necessity of an entire, total, unreserved dependence upon Providence in the most hopeful and promising condition of our affairs. 3. The impossibility of a rational dependence upon Providence with comfort, but in the way of lawful, honest, and religious courses. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Plans of God not fully known*:—I should like to hear any man attempt to interpret to a worm what it is going to be when it is a butterfly. Where is there a foreshadowing analogy, or anything to indicate to it what it is coming to in its fuller form? And how can any one disclose what is to be evolved when God's work is completed in this life? For, although we may know something, our knowledge is fragmentary and limited. And it is a glorious consolation to believe that sufferings forgotten are not less causes of good than those that are remembered, and that sufferings which apparently leave but little trace are working out in us great and blessed results in the kingdom to which we are

hastoning. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God's ways inscrutable, but in accordance with the highest reason*:—Natural instincts, and even moral sense, are no safe guide upon a subject which soars so infinitely above our limited capacity. We are children; and in considering the means by which our Heavenly Father will save us, it is wisdom to accept simply His own instructions, desperate folly and presumption to criticise those instructions by our puerile instincts. *E.g.*, a father, inured to life upon the Alpine mountains, is under the necessity of crossing a very perilous glacier with his children. The children are of such an age that the direction, "Hold this, and keep at as great a distance from me as you possibly can," can just be made intelligible to them, while the grounds of it, viz., that the weight of the party may be distributed, and not bear on one particular spot, which might thus give way, are, it may be, out of the reach of a child's capacity. Let us suppose that the children, in fright, begin to reason about this counsel, and to judge of it by their natural instincts; conceive that one of them should think and say as follows: "Can our father, who loves to have us close around him, say, 'Come not near me, child, at the peril of thy life'? Say it he may, but I will not believe such to be his meaning, for it conflicts with all my natural instincts, which are to cling round him in the moment of danger." But shortly afterwards night falls, and the wearied children are irresistibly impelled to lie down without any covering, in which case death would overtake them. The father burrows in a snowdrift, and proposes that in the cavities so made the children shall lie, the cold snow piled over them, and only the smallest possible aperture allowed for the passage of the breath. Adults, of course, would be aware that this would be the only method of preserving the vital heat of the body; but not so the children. Snow, applied only to parts of the person, and not as a general wrapper, is bitterly cold; and the children, unable to understand, imagine cruelty in this arrangement. Now, the child who keeps at a distance from his father, and hurles himself in the snow, is a wise child, because, renouncing the guidance of his instincts, he places faith in one manifestly his superior in capacity. The child who clings round his father's neck upon the glacier and stretches his limbs beneath the open sky in distrust of his parent's directions is a foolish child; for what is greater folly than to refuse to be guided by a recognised superior in wisdom? And it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that one who, in investigating such a subject as the method of human salvation, follows the guidance of his natural instincts in preference to that of Revelation, is a weak person, not a man of bold and courageous thought. Simple dependence upon God, where God alone can teach, is the truest independence of mind. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Secrets of God*:—Be not curious to search into the secrets of God; pick not the lock where He hath allowed no key. He that will be sifting every cloud may be smitten with a thunderbolt; and he that will be too familiar with God's secrets may be overwhelmed in His judgments. Adam would curiously increase his knowledge; therefore Adam shamefully lost his goodness: the Bethshemites would needs pry into the ark of God; therefore the hand of God slew about fifty thousand of them. Therefore hover not about this flame, lest we scorch our wings. For my part, seeing God hath made me His secretary, I will carefully improve myself by what He has revealed, and not curiously inquire into or after what He hath reserved. (*T. Adams.*) **For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?**—*God all in all*:—I. THE CHALLENGE. 1. To human intellect. 2. To human merit. II. THE ASSERTION. God is—1. The source of all. 2. The agent in all. 3. The end of all. III. THE ASCRIPTION. 1. To Him be glory. 2. On earth. 3. In heaven. 4. For ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's counsels* are:—I. DEEP. 1. Teaching us the feebleness of our understanding. 2. Checking our daring speculations. II. TRUE. 1. Inviting our confidence. 2. Commanding our submission. III. MERCIFUL. 1. Soliciting our love. 2. Inspiring our hope. (*Ibid.*) *God's independence*:—Philo, the Jew, compares the great God to a tree, and all creatures to the leaves and fruits, which are all in the tree; but the metaphor is not complete, because you may remove fruit from the tree, but there can be no creature out of the power and will of God by which alone it can exist at all. If you remove the fruits from the tree the tree has at least lost something; but if all creatures were destroyed, yet still the Lord would be as infinitely God as He is now; if the creatures were multiplied, God were no more—and if diminished, He were no less. The creatures, may be likened to the waves, and God to the great sea; the waves cannot exist apart from the sea, nor the creatures apart from God: but no earthly figure of the Divine can be complete, for the waves are a portion of the sea, but

the creatures are not God, nor do they contribute to His essence or attributes. The sea would be diminished if the waves were gone, but if you could take all creatures away, God would be no less God, nor less infinite than He is now. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.**—*God all in all*:—This is perhaps the most comprehensive account of the Deity in His relation to His works that is anywhere to be met with. All things are—I. OF HIM. He is of none. They originate in His will, and but for Him they would never have been. II. BY HIM. He creates and sustains all. III. TO HIM. All things are intended to manifest forth His glory, and will ultimately serve His purpose. He has made all things for Himself, and it is obviously meet that it should be so, that His will should be the law, His glory the end of the universe of which He is the Creator, the Supporter, and Proprietor. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *God all in all*:—Of Him all things are as their Original Author and Creator; through Him, as the Giver and Conveyer of them to us; to Him, to His honour, for His use, and in His disposal; and no further or longer ours than He is pleased in mercy, not in justice, as a free gift, and not as a debt, to dispense them to us. (*Bp. Sanderson.*) *God must be all in all*:—I. Him first. II. Him last. III. Him midst. IV. And without end. Amen. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God the first cause and last end*:—I. THE EXPLICATION OF THE TERMS. 1. That God is the first cause, signifies—(1) Negatively, that He had no cause, and is independent of every other being, and is eternally of Himself. (2) Positively, that He is the cause and support of all things besides Himself (John i. 3). 2. The last end; *i.e.*, that all things refer to Him; the aim of all things is the illustration of His glory, and the manifestation of His perfections. II. THE CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSITION. 1. By natural light. (1) The notion of a God contains in it all possible perfection. Now the utmost perfection we can imagine is for a being to be always of itself, and to be the cause and support of all other things. From hence follows that all things must refer to Him as their last end. For every wise agent acts in order to an end. Now the end which is most worthy the attaining is the manifestation of God's being and perfection, which is called God's glory. (2) These titles were discovered by the natural light of the heathens. Aristotle called God the first being, the first cause, and the first mover; and Plato calls God the author and parent of all things, the architect of the world, and of all creatures, the fountain and original of all things. Porphyry calls Him "the first," from whence he reasons that He is the ultimate end, and that all things move towards God; that all motions centre in Him, because, saith he, it is most proper and natural for things to refer to their original, and to refer all to Him from whom they receive all. Antoninus, speaking of nature (which with the Stoics signifies God), had these words, "Of Thee are all things, in Thee are all things, to Thee are all things." 2. From Scripture. (1) Hither belong all those places where He declares Himself to be "the first and the last" (Isa. xli. 4, xliii. 10, xliv. 6, xlviii. 12, 13; Rev. i. 8). (2) But more expressly, see 1 Cor. viii. 6; Acts xvii. 24. (3) Hither we may refer those texts which attribute the same to the Second Person in the Trinity (John i. 3, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16, 17; Heb. i. 2, 3). III. THE APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE. 1. If God be the first cause of all things, from hence let us learn—(1) With humility and thankfulness to own, admire, and bless God as the author of our being and of all the blessings we enjoy (Rev. iv. 11; Psa. ciii. 1–4). With patience and quietness to submit to all events that come upon us, as coming from Him (1 Sam. iii. 18; Psa. xxxix. 9). 2. If God be the last end of all, let us make Him our last end, and refer all our actions to His glory (Matt. xxii. 37; 1 Cor. x. 31). (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *The Trinity*:—1. The Father's love and purpose the origin of all things. 2. The Son's mediation and rule their continuance and direction. 3. The Spirit's agency conducts all things to the end designed. All things *of* the Father, *through* the Son, *by* the Spirit (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Laus Deo*:—My text consists of monosyllables, but it contains the loftiest sublimities. Our great God alone can expound this verse, for He only can worthily set forth His own perfections. May He do so now! Consider—I. THE DOCTRINE. All things are of Him as their source, through Him as their means, to Him as their end. They are of Him in the plan, through Him in the working, and to Him in the glory which they produce. Taking this general principle, you will find it apply to all things. 1. To the whole range of God's works in creation and providence. (1) There was a period when God inhabited eternity in His self-contained and solitary greatness. All things must be of Him in design, for there was no one with whom He could take counsel. Before His

works of old, eternal wisdom brought forth the perfect plan of future creations, and every line must have been of the Lord alone. He might have made a different universe, and that He has made it what it is was because He saw fit to do so. (2) When the plan was all laid down this was not enough; mere arrangement would not create. "*Through* Him" must all things be. There was no raw material ready, and there was none to help. He speaks, and the heavens leap into existence. He speaks again, and worlds are begotten with all the varied forms of life so fraught with Divine wisdom and matchless skill. Through Him were all things, from the archangel down to the insect. The same finger paints the rainbow and the wing of the butterfly. He who dyes the garments of evening in all the colours of heaven has covered the kingcup with gold, and lit up the glowworm's lamp. Nature is as it is through the energy of the present God. Out upon those men who think that God has wound up the world like a clock, and left it to work for itself. Wherever thou art, thou art in God's workshop, where every wheel is turned by His hand. (3) But the great glory of all is that everything is to Him. God must have the highest motive, and there can be no higher motive than His own glory. When there was no being but Himself God could not have taken as a motive a creature which did not exist. The good of His creatures He considereth carefully, but even that is but a means to the main end. And the day shall come when even the fall will be seen not to have marred the Divine glory. His enemies shall bow their necks, whilst His people shall cheerfully extol Him. 2. To the grand work of Divine grace. (1) Here everything is of God. The plan of salvation is no concoction of priests, but the offspring of a wisdom no less than Divine. None but God could have imagined a plan so just to God, so safe to man. And as the great plan is of Him, so the fillings up of the minutiæ are of Him. God ordained the time and circumstances of the first promise, and the hour when the great promise-keeper should come, &c. Every stitch in the noble tapestry of salvation is of the Lord. (2) Through Him. Through Him the Son of God is born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Spirit. In the great redemption God alone is exalted. And as through Him the atonement, so through Him the application of the atonement. By the power of the Spirit the gospel is daily preached, and through Him men are called and saved. (3) All is to Him; we have not a note of praise to spare for another. 3. To the case of every individual believer. (1) Of whom comes my salvation? That which is born of the flesh is flesh. (2) Did it not also come through God; through faith, which was the operation of the Holy Spirit? And what didst thou believe in but in Jesus the Lord? (3) Is it not also "to Him"? 4. To Christian work. (1) The power comes from God. (2) The success comes through God. (3) The honour is to God. II. DEVOTION. "To whom be glory for ever, Amen." This should be—1. The single desire of the Christian. He may desire prosperity or to attain more gifts and graces, &c., but it should only be that "to Him may be glory for ever." 2. Our constant desire at our work behind the counter, or in the exchange, or walking in the fields, &c. 3. Our earnest desire. Do not speak of God's glory with cold words, nor think of it with chilly heart. 4. Our growing desire. You blessed Him in your youth; do not be content with such praises as you gave Him then. 5. Make this desire practical. Praise God by your patience in pain, your perseverance in duty, your generosity in His cause, your boldness in testimony, your consecration to His work. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **To whom be glory for ever. Amen.**—As the rivers return again to the place whence they came, they all come from the sea, and they all run into the sea again; so all our store as it issued at first from the fountain of God's grace, so should it fall at last into the ocean of His glory. (*Bp. Sanderson.*)

CHAPTER XII.

VER. 1. **I beseech you.**—*A lesson to ministers*:—Ministers of the gospel should be gentle, tender, and affectionate. They should be kind in feeling, and courteous in manner—like a father or mother. Nothing is ever gained by a sour, harsh, crabbed, dissatisfied manner. Sinners are never scolded either into duty or into heaven. Flies are never caught with vinegar. No man is a better or more faithful preacher

because he is rough in manner, coarse, or harsh in his expressions, or sour in his intercourse with mankind. Not thus was the Master or Paul. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) **Therefore.**—*The connection between the two parts of the Epistle*:—Religion among the ancients was service (*cultus*), and cultus had for its centre sacrifice. The Jewish service counted four kinds of sacrifice which might be reduced to two: the first, comprising the sacrifices offered before reconciliation and to obtain it (sin and trespass-offering); the other the sacrifices offered after reconciliation and serving to celebrate it (whole burnt-offering and peace-offering). The great division of the Epistle to which we have come is explained by this contrast. The fundamental idea of Part I. (chaps. i.–xi.), was that of the sacrifice for the sin of mankind. Witness the central passage (iii. 25, 26). These are the mercies of God to which Paul appeals here, and the development of which has filled the first eleven chapters. The practical part which we are beginning corresponds to the second kind of sacrifice, which was the symbol of consecration after pardon had been received (the holocaust, in which the victim was entirely burned), and of the communion established between Jehovah and the believer (the peace-offering, followed by a feast in the court of the temple). The sacrifice of expiation offered by God in the person of His Son should now find its response in the believer in the sacrifice of complete consecration and intimate communion. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Doctrine and practice*:—The doctrinal and dispensational portions of the Epistle being ended, the apostle, as a wise master-builder, erects the superstructure of personal religion upon the foundation of redemption, which he has laid deep and substantial. "No doctrine," remarks H. W. Beecher, "is good for anything that does not leave behind it an ethical furrow, ready for the planting of seeds, which shall spring up and bear abundant harvests." The connection between doctrine and exhortation is quaintly explained by Bishop Hall: "Those that are all in exhortation, no whit in doctrine, are like to them that snuff the lamp, but pour not in oil. Again, those that are all in doctrine, nothing in exhortation, drown the wick in oil, but light it not; making it fit for use if it had fire put to it; but as it is, neither capable of good nor profitable for the present. Doctrine without exhortation makes men all brain, no heart; exhortation without doctrine makes the heart full, but leaves the brain empty. Both together make a man, one makes a wise man, the other a good; one serves that we may know our duty, the other that we may perform it. Men cannot practise unless they know, and they know in vain if they practise not." (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The relation between doctrine and life*:—1. The link which unites doctrine and duty is like the great artery that joins the heart to the members—the channel of life and the bond of union. If that link is severed, the life departs. If doctrine and duty are not united, both are dead; there remains neither the sound creed nor the holy life. 2. A common cry is, Give charity, but no dogma, *i.e.*, Give us fruit, but don't bother us with mysteries about roots. We join heartily in the cry for more fruit; but we are not content to tie oranges with tape on dead branches. This may serve to amuse children; but we are grown men, and life is earnest. 3. In the transition from chap. xi. to chap. xii., the knot is tied that binds together doctrine and duty. At the point of contact Paul defines the relations between the gifts which flow from God to men, and the service rendered by men to God. Christians having gotten all from God are constrained to render back to Him themselves and all they have. Here is a leaden pipe which, rising perpendicularly from the ground, supplies the cistern on the roof. "Water flow up? Don't mock us. Water flows down, not up." Place your ear against the pipe. Is not the water rushing upward? "Yes." The reason is that the water flowing from the fountain on the mountain's side forces the water up. So the soul is constrained, by the pressure of Divine mercy flowing through Christ, to rise in responsive love. The word "therefore" is the link of connection between doctrine and life. It unites the product to the power. I. THE MERCIES OF GOD CONSTITUTE THE MOTIVE FORCE. 1. Paul is a scientific operator—skilful in adapting means to ends. To provide the water-power may be a much more lengthened and laborious process than to set the mill agoing; but without the reservoir and its supply, the mill would never go round at all. So Paul takes every step on the assumption that a devoted and charitable life cannot be attained unless the person and work of Christ be made clear to the understanding and accepted with the heart. 2. There is a class of men pressing to the front whose maxim is, "A grain of charity is worth a ton of dogma." But, as I have seen a mechanic, after applying the rule to his work, turning the rule round and trying it the other way, lest some mistake should occur, so it may be of use to express the same maxim in another form: "A small stream

flowing on the ground is worth acres of clouds careering in the sky." In this form the maxim is nonsense; but the two forms express an identical meaning. Wanting clouds, there could be no streams; so, wanting dogma, there could be no charity. The Scriptures present the case of a man who was as free of dogma as the most advanced secularist could desire. "What is truth?" said Pilate, who was not burdened with even an ounce of dogma; yet he crucified Christ, confessing Him innocent. 3. Those who lead the crusade against dogma are forward to profess the utmost reverence for the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. But "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was a dogma He received with approbation and died for it. Therefore, if He be not the true God, He must be a false man. Thus the Scriptures have rendered it impossible for modern secularists to reject the great dogma of the gospel, and yet retain the life of Jesus as the highest pattern of human character. 4. The word "therefore" is like the steel point which constitutes the fulcrum of the balance. To one extremity of the beam is fixed, by a long line, a consecrated life; but that life lies deep down in the dark, a possibility only as yet. No human arm has power to bring it up. Here is a skilful engineer, who has undertaken the task. What is he doing? He is making fast to the opposite extremity of the beam some immense weight—nothing less than the mercies of God as exhibited in Christ. He has fastened it now, and he stands back—does not put a hand to the work in its second stage. What follows? They come! they come! the deeds of charity. 5. Ask those great lovers who have done and suffered most for men what motive urged them on and held them up. They will answer unanimously, "The love of Christ constraineth us." They are bought with a price, and therefore they glorify God in their lives. 6. In the scheme of doctrine set forth in the first half of the Epistle, we behold the reservoir where the power is stored; and in the opening verses of the second section the engineer opens the sluice, so that the whole force of the treasured waters may flow out on human life, and impel it onward in active benevolence. II. A CONSECRATED LIFE IS THE EXPECTED RESULT. This consists of—1. Devotion to God, the constituents of which are—(1) A living sacrifice—the offerer's own body, not that of a substitute; and not dead, but living. It is not a carcass laid on the altar to be burned; it is a life devoted to God. Love is the fire that consumes the sacrifice; and in this case, too, the fire came down from heaven. (2) A reasonable service. It is not the arbitrary though loving command addressed by a father to his infant son, that he may be trained to habits of unquestioning obedience; it is rather the work prescribed by the father to an adult son, which the son understands, and in which he intelligently acquiesces. 2. In the remaining portion of the Epistle Paul labours to stimulate practical charity, in one place reducing the whole law to one precept, to one word—love. After devoting so much attention to the roots, he will not neglect to gather the fruit. Conclusion: 1. We must look well to our helm as we traverse this ocean of life, where we can feel no bottom and see no shore, lest we miss our harbour. But we must also look to the lights of heaven. The seaman does not look to the stars instead of handling his helm. This would be as great folly as to handle his helm vigorously and never look to the stars. So we must not turn to the contemplation of dogma instead of labouring in the works of charity; but look to the truth as the light which shows us the way of life, and walking in that way with all diligence. 2. Want of faith is followed by want of goodness, as a blighting of the root destroys the stem and branches of a tree. But does the converse also hold good? Many trees when cut down grow again. But some species—pines, for example—die outright when the main stem is severed. Here lies a sharp reproof for all who bear Christ's name. True it is also that, if from any cause the life cease to act, the faith, or what seemed faith, will rot away underground (1 Tim. i. 19). While faith, by drawing from the fulness of Christ, makes a fruitful life, the exercise of all the charities mightily increases even the faith from which they sprang. While, on one side, the necessity of the day is to maintain the faith as the fountain and root of practical goodness in the life; on the other side, the necessity of the day is to lead and exhibit a life corresponding to the faith it grows upon. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) **By the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.**—*Wherein our Christian sacrifice, with respect to the body, principally consists; and the reasonableness of it*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSON EXHORTING. Whoever speaks to us in the name of God, or by a special commission from Him, has certainly a right to our attention. When we consider that the generality of men are more governed by example than precept, or the intrinsic reason of things, we must acknowledge it adds a very great force to instructions we hear from any person

when they come recommended by his own practice, and that upon two accounts. 1. Because the actions of men discover most evidently to us the secret bent and disposition of their hearts. 2. Because a good example is a more moving and sensible argument to the practice of piety than the most beautiful images whereby we can otherwise represent it. II. THE MANNER OF THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION. 1. "Brethren" is the general appellation of Christians which St. Paul uses in all his Epistles. 2. "By the mercies of God," that is, from the consideration of those great things our good and merciful God has done for us. 3. The subject-matter of the apostle's exhortation in the following words, "That you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." (1) By presenting our bodies a "living" sacrifice is implied that we perform to God a ready and cheerful obedience, that no difficulties or discouragements stop us in the course of our Christian progress. (*a*) "Living" may be here understood as it is opposed to those sensual lusts and passions which have their source from the body, and upon the account of which the apostle cries out (chap. vii. 24). By indulging our sensual appetites we vitiate the best constitution, put the organs of the body out of tune, and by degrees perhaps do render it a sink of mortal diseases. All which disorders must necessarily render the body a very unfit and dull companion for the soul, or rather, as it were, a dead weight hanging upon it, in the more lively exercises of reason and devotion. And therefore we must take care never to indulge our bodily appetites to any excess, but rather endeavour to mortify our members which are upon the earth, that the soul operate with its full force and activity; which it is impossible we should do while we study nothing so much as to gratify our bodily appetites. (*b*) "Living," that is, a continual sacrifice. Our whole life in every part and period of it should be consecrated to the service of God. Our incense must burn continually before Him, and the sacrifice of our body, while we are in the body, never cease to be offered. But this leads me to consider—(2) The other affection of this sacrifice, in order to render it acceptable to God, and that is "holiness." A thing is said to be holy that is set apart to the more immediate service or worship of God. So that to present our bodies holy, is to keep them in a constant preparation for the duties of religion; to preserve them in a regular, pious, and composed temper; not to suffer our imagination to be defiled, or our sensual appetites gratified to any excess. And in particular to any of those sinful excesses which in the Holy Scriptures are termed the works of the flesh, and which are so contrary to the purity of that Divine Spirit who has chosen our bodies to be a habitation for Himself. III. THE REASON AND GROUND OF THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION. There is nothing here required of us but what is proper to the state and condition of human nature; nothing but what is fit and "reasonable" to be done. 1. God being the Creator and absolute Governor of the world, has power to lay what restraints upon men He sees fit, not exceeding the benefits of their creation. 2. He has laid no restraints upon our natural appetites but what generally tend to our own good and the perfection of our reasonable nature. 3. We think it no injustice in secular potentates to restrain subjects in their natural rights and liberties when such liberties are found inconvenient to themselves, or others, or to the government in general. 4. We often, upon a prospect of a future and greater good, are willing to deny ourselves a present pleasure or satisfaction. Nothing is more common or thought more reasonable. 5. The restraints which are complained of in the Christian religion are no more than what some of the wisest moralists and teachers of natural religion have laid upon themselves and prescribed to others. (*R. Fiddes, D.D.*) *Are you grateful?*—Ingratitude is one of the meanest of vices. You know the old fable of the man who found a frozen viper and in kindness took it home and put it on his hearth-stone to be revived; but when the creature felt the warmth and began to renew its life, it bit its benefactor. This meanest of vices is often seen in men, but scarcely ever in a dog. Perhaps one of its worst forms is when it is shown towards parents; and children who are most indulged are generally the most ungrateful. Note:—I. THE COMPASSIONS OF GOD. 1. Was it not compassionate of God to create us? There might have been so much better men in our shoes than we are. How shameful then that some of us are little better than logs in a stream! How mean that some of us should wallow in mire like swine, and then say we cannot help it! The wonder is that God can bear with us; but having in mercy created us, He has followed it up with infinite forbearance. Many people are like the Prodigal—they do not care about God until they meet with disaster. Yet God, in His compassion, does not spurn them. 2. God shows His compassion in preparing a heavenly life for us. I dare say that some mother here has taken her little son to market, and when he began to be

fagged, encouraged him by saying, "Now, Johnny, be a brave lad, and when we get home I'll love you and make it up to you!" Then the little feet trot on more gaily. My weary friend, take courage! God will make it up to you in the other world. 3. Then what compassion to redeem us and to save us from our sins! II. OUR REASONABLE SERVICE. God does not expect an impossibility from us—only a "reasonable service." Men are ready enough to profess their willingness to love God, but they are not so ready to show their love to Him by loving one another. Some of you may be living lonely lives, but, if you will, you may people the uninhabited island of your life. You long for sympathy. Well, others feel just the same, and they very likely think you are cold and reserved. Is there not somebody to whom you can say a gentle word, or to whom you can do a kind act? This is your "reasonable service." Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Take an interest in the joys and sorrows of your fellow-creatures. Those who have money to spare should enjoy the pleasure of dispensing it while they live. When a man gives his money while he lives it is a "living sacrifice"; but when he dies, his money is no longer his. If we have not treasures in money, we have the more precious treasures of love. Some people are like the picture of a rose, which has no perfume. Be perfumed, that is, living Christians; be fragrant of good deeds, which are the sweet breath of heaven; and thus you will show your gratitude to God, be an honour to the gospel of Jesus and a comfort to mankind. (*W. Birch.*) *True life a priesthood*:—The life of every man should be that of a priest. The earth should be trod, not as a garden, a playground, or a market, but as a temple. The text indicates that true priesthood is characterised by:—I. INDIVIDUALITY. "Bodies" here stand for the whole nature—man himself. In this priesthood—1. Every man is his own sacrifice. The wealth of the world would not be a substitute for himself. What does this imply? (1) Negatively; not—(*a*) The loss of personality. Man does not lose himself by consecrating his existence to the Eternal. (*b*) The loss of free agency. Man does not become the mere tool or machine of Omnipotence. In truth he only secures his highest liberty. (2) Positively; it includes—(*a*) Yielding to God's love as the inspiration of our being. (*b*) Adopting His will as the rule of our activities. 2. Every man is his own minister. None can offer the sacrifice for him. He must do it freely, devoutly, manfully. II. DIVINITY. It is a vital connection with the Great God. 1. God is the object of it. Men are sacrificing themselves everywhere to pleasure, lucre, fame, influence. There are gods many in England at whose altars men are sacrificing themselves. 2. God is the motive of it. God's "mercies," which are infinite in number and variety, are the inciting and controlling motives. The true priest moves evermore from God to God. 3. God is the approver of it. "Acceptable unto God." He approves it because it is—(1) Right in itself; (2) Blessed to man. III. RATIONALITY. Its reasonableness will be seen if you consider what it really means, viz.—1. Cherishing the highest gratitude to our greatest Benefactor. Reason tells us that we ought to be thankful for favours generously bestowed upon us. But who has bestowed such favours as God? 2. The highest love to the best of beings. Reason tells that we should only love a being in proportion to his goodness. God is infinitely good, therefore He should be loved with all our hearts, minds, souls. 3. That we should render our entire services to our exclusive proprietor. God owns us; all we have and are belong to Him. If this is not reasonable, what is? In truth religion is the only reasonable life. Conclusion: Such is true priesthood. 1. All other priesthoods are shams, mimicries, and impieties. 2. Christ's priesthood will be of no avail to us unless we become true priests to God ourselves. His priesthood is at once the model and the means of all true human priesthood. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Gratitude requires expression*:—President Hopkins, of Williams College, used to tell his classes that if our religious feelings have no appropriate forms of expression, the feelings themselves will die out. If we do not take a reverential attitude in prayer, we shall lose the spirit of prayer. It is true that if a tree is stripped of its leaves, and kept so, it will die. If we do not express our gratitude and love to God, we shall lose what we have; but by expressing them they are increased—hence these offerings. *Bodily consecration*:—I. THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. "You, brethren." Church members. Paul regarded conversion as an initial step, which, to amount to anything, must be followed by a "going on to know the Lord." His favourite words were run, strive, fight, grow. He saw the potentialities of Christian manhood in the babe in Christ. This gave him weighty convictions as to the importance of prompt and proper attention to the nursing. II. THE DUTY ENJOINED. "Present your bodies.' The

body, as well as the soul, is redeemed, and both must go together into God's service. It is man yielding his members, as servants of iniquity, that gives power to the kingdom of darkness. So, to be of any service in the cause of God, we must yield, not our sympathy merely, but "our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." III. THE STATE OR CONDITION OF THE OFFERING. "A living sacrifice." Allusion is here made to the Jewish sacrifices—which, to have any moral value, must be dead; the Christian sacrifice must be presented living. Man is a priest who lays upon the altar his own living body. And as it was the business of the Jewish priest, not only to present the sacrifice, but to keep it on the altar and see that it be properly offered, so the Christian's sacrifice is to be—1. "Holy." He is to see that his body is kept from all contact with the degrading or sensual. 2. Therefore, "acceptable to God." Jewish sacrifices were the best of their kind; and man must consecrate all his powers, or God will reject his offering as a mockery and a sham. 3. "Reasonable." Nothing more reasonable than that the creature should serve the Creator. If man was made to rule, it is equally true that he was made to obey; and in obedience is his greatest pleasure and profit. IV. THE MOTIVE PROMPTING THE SACRIFICE. "The mercies of God." This motive is—1. Strange. Other religions motive their devotees by the judgments and terror of their gods. None but Christianity ever thought of love as the motive to obedience. 2. Winsome. 3. Adequate. (*T. Kelly.*) *Entire consecration*:—The force of the aorist suggests that our self-dedication is to be entire, for once and for all. This act embraces three things—being, doing, and suffering. We must be willing to be, to do, and to suffer, all that God requires. This embraces reputation, friends, property, and time. It covers body, mind, and soul. These are to be used when, where, and as God requires; and only as He requires. Such a consecration should be made—1. Deliberately; 2. For all coming time; 3. Without any reserve; and 4. In reliance upon Divine strength. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Personal consecration for Divine service*:—I. THIS IS A SUMMONS TO A SERVICE OF WORSHIP. 1. The priestly service is required of all Christians without distinction. Every believer is assumed to be anointed, to have passed through the preliminary purification, to have been called and separated (1 Pet. ii. 9), and to have passed through the consecration ritual (Rev. i. 5, 6). Therefore every one of them has "boldness to enter into the holiest (Heb. x. 19; Eph. iii. 12). And therefore they are all here summoned to holy service. Clearly the act of worship is to be continuous. The Jewish priests had to minister day by day. Morning and evening sacrifices must be offered: the altar fire must be kept burning; the lamps must be lit, and, generally, worship must be offered up continually. And these all symbolised for the people of God the necessity of constant service (1 Cor. x. 31; Heb. xiii. 12–15). 2. This priestly service of worship is to be one of sacrifice—is not indeed of atonement, for the one offering of our great High Priest needs never more to be repeated. But now, the reconciliation having been effected by that offering, we must draw near to God for holy fellowship, as in the peace-offering; to praise, as in the thank-offering; and for perpetual dedication, as in the burnt-offering. (1) The Christian must present his own body. The Jew had to present the body of an animal: the Christian must offer his own. Under the law the priest sacrificed the animal; the Christian must offer up himself. The free, intelligent soul must be the presenting priest: the body, animated by the soul, and serving as its many-mannered instrument, must be the ever-presented offering (Rom. vi. 13). (2) The sacrifice must be living. The servant of God is not at liberty, by neglect of the body, to put an end to its life. Rather must it be carefully preserved that its providential term may be available for Divine service. For this life belongs to God (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). (3) This sacrifice must be holy. This holiness includes—(*a*) Full and perpetual dedication to Divine service. (*b*) Sanctification by the blood of Jesus, or it will become "anathema." (*c*) "Sanctification of the Spirit," so that all the appetites, instincts, and members of the body, and all the powers and properties of the inspiring soul, shall be brought into true harmony with the will of God. 3. This priestly service of sacrifice shall be acceptable to God. It is at once worthy of the priest, the temple, and God. That could not be said of the ritual service of the Jewish temple, except in so far as it was type of better things (Isa. *i.* 11–15). II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THESE PRIESTS ARE REQUIRED TO PERFORM THEIR SERVICE (ver. 21). 1. Negatively: "Be not conformed to this world." The special characteristics of worldliness vary according to the variations in the tendencies of thought and of ethical aim and effort at different periods, in different countries, and amongst different peoples.

The spirit of the age in which Moses lived was the spirit of gross, sensuous idolatry. Hence the prohibition thereof in the Decalogue. The spirit of the age amongst the Jews, in the time of the apostles, was that of dependence upon external services (Gal. iv. 3, 9). The spirit of the age by which the Colossians were in danger of being contaminated was that of "philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. ii. 8–23). There is in almost every age a twofold world-spirit, each being the other's opposite, the most energetic working of which was perhaps most strikingly manifested in the early ages of monasticism, when those who became earnestly religious sought for the perfection of the spiritual life in seclusion and asceticism. Both were injurious to true spiritual religion, and the remedy will be secured by attention to the true Christian requirement. "Present your bodies," and they are as capable of true spiritual service within their sphere as are your spirits. Therefore "marriage is honourable among all" right-minded men. Therefore to "them that believe and know the truth," "every creature of God is good" (1 Tim. iv. 3–5). Therefore all the honest occupations of life may be pursued in a truly religious spirit (1 Cor. vii. 29–31). 2. Positively. Observe—(1) The result to be produced; a transformation into something the very opposite of that conformation to this world, which is produced by the energy of merely secular powers. The form is that of likeness to the image of the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 18). (2) This result is to be produced by the renewing of the mind, *i.e.*, the progressive growth and ever-increasing power of Christian life, bringing the mind, and through that the whole person, into ever-increasing approximation to the perfect likeness of the Lord (2 Cor. iv. 16). (3) This renewing of the mind is a work of the Holy Ghost (Titus iii. 5) carried on with our own free and active concurrence. Therefore the command is laid upon us. III. THE ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THE PRIESTS ARE URGED TO ATTEND DILIGENTLY TO THIS SERVICE. 1. The apostle's personal influence. He himself had consecrated all to the service of God (Phil. ii. 17). And therefore with great urgency of moral power could he say, "I beseech you." 2. "The mercies of God," in which there is at once a backward reference to the foregoing arguments and illustrations, an onward reference to the duties about to be inculcated, and a central reference to the consequential link which binds on the one to the other. 3. That ye may personally prove the will of God—(1) The thing to be proved is that which God wills, ordains, and prescribes as the rule and end of our whole activity—"even our sanctification." (2) The method of proving this will is the practical one of rendering to it obedience under the influence of saving grace. "If any man will do His will, he shall know," &c. (3) This will of God prescribes only that which is good, acceptable, and perfect. This is to be the result of the test in the personal experience. (*a*) He will prove it to be good, and also productive of good. (*b*) He will prove it to be acceptable both to God and man (Rom. xiv. 18; 2 Cor. i. 12). (*c*) He proves that the course prescribed for him by the will of God is perfect. (*W. Tyson.*) *The consecrated body* :—The body is —I. THE SEAT OF OUR ANIMAL PROPENSITIES. These are not necessarily criminal. They are only so when they cease to be subordinate to God. When we are living in His power, the question will not be, Is this self-indulgence right, or wrong? but, Does it interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit within me, and the fulfilment of the mind of God in my life? II. THE SEAT OF OUR SENSUOUS EXPERIENCES. Is the love of music to be indulged, or may we take long journeys for pleasure? Surely none of these things are wrong in themselves; but with the child of God the question is not, How shall I most gratify my sensuous propensity? but, How most please God? III. THE SEAT OF OUR PHYSICAL SENSIBILITIES—those which are acted upon by the sense of pain, pleasure, lassitude, &c. A duty has to be done, but it is a hot day, and we have some approach to a headache, and we do not feel disposed to do it. What is it will enable us to rise above that? Why, to be filled with the Spirit, and then the body will present itself to God's service joyfully. IV. OUR MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PHYSICAL WORLD. Now, it is not a bad thing that we should have to do with the physical world; but what effect is our bodies producing upon this world? Is it the better for us? Is "Holiness to the Lord" written upon the very vessels of our households? If we are filled with the Spirit of God, our bodies will be the medium through which this world will be continually affected by Him, &c. V. THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH WE HOLD INTERCOURSE WITH MANKIND. Now, what is the nature of that influence? If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, it will be a revelation of Christ. In these bodies we should carry about the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tone of our voice, the line of our conduct, the look of our eye, everything about us, will speak of Christ. VI. THE

VEIL WHICH CONCEALS THE THINGS UNSEEN. Strip off these bodies, and in a moment we are landed in the presence of invisible realities. There is only this between me and eternity, between me and God. Now, that is something for which to be thankful. If it were not for this veil it would be impossible for me to fulfil the work of my probation. At the same time, the devil employs it as a means of deadening our spiritual sensibilities. When the Holy Spirit has free course within our being, then the veil becomes almost transparent. There are times when God draws so near to us that it seems more like seeing than thinking, more like touching than simply contemplating. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *Consecrated and transformed*:—The key of this chapter is found in the preceding verse. The law of the universe, the great march of all things is from God, through God, to God. But all things about us are wrought upon by a great compulsion. From reason, not from blind necessity, we yield ourselves to the sweep of this great law. Yet there is a compulsion even for us—nobler, as our service is nobler, viz., love: "by the mercies of God." I. THE ENTREATY: "I beseech you." But we object to be besought to do a reasonable thing. Show us that a thing is reasonable, and at once and of course we do it. Think, then, that for our highest good we have to be besought! For God alone we play not the part of reasonable men. How amazing that we should have to be urged when God invites us to give ourselves to Him that He may give Himself to us! "That ye may prove what is that good . . . will of God." The ear is deaf to the voice of God, calling us to Paradise again. This is the entreaty of a man—1. Who was living this life of blessedness. Of, through, and to God, was the rhythmic flow of his whole being. And then, in all the consciousness of this blessed life, he thinks of the half-hearted, of those who come far enough out of the far country to lose the husks of the swine, but not far enough to get the bread of the father's house, who, like the fabled coffin of Mahomet, lie suspended between earth and heaven, unclaimed by either, and yet fretting for each. To these the apostle cries, "I beseech you," &c. 2. Who had lingered at the Cross until its great love possessed him. He had seen something of God's unspeakable gift. With that mercy kindling his soul he asks, What acknowledgment can we make? Only ourselves. The power that prompts and sustains this consecration is only here—the love of God in Jesus. There let us seek it. II. THE CONSECRATION TO WHICH WE ARE URGED. Turn again to the great law of all things and trace its application. 1. Nothing in God's world is any good until it is given up to that which is above it. What is the worth of the land, however fruitful, and whatever title we may have to it, unless we can do something with it? The soil must minister to us, or it is merely waste land. The seed again and all its products—what should we give for them if we could do nothing with them? And what use are cattle and sheep, except as they clothe and feed us? And what are we for? Here lies our worth and our good, in giving ourselves "a living sacrifice" to Him, of, through, and to whom are all things. 2. Every thing by sacrifice not lost, but turned into higher life. Very beautiful is this law of transformation. Listen to the parable of the earth. "Here am I," it mutters, "so far away from Him who made me, without any beauty of form, or richness of colour, or sweetness of smell! How can I ever be turned into worth and beauty?" And now there comes the seed, and whispers, "Earth, wilt thou give me thy strength?" "No, indeed," replies the earth, "it is all I have got, and I will keep it for myself." "Then," saith the seed, "thou shalt be only earth for ever. But if thou wilt give me thy strength thou shalt be lifted up and be turned into worth and beauty." So the earth yields, and the seed takes hold of it. It rises with wondrous stem; it drinks in sunshine and rain and air, mingling them with the earth's strength and changing all to branch, leaf, flower, and fruit. The parable repeats itself in the case of the seed. It has a kind of life, but all unconscious. It cannot see, or hear, or move. But it yields itself to the animal, and then its strength is turned into part of the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the subtle nerve, the beating heart. And the animal gives itself in turn to serve man ,and is exalted to a thousand higher purposes. And man gives himself up to God, and is transformed—into what? Ah! who can tell of that wondrous transformation when it is completed? Once when I was a schoolboy going home for the holidays, I embarked at Bristol with just money enough to pay my fare, and thought in my innocence that that included meals. By and by came the steward with his bill. "I've got no money," said I. "What is your name and address?" I told him. "I should like to shake hands with you," he said instantly, with a smile. Then came the explanation—how that some years before some little kindness had been

shown by my father to his widowed mother. "I never thought the chance would come for me to repay it," said he, pleasantly; "but I am glad it has." I told my father what had happened. "Ah," said he, "see how a bit of kindness lives! Now he has passed it on to you. Remember, if ever you meet anybody that needs a friendly hand, you must pass it on to them." Years went by, and I had forgotten it all, until one day I was at a railway station, and saw a little lad crying. "What is the matter, my lad?" I asked. "If you please, sir, I haven't money enough to pay my fare. I have all I want but a few pence; and I tell the clerk if he will trust me I will be sure to pay him again." Instantly flashed the forgotten story of long ago. Here, then, was my chance of passing it on. I gave him the sum he needed, and told the little fellow the story of the steward's kindness to me. "Now, to-day," I said, "I pass it on to you; and remember, if you meet with any one that needs a kindly hand, you must pass it on to them." My story is the illustration of the law of God's great kindness that runs through all things. Here lies the earth, and it says: "I have got in me some strength. It belongs to God." Then it whispers to the seed, "I will pass it on to you." Then the seed passes it on to the animal, and the animal to man, who completes the circle. Think how all things minister to him. If he serves not God, he hinders all things, and diverts them. III. THE RESULT OF THIS CONSECRATION. "Be not conformed to this world." How great a drop is this! We were dreaming of heaven, and now we have a string of moral commonplaces. Be not wise in your own conceits. Be given to hospitality. Be not slothful in business. Live peaceably with all men. But that this should seem a coming down makes the lesson all the more needful. Do we not too often think that our way upward is first to be right with ourselves, and then to be right with the world, and then somewhere far off we may some day come to be right with God? No, the order is reversed. First right with God, then, and then only, right with all things. First "present your bodies a living sacrifice" unto God; then the world, and all belonging to it, is put in its right place. How vain are all other attempts at curing conformity to the world! There never was a time when there were so many man-made, church-made Christians. Who does not know the receipt? Tie up the hands and say, "You must not do that." Tie up his feet and say, "You mustn't go to such and such places—at least, when you are at home." Cut him off from certain things at which society is shocked, and there is your Christian: a creature with his heart hungering for the world as fiercely as ever. To "present our bodies a living sacrifice" to the opinions of religious society is no cure for conformity to the world. This is the only way—a glad, whole-hearted giving up of ourselves to God. Then comes the being "transformed by the renewing" of the "mind." Transformed, not from without, but from within; exactly as the earth is transformed when it gives itself up to the seed. "That ye may prove," &c. The renewed mind has new faculties of discernment—new eyes to see the will of God, and a new heart to do it, and to be it. We cannot know God's will until we are given up to it. Once as I meditated on these words I heard the children pass my study door. "I sha'n't," rang out a little voice. "This won't do," said I, gravely; "you must stand in the corner until you come to a better mind." "Think now," said I to myself, "if she should say, 'Well, I suppose it is my father's will, and I must submit to it,' should I not answer, 'Nay, it is dead against your father's will? Your father's will is that you should be in the garden playing with the others, but you have gone against your father's will, and now your father's will has gone against you.'" And as I turned it over, I thought I saw where all the crosses come from. When God's will goes one way and our will goes another, there is the cross. When God's will and mine are one the cross is lost. Already the crown is ours—for what makes heaven? Not white robes, not golden streets, not harps and anthems, but this only—the eternal harmony of wills; and we can have that down here. And what is hell? The eternal collision of wills. We may have that here, and this it is that makes the madness of many a life. Conclusion: And now here is a thing to be done. It shall help us nothing to know all this, to believe it all, and yet to stop short of doing it. Will you do it? (*Mark Guy Pearse.*) *How is the body to become a sacrifice?* Let thine eye look upon no evil thing, and it hath become a sacrifice; let thy tongue speak nothing filthy, and it hath become an offering; let thy hand do no lawless deed, and it hath become a whole burnt-offering. But this is not enough, we must have good works also. Let the hand do alms, the mouth bless them that despitefully use us, and the ear find leisure evermore for the hearing of Scripture. For sacrifice can be made only of that which is clean; sacrifice is a firstfruit of other actions. Let us,

then, from our hands, and feet, and mouth, and all our other members, yield a firstfruit unto God. Such a sacrifice is well-pleasing, and not, as that of the Jews, unclean, for "their sacrifices," says the Scripture, "shall be unto them as the bread of mourners." Not so ours. Theirs presented the thing sacrificed dead; ours maketh the thing sacrificed to be alive. For when we have mortified our members, then we shall be able truly to live. For the law of this sacrifice is new, and the fire of a marvellous nature. For it needeth no wood under it, but liveth of itself, and doth not burn up the victim, but rather quickeneth it. This was the sacrifice that God sought of old. Wherefore the prophet saith, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." And the three children offered this when they said, "At this time there is neither prince, nor prophet, nor leader, nor burnt-offering, nor place to sacrifice before Thee, and to find mercy. Nevertheless, in a contrite heart and an humble spirit, let us be accepted." (*Chrysostom.*) *A living sacrifice*:—Here is—I. SOMETHING TO BE DONE. Note—1. The terms of the text. (1) "Present" is elsewhere rendered "yield" (chap. vi. 13, 16, 19), a word commonly used for bringing to offer in sacrifice (Luke ii. 22). (2) "Bodies," a part of human nature, is here used to represent the whole. Our whole nature consists of body, soul, and spirit. But as the body is the visible part of our nature, the organ of practical activity, as soul and spirit cannot now be devoted to God, except as connected with the body, nor themselves without the body, and as the body cannot be presented as a sacrifice separate from the spirit; moreover, as the allusion to the ancient sacrifices required the recognition of the material part of our nature, we may conclude that by "your bodies" is intended "yourselves." (3) The animals required by the law were brought alive to the altar, and in offering them up they were slain. So soon as the offering was made they were dead sacrifices. Yield yourselves a sacrifice in life, a sacrifice for life, a sacrifice rich in life. (4) "Holy," not nominally but really, cleansed from guilt, purified; passively and actively, not ceremonially, but experimentally; not outwardly only, but inwardly. (5) "Acceptable"; the sacrifice real, the bringing of the offering sincere; the Mediator recognised in the offering, therefore acceptable, *i.e.*, well-pleasing unto God. The sacrifices under the law were pleasing to God as representing certain ideas and facts, and as expressing certain sentiments; but the sacrifice before us is in itself an object of Divine complacency (Psa. cxlvii. 11; Isa. lxii. 4, 5; Mal. iii. 16, 17). 2. That which is here required is not "devotions," but devotion. Present the offerings of true worship, but above all, present yourselves. All that we are is required, beside that which we have. Bring money, time, and influence as offerings, but above this, offer yourselves, your natural selves, your redeemed selves, the best in yourselves, and the whole of yourselves. (1) That you may be what He requires, His children, servants, witnesses, and as such, poor or rich, least or greatest, according to His will. (2) That you may do what He requires, in obedience as a son, and in work as a servant, and in testimony as a witness, &c. (3) That you may suffer and submit to all that He requires. 3. Now there are three things necessary to this—(1) Knowledge of God. No such sacrifice as that described in my text was ever offered to an unknown God. (2) Reconciliation to God. There can be no devotion or consecration where there is indifference or alienation. (3) Love to God. II. A STRONG MOTIVE POWER BY WHICH TO DO IT. 1. "The mercies of God," which are the manifestations of His goodness recorded in the previous part of this Epistle (see chap. ii. 4; v. 8, 20, 21; viii. 38, 39). But there are mercies which Paul does not mention, and which the Christian shares with all men. The mercies of God are countless in number, infinite in variety, and inestimable in value. Gratitude is a strong motive-power, by whose aid we may present our bodies an offering for life, holy and acceptable. 2. And is there not some force in the statement that this offering is a reasonable service? The victims under the law were irrational. This yielding ourselves to God is a reasonable service because—(1) Worthy of our nature and constitution as rational beings. (2) In harmony with the object of man's creation. (3) The natural fruit of our redemption to God. (4) A meet and right acknowledgment of our obligations to God. (5) It commends itself to our judgment and conscience and heart. (6) While involving thorough enthusiasm, it is far from all fanaticism and superstition. 3. And is there not something due to the earnestness of Paul in this matter? "I beseech you." This man knew what it was to offer himself a sacrifice to God, and did what he recommends, by powers and aids within reach of all Christians. Here lies the secret of his power (2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 13). Conclusion: 1. Young brethren, render my text into life. In the school, home, place of business, present yourselves

living sacrifices. The religious habits you now form are of immense moment to you. Let them be right habits even from the beginning. 2. Lukewarm and backsliding brethren, my text shows you what you ought to be, and indirectly what you are. A sacrifice it may be, but to self, to vanity, covetousness, pleasure, &c. 3. False brethren, why do you creep into our churches? You are as wood, hay, and stubble in our spiritual building, You are a cancerous growth on the body of Christ. Why do you not leave Christians alone? If you be an infidel, be honest, and do not profess to be a Christian. Go to your own company, but know that there is forgiveness for your falseness if you repent and turn from your evil ways. 4. And let the Pharisees of doctrine and of ritual digest my text. Theory without practice, doctrine without duty, a creed without spiritual life, will avail you nothing. (*S. Martin.*) *A living sacrifice*:—I. THE MOTIVE of the sacrifice: "the mercies of God"—the most cogent motive that can possibly influence a Christian soul. II. THE METHOD. It is to be an act of presentation. "Here am I; send me." Make what use of me Thou canst and wilt. III. THE SUBJECT. "Our bodies." IV. THE OBJECT. "Acceptable to God." (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *A living sacrifice*:—We have here—I. A HIGHLY FIGURATIVE BUT EXCEEDINGLY SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATION OF PRACTICAL AND DAILY VIRTUE. It is given under the form of a presentation. 1. The Romans could not fail to be alive to its meaning. They had always been accustomed to sacrifice and splendid ritualism. They had to turn away from this, and to become members of little private societies, in which there was nothing of the kind. And I can imagine that they would almost feel the want of it; and in consequence of the absence of it to the heathen they did not seem to have any God or religion at all. But the Christian convert was now taught that he himself was a priest of God, that everything he did should be presented on the altar of a religious faith. 2. By the term "bodies" we are to understand the whole person. Though the body is the instrument, yet the mind is that which we always consider as acting. Of course you may take the term as it stands. You are to present your hands by keeping them from violence and fraud, and putting them to honest work. You are to present your eyes by turning them away from objects which may excite concupiscence, or fill you with the workings of unholy passion. The senses and appetites must all be controlled; and the understanding must learn to cultivate the knowledge of truth. II. "BE NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD, BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED." 1. Here, again, the primitive Christian would have a stronger feeling than we can have. The Church and the world were things very distinct then. On the one side were the idolatry, godless philosophy, and vicious habits of heathen society; on the other a little flock, bearing the marks of that holiness which the Christian faith was designed to produce. But things are so wonderfully intermixed now that we do not know where the Church ends and where the world begins. There is a kind of border land; and there they are, going to and fro. Of course there are a number of things which the Church and the world must do in common, and in many cases non-conformity to the world consists, not so much in doing different things as in the different feelings that underlie what we do. "Why," says the apostle, "if you are not to come in contact with certain persons, you might just as well be out of the world." If an unbeliever ask you to dine with him, and you are disposed to do so, go; only bear in mind that you are a Christian, and that whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, you are to do all to the glory of God. Now there can be no doubt at all about one thing. If anything presents itself as sinful there must not be conformity. Well, then, if you are really wishing to be a Christian; and if you find something which is injurious to you—you are not to enter into the question whether it is injurious to your neighbour; if you find it injurious to you do not be conformed to it. You may be conscious, *e.g.*, that a certain kind of reading or music is a hindrance to your religious life. Take care, then, that in these respects you "be not conformed to the world." So with respect to anything that is doubtful with regard to the expenditure of time or money. Let me here whisper to you young people—whenever you find anything condemned by your intelligent and cultivated elders, you may depend upon it that there is something right lying at the bottom of their antipathy. 2. But besides this negative abstinence outwardly, there is to be a positive opening and development of the mind and affections towards that brighter world of Divine truth and goodness, to which it becomes us to be conformed. You must not be contented with outwardly resisting and inwardly longing. There is plenty of non-conformity to the world in the inside of a jail. But is there the renewal of the mind? Unlike the man coming out of prison, who immc-

diately returns from the force of the life that is within him to the things from which he has been parted for a season, there must be in you such a renewal of the soul that you will detest the things which have been given up; you must feel that you have meat to eat which the world knoweth not of. You will then have the satisfaction of another kind of life within you. III. THE RESULT OF THIS IS THAT YOU MAY KNOW BY A POSITIVE, SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE THE WILL OF GOD, how beautiful, how perfect, how good it is; how it is just the thing for which man was evidently made. 1. There have been men of great genius who have been very immoral. Well, now, let us suppose such a man to have studied Divine truth until he apprehends it just as he might apprehend astronomy. He has knowledge; he has a perception of the beauty of the system, but he has not tasted and seen. There it is, lying above the intellect just as the stars lie above the sky; he has not within him the sense of an actual loving spirit, instinct with the spirit of truth. 2. Take a man of inferior faculties—who, having some little to begin with—the lessons of his father, the prayers of his mother, by which his young heart was early taught to love holiness and to hate sin; having very few ideas, and those not well arranged, but still daily presenting himself as a living sacrifice unto God, and going on learning the truth by loving it—oh, what different feelings will such a man have, as the whole system of truth gradually opens and reveals itself to him, and he gets more and more an apprehension of it! That is the way in which I want you to come to a knowledge of the Christian system. IV. THIS SACRIFICE IS A VERY REASONABLE THING. It is a service agreeable to your rational nature. Take the case of a man who does not believe in God; suppose that man to come in contact with another who is disgracing humanity by drunkenness or licentiousness. Can you not conceive him saying, "Well, now, you know you were not made for that"? Or if he did not believe man to have been made at all, can you not imagine him saying, "However, you were made, considering what your mind is, and what society is, with your own knowledge of what is becoming, it is a most irrational thing for you to sink down into such a low, gross existence"? Ay, and we say to the man who talks thus, "Sir, if there's a God that made him, and you, and me; and if the relations which we sustain to Him as reasonable creatures are far more important than our relations to one another, then is it not required by our rational nature that we should not only avoid the abominations which you have denounced, but that, by the culture of what is good and beautiful and pure, we should present ourselves to God "as a living sacrifice?" V. THE EXHORTATION IS ENFORCED "BY THE MERCIES OF GOD." The word "therefore" connects the exhortation with the preceding argument of the apostle, and without referring to that you cannot understand what are the mercies to which he especially refers. That argument bears principally on two points—the mediation of Christ, and the work of the Spirit. These are the two pillars on which the mercies of God are inscribed. You are to "present yourselves a living sacrifice"; you are not to be "conformed to the world," but to be "transformed by the renewing of the mind." Hard sayings. But you are not to take them by themselves. There is a provision to meet your weakness. (*T. Binney.*) *A living sacrifice*:—This verse makes a transition from the first to the second half of this letter. All before it is what we call doctrinal, the most of what comes after it is practical. There are many men that say, "Give us the morality of the New Testament; never mind about the theology." But you cannot get the morality without the theology, unless you like to have rootless flowers and lamps without oil. On the other hand, many forget that the end of doctrine is life, and that therefore the most orthodox orthodoxy, divorced from practice, is like the dried flowers which botanists put between sheets of blotting-paper—the skeletons of dead beauty. Let us, then, always remember this little word "therefore," that binds together indissolubly Christian truth and Christian duty. Note—I. THE SUM OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. 1. Sacrifice means giving up everything to God. That is the true sacrifice, when I think as in His sight, and will, and love, and act as in obedience to Him. And this sacrifice will become visible in the sacrifice of the body, when in all common actions we have a supreme and distinct reference to His will, and do, or refuse to do, because of the fear and for the sake of the Lord. The body has wants and appetites; you have to see to it that these are supplied with a distinct reference to, and remembrance of, Him, and so made acts of religious worship. The excess which dulls the spirit and makes it all unapt to serve Him, the absorbing care about outward things which checks all the nobility of a man's life, are the forms in which the body comes in the way of the soul, and the regulation and suppression of these are the simplest

parts of the offering. There is no need in this generation to preach against asceticism. Better John the Baptist's garment of camel's hair and his meat—locusts and wild honey, if, like John the Baptist, I shall see the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descending on the Son of Man, than this full-fed sensualism which is the curse and the crime of this generation. 2. This offering makes a man live more nobly and more truly than anything else. Not mutilation but consecration is the true sacrifice. We are not called upon to crush our desires, tastes, appetites, or to refrain from actions; only they are to be controlled and done in obedience to God. (1) Now and then circumstances may come in which it is Christian duty to put your hand down there on the block and take an axe in the other and chop it off. But that is second-best; and if the man had always consecrated his faculty to God, he would never have had need to cut it off. To harness and tame it, to yoke it to the cart, and make it work, not to shoot the wild beast, is the right thing to do. (2) Thus to consecrate one's self is the way to secure a higher and a nobler life. Just as when you take a flower out of the woods and put it into a greenhouse and cultivate it, you will get a broader leaf and a finer flower than when it was wild, so the disciplined, consecrated man is the man whose life is the richest every way. If you want to go all to rack and ruin live according to your own fancy and taste. 3. This sacrifice is "your reasonable service." The antithesis is with the material sacrifices, and the Revised Version gives the true meaning in its marginal rendering "spiritual." It is a service or worship rendered by the inner man, transacted by the mind or reason, and thus, as indicating the part of our nature which performs it, is reasonable. Now there is no need to depreciate outward forms of oral worship. But still we have all need to be reminded that devout daily living is true worship. Where the common food is eaten with thankfulness and in the consciousness of His presence, it is holy as the Lord's Supper. The same authority that said of the one, "This do in remembrance of Me," said by His apostle of the other, "Whether ye eat or drink, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "To work is to pray," if done from a right motive. The bells on the horses may bear the same inscription as blazed on the high priest's mitre, "Holiness to the Lord," and the shop-girl behind the counter may be as truly offering sacrifice to God as the priest by the altar. The mere formal worship is abomination without this. There are people that think they have done a meritorious thing in coming here to this service, and whose only notion of worship is a weary sitting in this place for an hour and a half. Do you think that is of any use? The sacrifice of praise is right, "but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." II. THE GREAT MOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. By "the mercies of God," the apostle means the great scheme of mercy set forth in the previous chapters. The diffused and wide-shining mercies, which stream from the Father's heart, are all, as it were, focussed as through a burning-glass into one strong beam, which can kindle the greenest wood and melt the thick-ribbed ice. 1. Only on the footing of Christ's sacrifice can we offer ours. He has offered the one sacrifice of His death in order that we may offer the sacrifice of our life. He has offered the dying sacrifice which is propitiation, in order that, on the footing of that, we may offer the eucharistic sacrifice of grateful surrender of ourselves to Him. 2. These mercies are also the only motive power that will be strong enough to lead to this consecration of ourselves to Him. The fierce wants, passions, and appetites that rage and rule in men will be subdued by nothing short of the mighty motive drawn from the great love of God revealed in the dying love of Jesus. There is one magnet strong enough to draw reluctant hearts and reluctant limbs, and that is Jesus lifted up on the Cross. Other restraints from propriety, prudence, or even principle will reach their breaking point at a much lower strain than the silken bonds of Christ's love. III. THE GENTLE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS GREAT MOTIVE FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE. Law commands, the gospel entreats! "Christ's yoke is easy," not because His precepts let down the ideal of morality, but because the motive is love, and the manner of command gentle and beseeching. Hence its power; for hearts, like flowers, which could not be burst open by the crow-bar of law, may be wooed open by the sunshine of love. Surely as the morning sunrise drew a note from the stony lips of the statue, which storm and thunder could not awaken, His pleading voice will bring an answer that could not have been won by any commandments, however rigid, or by any threatenings, however severe. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A living sacrifice*:—The words are very familiar, or they certainly would strike us powerfully. None of us ever saw a sacrifice; but the readers of this Epistle knew the sight well; and

whether they as Gentiles thought it a mere ceremony, or, if they argued about it, as the Scriptures almost compelled an Israelite to argue, they must have been startled at Paul's words. "Does he mean us," they may have said, "to treat our bodies as either sinful and to be got rid of, or as things so sacred, that to offer them in self-devotion will have power to make peace for us with God?" A little reflection would show them that neither of these interpretations could be the right one. St. Paul held the body in high honour; but, on the other hand, there was no thought in his heart, when he spoke of the body as a sacrifice, of anything meritorious. We shall best grasp the apostle's meaning if we consider—I. THE TERMS USED. St. Paul had never yet visited Rome, and could not say as he said to the Thessalonians, "Remember ye not that when I was with you I told you of these things?" And therefore he has gone with great fulness into the whole system of grace and redemption, and now he turns to the practical inference. 1. He appeals to his readers "by the mercies of God." They for whom God has done all these great things had, by their very nature, no claim whatever to the love of God; and therefore mercy, "kindness to the undeserving," is the right word for God's dealings with them; and if mercy is to be indeed a blessing, it must lead to something in the heart and life, responsive and corresponding to it. 2. "Your bodies." St. Paul gave no encouragement to that sort of religion which dreams and cultivates beautiful ideas and rapturous feelings, and there stops. If he had written "minds" he might have given the notion of an intellectual attainment; if "souls" he might have opened the door to a languid and useless existence, such as hermits and mystics delight in; but when he says "bodies" he strikes at the root of all such errors. The word he uses is not "carcase," but "living body"; which includes all the powers of intercourse and exertion. 3. "Present" applies to the worshipper who places his victim by the altar and to the priest who officially makes the presentation, in either of which senses the word would be suitable here. In the one sense the Christian is the priest of his own sacrifice. Scripture speaks of us as offering up "spiritual sacrifices," as being ourselves "a royal priesthood." In the other sense the Christian places his offering by the altar that Christ may offer it up to God, and so make it acceptable. There is no conflict between the two; for, if the Christian is God's priest, he is so in virtue of the one process and the one sacrifice, and the moment he would officiate independently he becomes a priest of Baal. 4. "Sacrifice" was of two kinds. (1) Lev. xvi., with its commentary in Heb. ix., x., is the great study of "the sin-offering." There we find how absolutely this is restricted to the work done on Calvary. It would be blasphemous to apply the term to a human being as meaning atonement. When we even speak of atoning for a sinful past we are going perilously near to the edge of this precipice. (2) But though the sin-offering is absolutely Christ's, it is not quite thus with "the burnt-offering," the essence of which is the penetrating, transfiguring fire, the emblem of the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost. The "sacrifice" here is the life indwelt, kindled, inspired, transformed by the fire of the Holy Spirit. II. THE CLAUSE AS A WHOLE. 1. It prepares us for a somewhat painful life. "Sacrifice" implies death. "Look, then, upon yourselves as men who have already died with Christ, and who are now being burnt upon God's altar." The figure sets before us the life of a Christian as a life through which a fire is passing, that it may come out from it in a new form, the sinful having become pure, the earthly heavenly, and the whole man "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." A process like this must be painful if the holy flame is really alight, if the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire is really at work in us, consuming our base passions, &c. 2. The painful life is also a glorious life. There is something in the word to which all but hearts of earth and stone are responsive. What will not a friend sacrifice for his friend? Will he not go through fire and water may he but prove his love? "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." Wherefore? and for what? To show that you feel what God has done for you in Jesus. If Christian ambition were just a refurbishing and regilding of this poor tarnished thing which sin and the fall has made us, I can well imagine noble hearts saying, "I will none of it. I despise your decencies and decorum." But men cannot speak in this way of the sacrifice of the body, of the flame kindled at the cross-altar, and kindling the creature and the sinner into the sufferer and into a doer and into a darer. Man would give worlds to live that life if he could. He cries in his shame and bitterness, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." One reason why there are not more Christians is because so few have entered into the thought of the inward fire which alone can make the outward

surface aught but a delusion or a hypocrisy. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *A living sacrifice*:—These words breathe the fervour of a heart which has made the surrender to which it would constrain others, and had they been read to us for the first time without context we might have pictured the apostle not dictating a letter, but standing as he does in the cartoon of Raffaelle with uplifted arms pleading with men. We have here—I. A DEMAND. 1. The living sacrifice stands in contrast with the animals which were slain in order to be presented to God, and the holiness which is to mark it has reference to the Mosaic sacrifices which had to be without spot or blemish. Believers as a royal priesthood are here exhorted to offer that spiritual sacrifice prefigured by the burnt-offering, without which the sacrifice of praise by the lips, and of almsgiving with the substance, will be unacceptable to God. Remember that the expiatory sacrifice has gone before, and by virtue of it only are we priests unto God (Rev. i. 5, 6). When the Jewish priests were consecrated the blood of the sacrifice was applied to the ear, the hand, and the foot, signifying that it needs a blood-stained ear to listen to the Divine commandments, a blood-stained hand to minister before God, a blood-stained foot to tread His courts. So being now consecrated by the blood of the atoning sacrifice, believers are to offer the eucharistic sacrifice of the text. 2. The body does not signify here the whole man. True, the altar on which this victim is offered is the heart, but the reference to the body is not to be frittered away. The body shared largely in the fall, and is to share largely in the redemption. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and an instrument in Divine service, and is to be transformed in the likeness of our Lord's glorious body. So, then, we are called upon to present our bodies to God in useful service, and to take heed that it is not withheld or impaired by indolence, allowance of evil habit, or lack of self-discipline. II. THIS DEMAND IS ENFORCED BY A TWOFOLD PLEA. 1. It is our reasonable service, which has been understood to point a contrast between the Christian sacrifice and those made prior to the Divine command, or those which are superstitious, or mechanical, or carnal. It is enough, however, that the service is dictated by reason in response to a reasonable demand. Granted the apostle's premises, no one can deny the rationality of this his conclusion. Hence sin is identified with folly, and wisdom constantly defined as being the fear of God and the keeping of His commandments. 2. The mercies of God. Note the emphatic "therefore," one of many which constitute the links of an irresistible argument for consecration based upon the mercy of God in Christ. It would be enough to mention God's temporal mercies, but in Paul's view these sink into insignificance compared with God's redeeming mercies, which form the substance of the Epistle. (*Canon Miller.*) *A living sacrifice*:—As the smith casts the iron he wishes to mould into shape into the fire, so the apostle has been smelting the minds of his readers in the fires of sacred argument, till now they are prepared to receive those strokes of his hammer which are to shape them into practical Christians. The object of all Christian doctrine is to fuse the life of a man with Divine fire, and mould it into a Divine form, so that it shall not be conformed to the fashion of any passing age, but transfigured by the renewal of the mind with the life and beauty of God. Note—I. THE CONSECRATION OF ONE'S SELF TO GOD. 1. In our human relations we know the nature of such self-consecration and what it involves. When two human beings give themselves to one another they swear in the name of love that they will be true to each other as long as life shall last. If the surrender be really entire and mutual, then marriage is really a holy sacrament, consecrating each to each as under the eye of God. It means such a oneness of life henceforth as shall not tolerate the thought of division; such mutual devotion that each shall lose himself in the service of the other—and the anguish of the thought of parting at death is consoled by the confident hope of reunion hereafter. 2. Our relations to God being spiritual cannot always be realised with the same intensity as our visible relations. But some things help to make them stronger and nobler. (1) Think of the motives that constrain our consecration. Love is the only guarantee for the enduring fellowship of souls, whether Divine or human. But the love of two human beings may not endure for ever. But if we have come to know God's love in Christ, a love that does not depend for its existence or strength upon our love to Him, or upon the continuance of our love, but has its origin in infinite and eternal goodness, we have a motive for love and consecration which transcends all others that can affect the heart. Hence the force of the appeal "by the mercies of God," &c. (2) We can now understand also the purpose of such a consecration. Why do two human beings give themselves to one another? What does love mean by the surrender of self? Identity,

so that two become one "like perfect music joined to noble words." And this is what the soul means when it gives itself unto God, that we may become one with Him, that our hearts may beat in sympathy with His, that our wills may keep time with the Divine will, that we may help in the accomplishment of His plans. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS CONSECRATION VOW IS FULFILLED. "And be not conformed," &c. 1. The offering of ourselves, and the carrying out of the vow, are two different things. The one act is the work of a moment, the other is the work of a lifetime. The one is coming to God under the constraint of His love; the other is abiding in Him and growing up into Christian manhood. When a young man inflamed with the passion for scholarship is sent to the university, he enters his name upon the college books, and becomes pledged to the life of a student. But he is not yet therefore a learned man. He must attend classes, scorn delights, and live laborious days. If he can learn to love hard work and stern self-discipline he shall become at length what his first ambition aimed at. When a soldier takes the oath of allegiance it is but the first step of a soldier's life. He will have to pass through much monotonous drill before he is fit for service; and if ever called into the field of battle he will have to endure fatiguing marches and brave death itself. And we can be good soldiers of Jesus Christ only upon the same conditions. The case sometimes happens that a profligate man is smitten with the love of a pure woman, and swears that if she will give him her love he will become a new man. And if she believes his promise and accepts his love, and he earnestly sets himself to redeem his vow, do you think he is able to become a new man in a day? Yes, in purpose, but not in achievement. The battle with former habits cannot be completely fought out at once, but the victory is won at last because the battle has been faithfully fought under the inspiration of a love that has been stronger than all his other passions. And what a pure earthly love is able to accomplish for a man, shall not the love of God in Christ accomplish for us? 2. We are to become transformed by the renewing of the thinking faculty. That is, instead of being occupied, as we once were, in thinking and planning about the old life and ways, we are to busy our thoughts with the new life, and not only try to feel right, but to think right. And so we shall cease to be conformed to this world, and become transformed by the progressive renewal of our minds till we learn by experience that the will of God is good, and acceptable, and perfect. III. SUCH A SERVICE TO GOD IS IN THE HIGHEST DEGREE REASONABLE. 1. The religion of Christ appeals to all our highest faculties. It recognises also our understanding as well as our affections, and says that one of the great arguments for the surrender of the life to God is that it is eminently a right and reasonable thing. With some religion is all feeling, all sentiment; with others it is a round of dull proprieties, or a scrupulous and painful performance of prescribed duties; with others it is cloistered communion; with others it is all a matter of reason and argument. Now the apostle intimates that faculties the widest apart are to be brought into the closest alliance in the service of God. Love and reason, the mercies of God, and the judgment of man seem to be things far asunder, and yet here they are united in the apostle's argument. 2. We live in the most enlightened age the world has seen; when all claims are brought to the bar of reason. Christianity itself cannot escape this test. But if we are true to the teaching of Christ, and insist that consecration to God means the highest love to God and the purest love to men, need we fear that the most enlightened sages can gainsay that doctrine? For is not such love the richest outcome of the nature of man? Is self-sacrifice reasonable or unreasonable? Conclusion: The two things most needed in the religion of our day are a greater spirit of consecration to God, and a greater conviction of its reasonableness. We need greater love and more reason in our religion. A love that shall cast out sordid fear and low-minded calculations of the profit and loss of our religion; a love that can render greater service to God and greater service to the needs of our fellow-men: and in conjunction with this, a more enlightened reason that shall teach us to be afraid of no foes to religion but falsehood, indifference, or superstition. (*C. Short, M.A.*) *A living sacrifice*:—The expression may include—I. ACTIVE SERVICE. The victims slain could do no further service. But the sacrifice spoken of here is that of a living, voluntary agent, presented, not by others, but by himself, and presented for life in all his powers. II. CONTINUED DEVOTEDNESS. The victims at the altar could be offered but once, and could never appear at the altar again. But the "living sacrifice" is one which is presented anew every day in the unremitting homage of the life. III. As the apostle is addressing himself to believers, we ought to include the idea of the NEW LIFE as distinguishing them from the world and from

their former selves when they were in a state of spiritual death. The sacrifice must not possess more animal life, but must be instinct with the new life of holy sensibilities and spiritual principles to which the soul is "born again by the incorruptible seed of God's Word" and the power of the Spirit. IV. Although it is a living sacrifice, it is a sacrifice READY FOR DEATH, should God require it. The life is to be so devoted to God as to be at all times and entirely at His service, and, if need be, cheerfully surrendered for His glory. It includes, in a word, willingness to be, to do, or to suffer whatever He may see fit to appoint. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *A living sacrifice:*—Ellerthorpe, the hero of the Humber, who had rescued many from drowning, was at his duty on board ship, when a cry was raised, "A child overboard!" In an instant he was in the sea, and soon both were again on deck. Next day the mother took the child up to the brave man and said, "This is the gentleman who saved you from the sea; what are you going to give him?" For a moment the child was speechless, not knowing what to answer. But suddenly she put out her hands and said, "If you please, I have nothing else, but I will give you a kiss." The rough sailor had received many valuable presents, but he declared that the child's kiss was more to him than all beside. Why? Because she had given all she had—her love. Such is what Paul here asks for God. Note—I. PAUL'S EARNESTNESS. "I beseech." He was a man in earnest, and nothing quenched his zeal; and this one man's zeal sufficed to carry the standard of the Cross in all directions. It is the earnest man who wins, as is shown in the cases of Luther and Wesley. Rowland Hill once said, "Because I am in earnest men call me an enthusiast. When I first came into this part of the country I saw a gravel pit fall in and bury three human beings. I lifted up my voice for help so loud that I was heard in the town near a mile away. Help came and rescued two of the sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast then; and when I see eternal destruction fall upon poor sinners and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast now?" There was much force in the suggestion of a Scotchman when they were discussing where to put the new stove in the church. "You had better put it in the pulpit," said he, "for it is awful cold up there." Yes, put fire in the pulpit, but the best way of getting it there is to have plenty of it in the pews. Consecrated earnestness is needed in Church and Sunday-school work and by seeking sinners. II. OUR DUTY TO GOD. We have been so busy in talking about saving souls that we have left no time to think about the body. Christ had but little to say about souls, but much about bodies. It is not without meaning that Paul says, "Present your bodies." This sacrifice must be—1. Personal. "You," "ye," "your." We may transact business by proxy, but religion is a personal matter. Earnest efforts may bring blessings upon others, but a man must repent and believe for himself. A teacher cannot save his class, nor a minister his congregation, nor a mother her child. 2. Voluntary. Present yourselves. There is no compulsion. Christ made whips and drove out the buyers and sellers from the temple, but He has not made scourges to drive them in. The driving business has made many hypocrites, but never a saint. Christ knocks at the door, but the door has to be opened from within. 3. Living. God wants no dead or formal offering, but real living service. I would give Him the best buildings, singers, preachers, but unless we give Him living service all else is but the painted flower. A road surveyor, who was just finishing the levelling and paving of a long stretch of street, asked me in an enthusiastic tone if I did not think it splendid. "You see," he added, "I am trying to put my Christianity into the streets I make." That is just it. Drive your engines, make your coats and boots and chairs for Christ. III. THE ARGUMENT BY WHICH PAUL ENFORCES ALL THIS—a threefold cord which cannot be broken. 1. "By the mercies of God." 2. That God will accept us. Without this encouragement we might expect to be rejected, for we are rebels. 3. It is our reasonable service. (*C. Leach, D.D.*) *The living sacrifice:*—The ivy, twining its delicate stem round the tree, gradually increases in size and strength until the tree is overlapped and destroyed. Likewise, if allowed to grow up round the spirit of man, the selfish nature will increase in power until his life is as a stunted tree without any branches on which the fruit of love can grow. Christianity gives to the believer a new energy, which cuts off the ivy of selfishness and enables him to bring forth everlasting fruit. Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and we are besought to follow His steps and to copy His example. I. THE MERCIES OF GOD are—1. Repentance—not like the repentance of the sailor in the time of storm, who throws his goods overboard, and in the time of calm wishes he had them back, but it is a repentance unto life which gets rid of all sin and joyfully leaves it behind. 2. The

remission of sins. As the dying Israelites of old who, when they looked to the serpent of brass, were saved, so we have looked to Christ on the Cross, and as we looked we believed, and we have received life. 3. Adoption into the family of God and the witness of the Spirit. When the prodigal is clasped in his father's arms the passer by may say, "I do not believe the lad knows that he is forgiven." Others add, "I do not believe that anybody can know that his sins are forgiven till he dies." But that prodigal says, "My beloved father is mine and I am his." II. DIVINE MERCIES PROMPT THE CHRISTIAN TO BECOME A SACRIFICE UNTO GOD. 1. Living. In the olden time the bullock had to be dragged to the altar, but the Christian comes willingly. After the bullock had been dragged to the altar he was slain, but the real Christian sacrifices while he lives, and does not put off till death, as some do when they bequeath so much to the cause of God because they cannot hold it any longer. 2. Holy. If Christianity can help only our outer life we can do without it. But it enters within the body, cleanses our inner nature. God makes us to be temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is the filter in the muddy heart making to spring from it a fountain of holiness. 3. "Acceptable unto God" is not only praising God in the church, but praising Him with the melody of our daily words and actions, helping the helpless, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. (*W. Birch.*) *The living sacrifice*:—This "therefore" has in it the accumulated momentum of the whole preceding portion of the Epistle, wherein the apostle has established the doctrine of that justification which is open to every one who believeth, and which is inseparably connected with sanctification of heart. I. THE DUTY WHICH PAUL HERE LAYS UPON US. 1. There were two kinds of offerings under the Law—the one of expiation, the other of oblation; and two orders of priests—the high priest who went in alone every year into the holy of holies, and the ordinary priests who ministered daily at the altar. Under the new economy there is but one high priest and one sacrifice of expiation, but every believer is consecrated for the daily presentation of thank-offerings to God. 2. So Paul says, "Present your bodies." That, of course, does not mean that we are to do with ourselves as Abraham thought to do with Isaac, but neither does it mean that we are to give the body apart from the soul, which would be formalism and hypocrisy. Therefore many would take "your bodies" as equivalent to "yourselves." But that diminishes the force of the original. Paul is anxious to impress the truth that the transformation of the soul should be made manifest through the body, either because the body is the organ of practical activity, or as an indication that sanctification is to extend to that which is most completely under the bondage of sin. Paul found many disposed to undervalue the body, but he confronts this error by exhorting his readers to consecrate it unto the Lord. The words are equivalent to "yourselves in the body." As it is through the body that the evil in the unrenewed heart comes forth into manifestation, so it is through the body that the gracious principles and affections of believers reveal themselves. Note the singular rite of consecration (Exod. xxix. 20), the significance of which clearly was that the priest's ears, hands, and feet were sacred to Jehovah. Similarly each member of the body is to be held by the believer as specially consecrated to God. II. THE QUALITIES THAT THIS SACRIFICE SHOULD POSSESS. 1. Life in contrast with the dead victim which could do no farther good in the world; but the living body, inhabited by the Holy Ghost, is to be constantly employed. The Jewish victims could be offered only once, but the Christian sacrifice continues while the life lasts. Here is a field for the display of heroism. It is easier to die for Christ than it is to live for Him. 2. Holiness. The word literally means set apart, but it is also that which is used for the Hebrew term signifying "without blemish and without spot." The idea is that it should be free from those things which would cause it to be rejected. 3. Acceptableness to God. Not only such as God can accept, but offered on such a ground as shall be well-pleasing in His eyes. Peter supplements Paul when he says, "Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 4. Rationality, *i.e.*, a service which rests on rational grounds, or one in which the reason is engaged. Our sacrifice is mental and spiritual, and so distinguished from those which were merely ceremonial and external. It requires that the thoughts of our minds, the affections of our hearts, the decisions of our wills, and the admonitions of our consciences should all be Christianised. III. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH THE OFFERING IS ENFORCED. The term mercy as generally used denotes kindness shown, irrespective of character, but in the New Testament it designates favour done to the undeserving. That is its meaning here, for the apostle is referring not to the ordinary gifts of God's providence, but to justification, adoption, sanctification, and glory. Tracing all these to the free mercy of God, he

shows us the obligations under which we are thereby laid to dedicate ourselves to God. We see, thus, how false the assertion is that the preaching of justification by faith undermines morality. It does not discourage good works; but, instead of encouraging the sinner to purchase his salvation by his deeds, it makes good works the offering of the grateful heart for the salvation which it has believingly received. Thus the slave becomes the child, and duty is transfigured into choice. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Living sacrifices:*—God always must be served, and that by all. Angels refused to serve Him in heaven and were cast down to hell. Man refused to serve Him and was driven out of Paradise. There are four courses open to us. We may refuse by attempting to oppose and overcome God, or to escape Him, or to endure His wrath; or, we may submit and serve Him. Which of these shall we take? We cannot succeed in the first, the second, or the third; there is nothing therefore left but the fourth. I. WHAT YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE IS. 1. The sacrifice to be offered must be—(1) Holy. But how can we dare to lay any such sacrifices upon His altar? And if we dared, how could He accept? Turn aside and see how the priests used to act. Having killed the animal, they cut it open, and took out all that was unclean; and then, having washed it, they consumed it on the altar with fire before the Lord. So our Great High Priest would wash us externally from our guilt in His own blood, and then, laying us open, would remove all that is corrupt within us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that thus we may be laid as holy sacrifices upon the altar, and consumed before the Lord. (2) Complete. Entire. "Your bodies" means yourselves. When the lamb was brought to the altar, the body was brought, and all that it contained. Your bodies are like precious caskets containing the more precious jewels of your souls and spirits. Keep back nothing. Ye are not your own, therefore "glorify God in your bodies," &c. If you want examples read Heb. xi., or take the case of Paul; or, nobler far, look at Jesus, "who gave Himself for us." 2. The manner of offering it. (1) Freely "present." Do not wait to be obliged, but come of your own accord. The principle is love. If you love God, you will present yourselves to God. Suppose you have a poor friend who asks for a small loan. If you love your money better than your friend, you will keep your money. If you love your money as much as your friend, you will, most likely, waver, and at last give it grudgingly. But if you love your friend better than your money, you will give the money freely. 3. Daily. When a lamb was brought to be offered, it was first cleansed, then bound, and then burned. Now that you may be living sacrifices, it is necessary that you should be daily cleansed, bound, and burned. II. PAUL "BESEECHES YOU BY THE MERCIES OF GOD" TO PERFORM IT. 1. It is an appeal from the altar of God, from one who was himself, through the riches of the grace of God, a living sacrifice. 2. Look back through the Epistle for the mercies of which he speaks. Mark how he points out—(1) Our sin and ruin. (2) The mystery of our salvation through the riches of the grace of God. 3. If you have made the resolve to present yourselves to God, be encouraged to do so, for the text declares that this sacrifice is "acceptable to God." You see the altar, the cords for binding the sacrifice, the fire for burning it, the sacrifice laid on the wood, bound with cords, and burned. Now look to Him who sits upon the mercy-seat, in the most holy place, accepting it! And that you may understand how acceptable it is, remember that it is "bought with a price"—a "member of Christ"—and a "temple of the Holy Ghost." (*H. Grattan Guinness.*) *A reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice:*—1. When Christianity dethroned the previous religions of the world, it immediately did that which proved its sovereign right to the position which it claimed. It took the names, institutions, and ideas which it found, and gave them a new and better meaning; or even if it destroyed them, it immediately planted something corresponding in their place. Take, *e.g.*, its treatment of sacrifice, so universal in the old religions. In its ancient sense Christianity rejected it altogether; but in a higher sense Christianity is, above all others, a religion of sacrifice. It is a religion founded on the greatest of all sacrifices, and one whose whole continuance in the world depends on continual sacrifice—the sacrifice of the heart and mind in thanksgiving (chap. xv. 16; Heb. xiii. 15), the sacrifice of good deeds (Heb. xiii. 16; Psa. l. 23), and broken hearts and contrite spirits (Psa. li. 17), the sacrifice of the whole man in the dedication of himself to God (Psa. l. 23; 1 Pet. ii. 5; Rom. xii. 1; Phil. ii. 17). 2. There have been times when this sacrificial act must have been true to the very letter. In the ages of persecution, Christians must have felt that they were indeed presenting themselves victims in the cause of God and truth. Soldiers, too, on the eve of some great battle, must, if they reasoned at all, have felt that they were sacrificing themselves in the literal sense of the apostle's words. But

in the less exciting days of our ordinary lives we can enter into every word of the apostle's appeal. We many of us feel its whole meaning, when at the Lord's table we "present to God ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to Him." We feel it with an especial force in the beginning of the new year, when new hopes and new resolutions rise within us, and when we determine to enter on a new course of life. We feel it still more when we are entering on a new crisis, career, or position, which to be worthily fulfilled requires the sacrifice of all our energies to this one purpose. 3. Let us note the characteristics of this sacrifice. It is—I. REASONABLE. It is a dedication, not of mere impulse, fancy, affection, but of our intellect; a sacrifice in which our minds go along with our hearts. How is this to be done? The service, which the God of reason and of truth requires of us, first and foremost—1. The sacrifice of truth. Not to authority, freedom, popularity, fear, but to truth. This is, no doubt, a hard sacrifice. Custom, phrases bound up with some of our best affections, respect of persons or acquiescence in common usage, these are what truth compels us to surrender. Dear, no doubt, is tradition, the long familiar recollection, venerable antiquity on the one hand or bold originality on the other; but dearer than any of these things is truth. 2. The preference of "the Word of God," as it appears in the Bible, is above all human opinions. This, too, is a sacrifice often hard to make. To search the Scriptures thoroughly, to make out their true sense, and not force our opinions on them, is a task which may involve many a sacrifice of time and thought and ease. The Bible doubtless contains many "things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable may wrest to their own destruction." But take it with all its difficulties and all the imperfections of the human agencies by which it has come down to us, and it is still true that no more reasonable service can be offered up by man to God than the study of the Scriptures. "Thy Word is tried to the uttermost," tried by the investigations of science, by the undue claims made upon it, by the misunderstanding of its enemies, by the exaggeration of its friends; and yet, in spite of all, "Thy servant loveth it," because he knows there is nothing else which will so well repay all the trouble which its study involves. II. HOLY. To what a world beyond ourselves does this word carry us! how near to the Great White Throne! how far away from this selfish, sinful world! How easy to feel its meaning! how difficult to apply it! A life, a worship, consecrated from the low, narrow, impure influences which dry up our better thoughts; a life set on higher aims, a life which has within it something at least which recalls the world to the sense of the saintly, the heroic, the heavenly, the Divine! Where shall this holiness be sought? 1. The Bible is the fountain and bulwark of truth; it is no less the fountain and the bulwark of holiness. There is a holiness in the Bible which speaks for itself. The spirit which breathes through it is indeed the spirit of the saints. To live in that exalted atmosphere which nursed the faith of Abraham, and the unselfishness of Moses, and the courage of Joshua, and the devotion of David, and the hope of Isaiah, and the energy of Paul, and the love of John, is better than any rule or form which scholastic ingenuity or ascetic piety has ever devised. Take even a single Psalm. Read over Psa. xv., li., or ci.; or even a single verse from 1 Cor. xiii., or the Sermon on the Mount; act upon it throughout a single week, make it the rule of a single family; what a holy sacrifice, salted with the salt of God's special grace, would then be offered up! 2. And if we ascend from the Bible to Him of whom the Bible speaks, what a lifting up of our hearts above the toil, and dust, and turmoil, and controversies, and doubts of the world, if we could declare that we embraced with our whole souls the true religion of Christ! Ask spiritual counsel from all quarters, but ask it especially from Him who must be above every other religious teacher. Ask not of Him questions of times or seasons, or this world's knowledge and power, which He refuses to answer; but ask of Him the questions how we are to please God, to serve our brethren, to deal with sin and error, and assuredly we shall receive an answer, not of this world, nor of this age, nor of the will of man, nor of any sect or party, but the answer of the eternal mind of God Himself, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. III. "LIVING." There have been those who have offered to God a reasonable sacrifice, but one cold, hard, philosophic, without warmth, sympathy, or action; a holy sacrifice, but shut up within books, or walls, the dry bones of religion. Our sacrifices must not be like the dead carcases of the ancient victims, thrown away to perish or to be burned; they must be living, walking, speaking, acting in the face of day. We know what we mean when we say that a child or a man is "full of life." That is what our sacrifice of ourselves should be—happy and making others happy, contented and making others con-

tented, active and making others active, doing good and making others do good, by our vivid vitality—filling every corner of our own souls and bodies, and every corner of the circle in which we move, with the fresh life-blood of a genial Christian heart. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The Christian's sacrifice*:—I. THE PURPORT OF THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION. Here is—1. Something to be presented unto God. "Your bodies." Not that Paul was unmindful how important it was that they should present their souls. He had already acknowledged that they had "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which had been delivered" unto them; but he probably thought there was some danger lest they should not to the requisite extent "serve of righteousness." 2. The purpose for which this presentation must be made. It is not a gift—something which we have a right to present, or to withhold; nor a loan, to be returned, nor a service or benefit to be rewarded, but a sacrifice; *i.e.*—(1) An acknowledgment of what is due to God. (2) An entire resignation of it to the Divine use and disposal. 3. The manner in which this sacrifice must be presented. It is to be—(1) A living sacrifice, *i.e.*—(*a*) According to the original a sacrifice alive. "Present your bodies a sacrifice" would startle those who associated the term with death; and hence the necessity of the assurance that it was life, not death, that God required. We are neither to devote ourselves to destruction, as many of the heathen do, to satisfy the claims of their idols, nor to embitter and waste our lives by austerities, as many of the papists do. (*b*) Or the apostle may have meant that the "sacrifice" was not to be a solitary act, nor even a frequent repetition of such acts, but the prevailing habit of our lives. There are indeed particular seasons when the sacrifice should be formally presented; but "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do," we must "do all to the glory of God." (2) A "holy" sacrifice—*i.e.*, solemnly set apart for the Divine service. As "living" implies perpetuity, "holy" intimates entireness. Under the law that the sacrifice might in all cases be entire, the poor were permitted to present "a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons." So we are not to appropriate our bodies to one master and our souls to another, nor to reserve any faculty of body or of soul. (3) "Acceptable unto God." Under the law the mode of presentation had to be attended to, or the sacrifice was spurned as an abomination. The place in which the sacrifice was to be offered was defined, and it had to be presented through the priest. And so we must take care that our sacrifice be presented at the proper altar, viz., Christ, by whom alone our gifts are sanctified. And by Him, as our High Priest, the sacrifice is to be offered to God. II. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION IS URGED. He might have urged terrific motives, viz., that, should they fail to present themselves, God would hereafter seize upon them for a prey. Or he might have reminded them how just and right it was, or how advantageous. Instead of this he appeals only to their gratitude. Why? 1. Considering their spiritual state, it was the most powerful motive which he could possibly employ. Had he been writing to persons who were strangers to the grace of God, or had received that grace in vain, it might have availed but little, and the other motives might have availed much. But "the mercies of God" strike the chord of a Christian's tenderest and best affections, and touch the mainspring of all his conduct. The apostle knew this from his own experience. 2. This is the motive best suited to the character and intent of the sacrifice required. Had the apostle been exhorting us to present our bodies as a sacrifice for guilt, the motives would have been drawn from the Divine justice. As the sacrifice is a thank-offering, the apostle presses on us those considerations which may tend especially to animate our gratitude. 3. They only who have obtained mercy are capable of the sacrifice. They only can present—(1) "A living sacrifice." The man who has not yet obtained mercy, in any sense in which he may be said to live at all, lives to himself, and not to God. Or supposing that, by a formal "service," he presents a living body, yet while the soul continues "dead in trespasses and sins," it is but a dead sacrifice he offers. (2) A holy sacrifice. The sin which reigns in that man's heart who is a stranger to grace makes his sacrifice abomination. (3) Acceptable to God. In order to this the sacrifice must be preceded by the pardon of sin. For how can God accept an offering from His enemies with whom the purity of His own nature constrains Him to be angry every day? (*Jonathan Crowther.*) *Christian self-sacrifice*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS. 1. Not in particular acts of self-denial, or in undertaking certain painful duties. 2. But in full consecration to God, and in the maintenance of a living, holy, and acceptable walk before God. II. WHAT IT REQUIRES. 1. The renunciation of the world. 2. The renewing of the mind. 3. The practical proof of the perfect will of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Self-sacrifice*:—Pousa, the Chinese potter, being ordered

to produce some great work for the Emperor, tried long to make it, but in vain. At length, driven to despair, he threw himself into the furnace, and the effect of his self-immolation was such that it came out the most beautiful piece of porcelain ever known. So in Christian labour it is self-sacrifice that gives the last touch and excellence and glory to our work. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Personal sacrifice*:—I. THE LEADING MOTIVE OF THE GOSPEL. 1. Not self-interest; not the reasonableness, beauty, and dignity of virtue. 2. But a grateful sense of God's many and great mercies. II. THE SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DUTY. Self-dedication to God, or the consecration of ourselves to do His holy will. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Acceptable to God.**—*On the attributes of acceptable worship*:—I. NOTICE SOME OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IMPLIED AND EXPRESSED IN THE TEXT. II. CONSIDER THE ARGUMENTS USED BY THE APOSTLE TO ENFORCE THIS DUTY. 1. Advert to the reasonableness of the service. It has been thought by some that the apostle, in this phraseology, has an allusion to the irrational animals which were offered in the service of God under the Levitical law; but that His service is much more simple, and the reasons of duty much more obvious to the understanding of the worshipper under the present than they were under the former economy. This is certainly true in point of fact. But recollect that, however various the sacrifices, and however complex the service of God during the preceding dispensations, yet His worship, in itself considered, ever has been, and ever will be, "a reasonable service." We lie under peculiar obligations, however, to bless the Lord, that the bondage and comparative darkness of the preceding economy is past, and the true light now shineth. The natural imbecility of reason in a fallen creature has been much overlooked; and her appropriate province in revealed religion much misunderstood by many of the disputers of this age. Christians also have much erred on the same subject. Instead of her having been used as an humble, submissive handmaid, to sit at the Saviour's feet, and implicitly receive the authoritative dictates of heaven from His lips, she has frequently been tricked out in the fantastic drapery of infallibility, and that also, sometimes, in the very temple of God, above all that is called God, or worshipped. Now recollect it is one leading design of the revelation of mercy to humble her haughty looks, and to level all her flofty pretensions in the dust, and to draw her deluded votary to the feet of the Saviour, as an eternal debtor to free mercy, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption (1 Cor i. 4, 5, 30, 31). Glad should we be if sinners were but prompted to reason justly upon their immortal interests and on the unqualified claims which the great salvation has upon the human heart. But it is not enough that our reasoning powers first of all yield unreservedly to God's appointed plan of redemption for pardon and peace, everlasting consolation and good hope through grace; they are brought into the school of Christ to be tutored for eternity, and to acquire the elements of implicit submission to the whole council of God. This is not so much the duty of a day as a labour for life. But, reason thus tamed, and thus taught—thus guided, and thus governed—by the principles of pure and undefiled religion is the decided enemy to all error—the sworn foe to all corruption—a powerful advocate of the honours of truth and righteousness—and a firm friend to the doctrine of the Cross, and all the social ordinances and commandments of Christ. Allow me further to observe that a well-principled mind will not dare to reason against any part of the revealed will of God. A Christian, living under the vivid impressions of the fear of God, will consider that every part of the truth as it is in Jesus demands and deserves personal obedience, for its own and its Author's sake; and he will give to each of its parts that degree of attention which its relative importance in the economy of redemption properly claims. 2. We shall now briefly notice our last, though not least powerful argument, used to enforce the duty in the text: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." There is no law in the universe more powerful than that of love. What heart can possibly withstand the tender mercy of the Most High! It is firm as the mountains—free as the air—boundless as the ocean—durable as the pillars of heaven—and efficacious in its operations, as the sun shining in the greatness of his strength. II. APPLICATORY REMARKS. 1. The absolute necessity of a renewed mind in order to any person serving God with acceptance. 2. The importance of Christians being deeply embued with the spirit of devotion in order to their personal comfort and public usefulness. 3. A Christian Church ought to give a fair representation of the spirit of devotion—the institutions of the kingdom of Christ—the principles of benevolence—and the standard of morals in the place where they live. (*N. Macneil.*) *An acceptable present* (Children's sermon):—I. WHO THE PRESENT IS FOR. We

read of all kinds of presents for all sorts of persons. Jacob brought one to Esau (Gen. xxxii. 13), and sent one to Joseph (Gen. xliii. 11); Abigail to David (1 Sam. xxv. 18); Naaman to Elisha (2 Kings v. 17); Queen of Sheba to Solomon (1 Kings x. 10). Then there are birthday and Christmas presents, and the more imposing testimonials given to men and women for special work. But the present we speak of is for God. Why should we give presents to every one but Him? The wise men brought Him presents; why should not we? II. WHY SHOULD WE GIVE IT. 1. We give presents to those whom we love—to parents, &c., and if we loved God we should bring something to show our love. Mary brought an alabaster box of ointment, worth about £9, to show hers. 2. We give to those who deserve well of us—especially if they have done or suffered much on our behalf. Masters give pensions to old and faithful servants, and the Queen medals to her brave soldiers. If some one were to save you from drowning or fire you would want to give something to show your gratitude. How much has God done for us! 3. We give presents to those who we think will be pleased to receive them. We know it gives them pleasure partly because of the value of the present, but chiefly because of the love that prompts it. So with God (Isa. xliii. 24). III. WHAT SHOULD WE GIVE. 1. Something worth giving. What costs little is usually worth little. The gift is valuable according to its value to the giver as Jesus taught in the parable of the widow's mite. God complained that His people gave Him the blind and lame. He was not pleased with it because it cost them nothing (see also 2 Cor. xxiv. 24). What we bring must be worth something to us or it will be worth nothing to Him. 2. Something God will care to receive. We avoid what our friends already have, or what would be unacceptable, and find out what they would like. Money, gold, jewellery, land, &c., are of no value to God. The only thing we can give is ourselves—our bodies, including our souls; and God will be pleased with nothing else. But how? By using our hands to work for Him, our tongues to speak for Him, &c. A missionary tells of an Indian who offered his blanket, gun, wigwam—but got no blessing till he offered himself. IV. LESSONS. 1. We are to give, not lend. Seneca says, "There is no grace in a benefit that sticks to our fingers." 2. We should give our bodies while young and worth giving. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) Your **reasonable service.**—*Our reasonable service*:—I. THE SACRIFICE. We bring not slain beasts, but living souls and bodies. II. THE SANCTUARY. Is not of this world, but the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. III. THE PRIESTS. Are not Levites, but Christian believers, renewed in the spirit of their minds. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Our reasonable service*:—Yes; there is nothing so reasonable—nothing that gives, and will ever give, reason its full powers, but the religion of Jesus Christ. Our intellects are destined to travel much further into the moral than into the natural perfections of Jehovah; whence we see that those who spurn the religion of Jesus Christ insult their intellects as well as their hearts; robbing themselves at the same time of the sublimest pleasures God Himself has to confer upon any of His creatures. We are destined, moreover, to be more intimately acquainted with the moral perfections of God than with anything else. We shall know more of God a great deal than we shall know of each other. Here then is a sublime feast for the human intellect as well as for the human heart. Worship, then, the Lord in the beauty of holiness. What is so reasonable? Is there anything more reasonable than that a child should obey the father on whom he is dependent for everything? Indeed, communion with God is absolutely necessary, to enable us to extract all the sweets of learning or science. We must learn the happy art of leaving everything more and more with Jehovah, and then we shall be led by Himself into Himself in everything, and participate throughout the revolving ages of eternity in His purity and bliss. Contrasting what I am now telling you with what we see in Scripture, we shall find a strong reason for calling sin folly. There is nothing so opposed to right reason as sin. God's service is a reasonable service; the slave of sin and Satan is the most unreasonable of all beings. I. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH AS A DUTY. It is due to God from every being who hears the gospel without one single exception. All beings must be, and for ever will be, indebted to God for three reasons:—His own perfections—the relationship subsisting between Him and His creatures—and the many obligations conferred upon them. II. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH AS A PRIVILEGE. If asked which is the most glorious, the obedience of vision above, or the obedience of faith below, I should be obliged to say I cannot tell. I can do many things here on earth in the service of God and my fellow-creatures, which I could not possibly do if body and soul were separated from each other. There is a something which involves in it the glory of God in a peculiar degree in the

triumph of faith here below. But there is another thing to be considered. The principle of obedience is, indeed, the gift and creation of God—it is likewise the purchase of One who is God. It not only involves the power of Jehovah, but His worth. It is in these, when connected together, the natural and moral perfections of Jehovah shine in all their glory, in calling into existence, and preserving in existence, true religion in the human heart on this side eternity. The believer is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5). And we must necessarily connect our obedience here below with the obedience of the Son Himself in glory at the present moment. He has triumphed; and the body He wears now will, in its perfect similitude, be worn for ever and ever by all His family. My brother, revere thyself! consider whose thou art!—who bought thee!—who redeemed thee!—thy high parentage!—thy glorious destiny! Consider, too, whose representative thou art intended to be, so long as thou art a stranger and sojourner here on earth! III. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH IN ITS ADAPTATION TO THE STATE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT. The dispensation under which we are living richly blends justice with mercy. It is but just to God to require what is due to Himself. In His mercy, however, He accepts the weakest offering, proceeding from a contrite heart; while, at the same time, the blessing of perfection is reserved for His family, and He will assuredly make them what He Himself would have them to be for ever and ever. IV. IT IS IN THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH ALONE WE CAN BE CONSCIOUS OF AN INTEREST IN CHRIST. Let me once be conscious that I love God and delight in Him, I have no more to doubt then. Let the principle of obedience be sublimated, as it may, nay, must be, even here, and I shall immediately echo the language of Paul, "I know whom I have believed." Lessons: 1. The obedience of faith was destined to preserve man from all extremes—from his legality—from his licentiousness. It is in this obedience we are preserved; and obedience is salvation on this side eternity. 2. Are there any here strangers to Christ? You tell me you cannot come to Him. Invite Him, then, to come to you. But you have many and mighty enemies. He is determined to overcome every enemy. 3. Election is full of every possible encouragement. To whom? To every one who hears the gospel. (*W. Howels.*)

Religion a reasonable service:—If we examine our own nature, everything within, everything around us indicates that religion is a reasonable service, and that man was intended to present it. First, because he is a weak, dependent creature. Survey him in infancy, helpless, needing parental fondness! Thus the first feelings of nature indicate his want of protection, and lead him to seek it from those whom he conceives more powerful than himself. The same sentiment is evident through the whole of his life. Conscious of his inability to guard against the numberless dangers that surround him, conscious of his insufficiency to procure the means of happiness, his desire of protection and assistance is one of the strongest ties that binds him to political society; and for the sake of this he is willing to sacrifice a part of his property, and in many cases a considerable portion of his natural rights. Yet after all he is liable to innumerable evils and dangers, from which no care of his own, and no protection of his fellow-creatures can guard him. Even in the midst of the gayest scenes of pleasure the heart feels a void, and a very slight circumstance is sufficient to render the cup of worldly bliss tasteless. But will the fun of prosperity always shine unclouded and serene? In short, in whatever view you consider man, he is a dependent being; he feels this to be the case, and naturally seeks for assistance and support. The misfortune is, that he applies to the wrong object: instead of trusting to the Rock of Ages, he leans on a feeble reed that will break under him, and wound the hand that reclined upon it, More especially will this appear when we consider that the God on whom we depend is a Being in whom every perfection centres; whose benevolence inclines Him to communicate happiness, and who has given us a rule of faith and conduct which, if we observe, He has solemnly promised that He will make all things to work together for our ultimate and greatest good. Is not religion then the reasonable service of a dependent creature like man to the God on whom he absolutely depends? Religion is likewise our reasonable service, as it is the exercise of the best affections of the heart, and of those which are most influential on the moral conduct. In the habitual exercise of that piety and devotion which religion inspires, we contemplate the ever-living source of all perfection and happiness; an object which fills the mind with pleasing astonishment, enlarges our views, elevates our sentiments and excites us to an imitation of that which we cannot but admire. That religion is a reasonable service which man was intended to present will further appear if we consider that the hopes which it inspires are consonant to his nature, and necessary to his happiness.

Of all the creatures that inhabit the world, man alone is the child of hope. But alas! every expectation which has this world for its object must inevitably perish, and man were the most wretched of creatures if all his hopes were confined to the present life. As hope is thus essentially necessary to human happiness, how excellently adapted to our nature is the religion of Jesus, which tends to improve, exalt, and direct this turn of the affections to objects more durable, sublime, and satisfactory, than any this world can afford. The glorious and Divine hope of life and happiness eternal, which is brought to life in the gospel, is the only true source of felicity to man. Every grateful idea which cheers the mind, together with every pleasing sensation that warms and dilates the heart, is the legitimate offspring of this enlivening principle. The mind of the sincerely pious Christian, inspired by the promises, invigorated by the principles, and supported by the prospects of the gospel, rises superior to every affliction. Thus is religion happily suited to the nature of man, as a dependent creature, as a moral agent, and as the child of hope. To enjoy the consolations it affords, to be inspired with the amiable dispositions it promotes, to be animated with the encouraging hopes it suggests, we must not be satisfied with the mere profession, but must diligently cultivate its duties, and endeavour to imbibe its principles. (*B. C. Sowden.*) *Our reasonable service:*— 1. To sacrifice ourselves. 2. To renounce the world. 3. To regard ourselves as members of the body of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Reasonable service:*— I. ITS NATURE. 1. The word rendered "reasonable" means what belongs to the reason, as distinct from the belongings of the body, or external law. Hence reasonable service means the service of mind. 2. The word "service" means worship; and reasonable service will therefore mean the worship of mind. 3. Consequently "reasonable service" stands in contrast to "body." What you present is the body, but it is the worship of your mind. (1) As much as to say on the one hand, that no act done by the body is worship, is acceptable to God unless accompanied by an act of thought. Every thoughtful mind rises above being satisfied with external rites. Suppose the expression of our love to our dearest friends were a simple ceremony not representing any inward feeling, it would be worthless. If man is dissatisfied with empty rites how much more God! (2) On the other hand, the words imply that no feeling towards God is adequate worship. There must be the presentation of the body to perfect the worship of the mind. There must be something more than thinking of God, than admiring the greatness of God's works, than even acknowledging that God is kind; and what that is we have in this verse. 4. The essence of worship is self-dedication; the perfection of worship is entire self-sacrifice, and we cannot sacrifice except in the body. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the best example of this great act of worship. He loved us from eternity. There was no sacrifice in His love; because there was no sacrifice, there was no merit; because there was no merit there was no salvation. Now what must He do in order that His love may take the form of self-sacrifice? He must become man, and be able in the body to do bodily acts, and these bodily acts of suffering and dying will enable Him to sacrifice Himself. To die is not a great thing externally. Little children do it. Creatures who have no souls do it. Yes; but in that small act of dying on the Cross the infinite Son of God was able to do the very same thing as the little child in that cottage. He was able in that simple act to do the greatest spiritual self-sacrifice that was ever done from all eternity. He created the worlds; but something greater than creation is here. He died, and in dying showed how the infinitely rich, great, powerful, became the infinitely poor, small, weak, and how He who is the Fountain of Life sacrificed His own life for others. Now that is the highest act of worship. II. HOW TO RENDER IT. This verse begins the second part of the Epistle. The doctrine of the previous chapters is justification by faith; what is the connection between that and sacrifice of self? Justification means—1. That a man is profoundly convinced that he is a sinner. He is filled with shame in the presence of God. That shame is the beginning of self-sacrifice. There are other things, plenty of them, to make us feel small, but they do not create self-sacrifice. (1) I am small in space; how small compared with the stars! Yet I do not see that I ought to consecrate my whole being to the stars, for I can weigh them in my scales. I can count them on my fingers; they cannot count us or weigh us. We are greater than they. (2) Rise to the higher world. How small is man compared with the great truths of God's intellect! Yet there is no worship of truth. Naked truth, mere abstract ideas, will never create love and self-sacrifice. No man ever did it, not even Socrates at his best. (3) Rise once more to the moral law, greater than ideas, commanding me to submit myself to its

omnipotence, telling me that there is an eternal difference between being good and being bad; that there is a greater difference between goodness and evil than there is between the greatest and the least creature in God's universe. And now in the presence of this awful power what is the result? Oh, I am ashamed of myself before God's law. I wish the mountains would crush me out of my very being, and that is the beginning of self-sacrifice. 2. Justification by faith means that you and I realise deeply that our only salvation is in trusting God. Trust not works. Trust not your own struggles for eminence. Simply trust in the unchanging goodness of God. Paul realised that great truth. That is the secret of this man's apostleship. It is the explanation of his spiritual life. He felt convinced when he was conquering himself and his pride and the world, he was able thus to conquer through simple trust. It is in that that I see the possibility and the progress of self-sacrifice and self-consecration. And then, oh! how easy it is to say, "Thy will be done"! That is worship. Not singing hymns with a loud voice and a hardened heart; not uttering words of prayer with wandering thoughts; not gesticulations and appearances before men, but a profound, calm, deep readiness to say, "Thy will be done." (*Principal Edwards.*) *Sanctified reason* teaches us—1. How to serve God. 2. How to use the world. 3. How to estimate ourselves. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 2. **And be not conformed to this world.**—*Conformation and transformation:*—1. "World" has various meanings. (1) Time. (2) An age—the Messianic, *e.g.*, as contrasted with the Jewish, or the past as opposed to the present or coming age. (3) A state, as the present in distinction from the future in antagonism with the good. (4) "Worldliness," a spirit or principle of evil pervading the world. It is this to which we must not be conformed. 2. It is well to define the term in order to avoid two extremes. (1) That which regards the world as a mere abstraction, something incidental to those early Christian ages, but of which nobody is in danger now. (2) That exaggeration which confounds it with almost every transaction of our lives. 3. We must be vigilant against this spirit precisely where it is the most subtle and concealed, *e.g.*, (1) We may say that delight in the visible world is legitimate. "Surely this is not the world against which the apostle warns us." No; but suppose that nature becomes to us all in all, and cheats us into the belief that there is nothing higher than that which serves our senses. (2) We say indisputably that we ought to love our fellow-men; but what if with this there blends an influence that moves us to defer to their customs, and live merely upon the level of their ideals! (3) Even our religion may be worldly in its spirit. The objects of our faith in another state of existence may be sensuous, and the grounds of our obedience to God mercenary. 4. "The world," then, is a spirit, that is everywhere around us and within, and the injunction is most needed precisely where this spirit is most likely to be confounded with something that is good and true. Proceeding upon this assumption, let us examine the forms and achievements of our modern civilisation. I. MUCH OF OUR MODERN CIVILISATION IS A PROCESS OF CONFORMATION. Man is not the master of nature. He learns to control its forces by submitting to its laws. His triumphs of art and mechanism are simply a conformity to nature, not a mastery over it. He mitigates pain and conquers disease by conforming to the laws of health. He has no wand of miracle to supersede law. Civilisation is simply the adjustment of man to the conditions in which he is placed. Now, precisely here we may detect an evil tendency. There is danger lest this habit of conformity fasten us down to a mere worldly level, and saturate all our desires with worldly estimates. On the other hand, THE GREAT PECULIARITY OF THE CHRISTIAN METHOD IS TRANSFORMATION—not simply obedience to external conditions, but a renewing of the mind. It is a great achievement for man to control new forces without; it is a greater achievement when in the inmost recesses of his being there unfolds a law which forbids all sin, even under the mask of the most splendid gain; when there is awakened a vitality of conscience which inspires him to make only a beneficent application of mighty instruments; when there settles in his soul a sublime patience by which if he cannot conquer pain he can bear it; and when in the midst of all physical terrors he enjoys a spiritual vision which pierces through calamity and looks beyond death. II. CONSIDER SOME POINTS WHERE THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN METHOD AND THE METHODS OF THIS WORLD ARE MORE ESPECIALLY DISPLAYED. 1. Observe how largely men are influenced by excitement. There is a vast difference between the noble steamship that holds its way, trampling the waves and challenging the

gale, because it has an inward force, and the poor vessel whose iron heart stands still, and that wallows the sport and victim of the relentless sea. But there may be a difference as great between the man who determines his action by reason and conscience and the man who is perpetually driven by the excitements of time and place. How many people depend upon excitements as the aliment of their very being! They are always whirling in the commotion of something new. And thus people lose true independence of thought and life. Opinions and habits go with the tide. These men and women live as others live, think as others think, do as others do. Nay, even religion may become too closely identified with mere excitement. The method of Christianity is not excitement, but incitement. That man is best qualified for the perils, yet not disqualified for the blessings of the world around him who is moved, not by pressure from without, but by principle from within, who in the midst of these changing tendencies holds a purpose, and whose personality does not dissolve in the social atmosphere around him, but who preserves a rocky identity of faith and conviction, a moral loyalty to his own ideal. 2. The power of our modern civilisation is the power of that which is visible and tangible. Present good, immediate success, are its conspicuous results. What vast sovereignty, what subtle temptation, in this possession of the present, in that visible dollar which I make by my compliance compared with the inward blessing which follows my sacrifice; in the concrete fact which I can grasp in my hand compared with the abstraction that only flits in transient vision before my inward eye! Cancel space, outstrip time, bridge oceans with steam, twitch nations together with electric arteries. Now no instructed Christian undervalues concrete facts and interests. The man who starts from great principles is not one who is most apt to overlook the real interests of the world. But he also regards a higher good. He believes that for the real purposes of this life we need something besides steam and telegraph, and currency and ballot-boxes. We need that which delivers man from sensual illusion and the lust of immediate attainment by fixing his eyes upon the glory of spiritual rectitude, the victory of postponement, and the gain of sacrifice. 3. Civilisation produces its most marked effect without. The best thing accomplished by it is adjustment to the world. Its tests and fruits are better outward conditions, a better social state, better houses, lands, and means of communication. Nevertheless, man's real life is not in outward things. It cannot be changed merely by external agents. In its wants and capacities it is the same as it was six thousand years ago. Strip the man of the nineteenth century of these externals, and how much is he like the man of ages since! With the telescope we see farther, but do we really see more than Abraham at the door of his tent, or Job gazing upon the Pleiades? If we do, whatever of larger vision or substantial good has come to us has come within—in more comprehensive truth, in more consecrated love, in more perfect assurance of final good. And wherever these results are wrought within us we can dispense with much that is merely outward and palpable. The time comes when the world to us will be as nothing. But while it crumbles we shall not fail. We shall perish with no perishing thing, being "not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of the mind." (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*)

Conformed and transformed:—I. The man who is in CONFORMITY WITH THIS WORLD is not the man who understands it best, or who admires its beauties most; nor can he adapt himself best to all its circumstances. He is too much a slave of the things he sees to look into the meaning of them; too much shut up in the habits of the society into which he is thrown, to have any power of entering into what lies beyond. The word "conformed" implies that he takes his form from the things about him, that they are the mould into which his mind is cast. Now this St. Paul will not for an instant admit to be the form which any man is created to bear. Man is created in the image of God; and the form of his mind is to be derived from Him and not from the things which are put in subjection under Him. The heathen was resisting the conscience which told him that he was God's offspring, and the very things he saw which testified to the invisible power of God in worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator. But we who have been redeemed out of this worship are striving far more directly and consciously against this spirit; we are choosing a false way when we admit the world to govern and fashion our minds according to its pleasure, when we submit to receive its image and superscription. That image and superscription will vary in each new age, in each new locality; it is the very nature of the world to be continually changing. That is the reason why it is so ignominious a thing for a man to be conformed to it; he must become merely a creature of to-day; he must be fluctuating, capricious,

insincere—a leaf carried about by every gale, floating down every current. How is it possible that such a one can know anything of the will of God, which is fixed and eternal? What signifies it that you give to such a one the Bible and persuade him it is a Divine book? You may persuade him of that as easily as of anything else; if it is the current opinion of course he receives it until the fashion alters, and then he will scoff at it. But while he embraces it what does he gather from it? Just what his worldly spirit wishes to gather and no more. II. THE DELIVERANCE FROM ALL THIS IS TRANSFORMATION, and such transformation, instead of unfitting a man for the world, is that which alone can enable him to live in it, to appreciate the worth of it, to exercise an influence over it. It was this which enabled the prophet to see the trees and the floods breaking forth into singing; which enabled St. Paul to become all things to all men; which enabled St. John to see the kingdom of God and of His Christ emerging out of the kingdoms of this world. For they beheld all things in God's light, not in the false lights of this world. They saw the world as He had made it, not as men had made it by rebelling against Him. They had received the true form of men, they could therefore use the forms of the world, accommodating themselves readily to Jewish, Greek, Roman customs—never being brought into bondage by any. They were in communion with the eternal, so they could contemplate the great drama of history, not as a succession of shifting scenes, but as a series of events tending to the fulfilment of that will which is seeking good and good only. III. THE PROCESS OF THIS TRANSFORMATION IS THE RENEWING OF THE MIND. Such a phrase at once suggests the change which takes place when the foliage of spring covers the bare boughs of winter. The substance is not altered, but it is quickened. The alteration is the most wonderful that can be conceived of, but it all passes within. The power once given works secretly, probably amidst many obstructions from sharp winds and keen frosts. Still that beginning contains in it the sure prophecy of final accomplishment. The man will be renewed according to the image of his Creator and Father, because the Spirit of his Creator and Father is working in him. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Conformed and transformed:* —If we pour into a mould a quantity of heated metal, that metal as it becomes cool takes the shape of that mould. If we soften a lump of wax, and then press a signet upon it, on its surface is left the impression of the seal. Just so our nature, susceptible at present of being moulded to one character or another, is now undergoing this process. According to the tastes we cultivate, the acts we do, the society we keep, the subjects that engross our interest, we are becoming conformed to the world or to Christ; we are being made into "vessels unto dishonour," or into "vessels meet for the Master's use." The process may be very gradual; but it is not on that account the less fatal and the less sure. Like that insidious disease consumption, the first beginnings of it are hardly perceptible; but though it only destroys life as it were by inches, the raging fever is not in the end more deadly. How many are there who, because they are not raging in the fever-fits of open sin, never dream that they are dying of worldly conformity, and who consider, though the Bible and their consciences sometimes speak to the contrary, that there can be no great harm in living to the world a little, provided that they keep within bounds! But the Word of God says plainly, "Be not conformed to this world." And if we would fall in with this requirement we must strive to be "transformed by the renewing of our mind." We all know what a complete change is signified by the word "metamorphosis," which is the one here used. In describing this process we must go back one step further in the metaphors than in the case to which we before alluded. We must suppose the metal to have been cast into some faulty shape first, and then to have been melted down and re-cast. Just so our hearts, our wills, our tastes, in short our whole "mind" must be first of all softened by God's Spirit; then we must be transformed into a "vessel made to honour," and finally "sealed unto the day of redemption." In vain shall we seek to transform ourselves; we may give up this or that worldly pleasure or worldly pursuit; but unless we really, earnestly, perseveringly seek by prayer the power of God's Spirit we never shall be "transformed by the renewing of our minds." (*W. H. Etchers, M.A.*) *Conformity to the world:*—I. WHAT IS THE WORLD? The mass of unrenewed men as distinguished from the people of God. It is Satan's kingdom. It has laws and maxims. Its manners and customs are determined by its reigning spirit. It has its consummation, which is perdition. II. WHAT IS IT TO BE CONFORMED TO THE WORLD? 1. To be inwardly like men of the world in the governing principle of our lives, *i.e.*, to have a worldly spirit, a spirit occupied with worldly things, mercenary, earthly. 2. To be so ruled by the world's maxims that the question is not what is

right or wrong, but what is the custom of society. What is the public sentiment? 3. To be indistinguishable from men of the world in our—(1) Objects. (2) Amusements. (3) General conduct. III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CONFORMITY. 1. The destruction of all spirituality. It is impossible to live near to God and yet to be conformed to the world. The Spirit is grieved and quenched. 2. The obliteration of the distinction between the Church and the world, and the consequent enervation of the former. What becomes of Christian profession when Christians are as sordid, gay, and unscrupulous as other men? 3. Identity of doom. They who choose the world will perish with it. IV. BY WHAT RULE ARE WE TO DETERMINE WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT SINFUL CONFORMITY. This is more a theoretical than a practical difficulty, and will not trouble a man who is filled with the Spirit of Christ and devoted to His service. 1. We must avoid sinful things. 2. With regard to things indifferent. (1) One man should not judge another, but determine for himself what is and is not injurious to his spiritual interests. (2) We should avoid things which are injurious to others though harmless to ourselves. (3) We should shun things innocent in themselves, but which are connected in fact, or in the minds of men with evil, as cards, dancing, the theatre, &c. (4) The same rule as to dress and modes of living does not apply to all persons and places. It depends on usage, rank, &c. There is great danger of becoming pharisaical, and making religion consist in externals. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Conformity to the world*:—I. BE NOT CONFORMED—1. To its selfishness. 2. To its presumption. 3. To its superstition. 4. To its carnal policy. 5. To its earthly-mindedness. II. THIS DIVINE REQUIREMENT IS PRESENTED here—1. Negatively—"Be not conformed," &c., in—(1) Affection. (2) Principles or maxims. (3) Conduct. 2. Positively—"But be ye transformed," &c. True religion does not consist in simply abstaining, avoiding, disliking, &c.; but also in being, doing, delighting, &c. We cannot be unconformed to the world, unless we are in spirit conformed to God. Therefore the only way to be unworldly is to become converted and spiritual (Gal. v. 16, &c.). The Christian is not simply to be unlike the world; he is to be like Christ. (*Homilist.*) *Conformity to the world*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. By "this world" is meant everything in it which is antagonistic to the truth or to the life of God in the soul of man. You can form a correct estimate of a man's character by his ruling principles. So you can the spirit of "this world." Here are some of its maxims—(1) "Every man for himself"; there is the selfishness that draws in everything to itself, and keeps firm grip of all it has, though the needy be perishing around! (2) "Quietness is best": there is the cowardice, the selfish prudence of the world which will not stand forth and speak a word for God or man, lest trouble should come upon it! (3) "Honesty is the best policy." The man who is honest just because it is the best policy would for the same reason have been dishonest! 2. Conformity to this world means the adoption of principles such as these, and practices founded upon them, although there are great differences among men in respect of it. II. ITS CAUSES. Apart from its first and great cause, there are secondary causes, *e.g.*,—1. The proclivity to do as other people do. A child may act thus, but may a man? If so, where is his independence? In the dust. 2. The fear of giving offence. There are people who are so dependent upon the good opinion of others, that to gain it they will forfeit their own respect by doing things which otherwise they would have left undone. They have interests of their own, but they are laughed or frowned out of them; they have opinions of their own, but they modify and explain them away! Many a man may date his destruction from the day he began to be afraid of losing the good opinion of bad men! 3. The inability to stand alone. When any public question is debated, the question is, "What side are the respectable people on?" When a side must be taken, "Which is likely to win?" The "expediency" men are many; the "principle" men are few. II. ITS CURE. 1. The realising of our own personality and responsibility, refusing to live in the crowd, resolving that by God's grace we shall live the life He calls upon us to live. 2. The withdrawing of ourselves from under the power of that tendency within us which prevails with us to disobey this command. Sometimes it is of very little use to fight, the only thing is to get away. A young man is beginning to acquire a taste for low pursuits and company: how will you help him to get above them? Not surely by leaving him to fight it out with them, but by creating within him a taste for higher pleasures, and the society of the good. If we would not be conformed to the world, we must rise above it. 3. Transformation by the renewing of the mind. Thus transformed, you will not be conformed: another model will be realised by you in your lives: the world will lose its hold and

Christ will be all in all. (*P. Rutherford.*) *Conformity to the world:*—I. IN WHAT IT CONSISTS. In cultivating—1. Its spirit and temper. 2. Its maxims and principles. 3. Its company and conduct. II. HOW IT MUST BE AVOIDED. 1. By the renewing of our minds. 2. By the adoption of other—(1) Principles. (2) Rules. (3) Ends. III. WHY IT SHOULD BE AVOIDED. Because this is—1. Good in itself. 2. Acceptable to God. 3. Beneficial to man. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Conformity to the world: its folly:*—A member of his congregation was in the habit of going to the theatre. Mr. Hill went to him and said, "This will never do—a member of my Church in the habit of going to the theatre!" Mr. So-and-so replied that it surely must be a mistake, as he was not in the habit of going there, although it was true he did go now and then for a treat. "Oh!" said Rowland Hill, "then you are a worse hypocrite than ever, sir. Suppose any one spread the report that I ate carrion, and I answered, 'Well, there is no wrong in that; I don't eat carrion every day in the week, but I have a dish now and then for a treat!' Why, you would say, 'What a nasty, foul, and filthy appetite Rowland Hill has, to have to go to carrion for a treat!' Religion is the Christian's truest treat, Christ is his enjoyment." *Nonconformity to the world:*—1. There is no command in Scripture about which there is more debate than this. Are we required to separate ourselves from all who are not Christians, and avoid all employments except those of devotion? This is manifestly impossible. Are we then to abstain from those practices which are common among irreligious persons? Then the question arises, What practices? Where shall we draw the line? Many draw for themselves a line within which they keep; but unfortunately each person draws it differently. To some, this world means profligacy and sin; to others, great luxury; to others, certain fashionable amusements, or dress; to others, the use of secular music, or the reading of light literature. Each believes himself in the right, and blames his neighbours for going beyond or not coming up to the line he has drawn for himself. Each is alternately accuser and accused; while the ungodly consequently declare that it is quite impossible to say what is and what is not worldly. 2. Now all this arises from overlooking the fact that the precepts of the gospel are addressed to our new and inner nature; that they supply principles and motives on which we are to act always, not laws applying to any particular act or set of acts. "Be not conformed to the world" is defined by "Be ye transformed," &c. It is clear, then, that that conformity is forbidden which interferes with our being transformed. Now that into which we are transformed is the image of God (2 Cor. iii. 18). 3. Now, the rule of the renewed man is simple, always applicable—"The one thing I am to seek is conformity to God's image, and in order to that, constant communion with God; whatever, then, I find to interfere with this, however good it may seem, is the world to me." Now the application of this rule is matter of personal experience, and it is impossible to draw a line; for what is the world to one person is not the world to another; and the question is not so much where you are as what you are. To lay down a rule for all lives is as difficult as to prescribe a diet for all constitutions. If you ask us whether certain food will agree with you, we answer—That depends upon your constitution; we can only give you the broad rule—eat nothing that you find to disagree with you. So we lay down the broad rule—whatever disagrees with your soul's health you must avoid. 4. This is a rule which we would plead with worldly people. Christians are often perplexed when asked—Why do you not join in this or that amusement? (1) If they answer—Because they are sinful, they say what they cannot prove. Sin is the transgression of a law, and they can cite no law which expressly forbids such things. And then if we call them sins, we may induce others to consider sins as not much worse than amusements. (2) If they say, we object to these things because they are worldly, then they will be asked, What is the essential difference between the amusement in question, and some other which they hold lawful? (3) Now if in all such cases the Christian would be content to say—I refrain because I find I cannot enjoy it and afterwards have communion with God, he would give an answer which, if not understood, could certainly not be gainsaid. To ask for a law when this reason is given would be as unmeaning as to ask for a law of the land forbidding all imprudence in our diet, or exposure to the weather, or to the risk of infection. We cannot prove these acts to be crimes, but they are dangerous, and all come under the general principle which makes it wrong for a man to injure himself. 5. In this way we should deal with all cavillers on this subject. Worldly men set down the objections of ministers to prejudice or envy. "Of course, clergymen abuse theatres, &c., but where is the harm? Where are they forbidden in Scripture?" We answer this question by another: "What is

the state of your soul? Are you the possessor of a spiritual life? If not, then you cannot possibly understand our objection; for we object to these things as injurious to that which you tell us you have not got, namely—life in the soul. To understand a spiritual precept you must be spiritual yourself. 6. But there are those in whom this spiritual life is as the tender blade, or as the just kindling fire, who ask, anxiously, What is the danger? To show this, we will take—(1) The theatre. If we are asked, Is there any sin in a theatrical representation? We answer—There is no more sin in a person presenting to your eyes a certain character than there is in writing a description or painting a picture of it. But what we have to consider is, not the abstract idea of a theatre, but what it practically is. Now not to enlarge upon the evils connected with the stage, to which you give your countenance and aid by attendance and payment for admission: we will admit that these are not essential to the stage, though somehow they are always found connected with it. We are willing to allow all that can be said for it, and will not ask whether, in the course of the play, vice is not often made attractive, and whether the recollection of the pleasure of sin does not outlast the impressions made by the moral at the end, when the vicious characters meet with that punishment which we so rarely see them visited with in real life. We will suppose every play to have its moral, and the audience to be duly impressed with it. Yet we must ask, What character would you be conformed to if you followed out the lessons there taught? Would it be to the image of God? Is the good man of the stage the good man of Scripture? Who would venture to produce upon the stage one in whom was the mind of Christ? Would such a character crowd houses? Men would throng to the playhouse to hear sentiments which they do not care to study in their Bibles, or to witness a display of qualities which, in real life, they hold in contempt. Our objection to the stage, then, is this: it sets up a false and worldly standard of morality; and he who desires to be transformed to the image of God will find here another image set before him. (2) The card table. Is there any sin in moving about pieces of painted pasteboard? Certainly not. And yet it becomes a cause of sin; because, however small the stake, it excites, in however slight a degree, that desire of gain which is of this world. In proof of this note the greater zest with which men enjoy the game when some small stake is played for, "just to give an interest to the game." And by indulging in this we hinder that renewing of our mind which we should cultivate so carefully. (3) The ball-room. Is there any harm in the act of dancing? No more than in any marching to the sound of music. But is there not temptation there for the indulgence of vanity, frivolity, envy, and evil speaking? We ask whether one renewed in the image of God would find himself a welcome guest there?—whether his spiritual life would be strengthened, and his conformity to Christ increased, by constant attendance?—and whether the guest as he returns is in that frame of mind which best fits him for communion with God? In short, in all these matters we ask you simply to use your own judgment. Try honestly the effect of these amusements upon your own spiritual life; and if you be really renewed in the spirit of your mind, you will find that their atmosphere is injurious to the new life, which you desire to cherish. 7. But we must not forget that the principle may be applied in an opposite direction. There are others who need to be told that what is forbidden is worldliness of heart; viz., those who are sure they do not conform to the world, because they never enter a theatre, &c. Their idea of unworldliness is the abstaining from these things, and a few others, *e.g.*, display in entertainments and equipage. Add to this, becoming members of religious associations, frequenting religious society, and attending a gospel ministry, and their definition of unworldliness is complete. Now it is possible to do all this, and more, and yet still be conformed to the world. Worldliness can no more be excluded by a fence of conventional rules and habits than a fog or a miasma by a high wall: it is in the atmosphere. They avoid the theatre, and eschew fiction: to what purpose, if they are daily acting out the characters they will not see represented, or read depicted? They will not gamble. Are they the better for this, if they indulge the covetous spirit elsewhere? They will not frequent the ball-room. Are they any gainers, if they indulge the same spirit of display, &c., in a quiet party, or in a religious meeting? They will not wear fashionable dresses; to what purpose, if they are secretly as proud of their plain dress? Conclusion: To attack at once the worldliness of the religious and the irreligion of the world, is to risk the displeasure of both. But the world and the fashions of it are passing fast away; a few short years, and we shall all be where the applause or censure of men shall be alike indifferent to us—upon our dying beds. Then the question to be decided shall be, not how far may I go in my

enjoyment of the world, or where must I fix a limit to my pleasures, for the world can be enjoyed no longer, and death is fixing the last limits to its pleasures, and there remains but one act more of conformity to the world—that last act in which all flesh conforms itself to the law of dissolution; but this shall be the great question:—Am I fitted for that world which I am about to enter? Am I, or am I not, "transformed in the renewing of my mind"? Ask yourselves this question now, as you must ask it then. (*Abp. Magee.*) *Nonconformity to the world* may be seen—I. IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLDLY VIRTUES. There are graces which are sometimes seen more in the world than in the Church, and here we cannot go wrong in conforming to the world. Yet it is possible for an unworldly spirit to transfigure them. And unless occasionally so transfigured they would be corrupted and lost. One high heroic instance of truth, justice, or courage is worth a hundred lesser cases—the world is startled by it. But remember in proportion to the dignity given by an unworldly spirit to a worldly virtue is the mischief wrought by the absence of worldly virtues in those who call themselves unworldly. They are salt which has lost its savour. There is no greater stumbling-block than want of candour, justice, and generosity in those who profess to be "not of the world." But the soldier who is more brave because of a higher than earthly courage; the judge who is more scrupulously just because he has before him a higher than earthly tribunal, the men of business who "ply their daily task with busier feet, because their souls a holy strain repeat," are instances of what the apostle means by being "transfigured through the renewal of our minds." II. IN THE EXHIBITION OF QUALITIES WHICH ARE UNWORLDLY IN THEMSELVES. 1. Humility. In pagan times there was no name for this grace. The very word is a new creation of the gospel. Nor does the thing now exist in worldly minds. You may prove this by telling an average man of his faults and watching the result. 2. Independence of the world's opinion. "With me it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. He that judgeth me is the Lord"—is a true unworldly maxim. It is safe, prudent, to conform to the fashion of the world, to swim with the stream, to desert the sinking vessel, to avoid the stricken deer or howl with the wolves. That is the world's way; but there is a way which is not the way of the world. The old Christian virtue of chivalry still lingers amongst us—the leaning to the weaker side because it is weaker, the desire to protect the weak and repress the strong, &c., may run to excess, but even Quixotism is refreshing. How invigorating to see men dependent on God, though independent of man, stand up against professional clamour and popular prejudice, to see men resist the tyranny of public opinion which will not hear the other side, and refuse the popular and give the unpopular praise! 3. Purity. 4. Resignation. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Nonconformity to the world*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE WORLD (1 John ii. 16). 1. The lust of the flesh (Tit. ii. 12). 2. The lust of the eye (Eccles. v. 11). 3. The pride of life (chap. i. 30). II. WHAT IS IT NOT TO BE CONFORMED TO IT? 1. Not to approve of it (1 John ii. 15). 2. Not to imitate it (1 Pet. iv. 4). 3. To use it as if we used it not (1 Cor. vii. 30, 31). III. WHY SHOULD WE NOT BE CONFORMED? 1. We are separated from the world to God (1 Pet. ii. 9–12). 2. We have put on Christ. 3. All that is in the world is not of the Father (1 John ii. 16), and is contrary to the love of Him (1 John ii. 15). 4. The fashion of this world passeth away (1 Cor. vii. 31). Conclusion: Conform not to this world. 1. You have higher things to mind (Col. iii. 1–3; Phil. iii. 20). 2. This world cannot satisfy you (Eccles. i. 8). 3. You must give an account of what you do here. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Nonconformity to the world*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Not ceremonial. 2. Not civil. 3. But moral. Be not conformed—(1) To the spirit of the world. (2) In your rules of life. (3) In your company. (4) In your practices. II. SOME REASONS FOR ITS PROHIBITION. 1. Duty. 2. Profession. 3. Self-love. 4. Love of your neighbour. 5. The commands of Scripture. III. HOW IT MAY BE PREVENTED. By—1. The renovation of your natures. 2. The exercise of daily prayer. 3. Guarding against temptation. 4. A constant dependence upon God. (*Biblical Museum.*) *Nonconformity to the world*:—There will arise in the Christian's course, from time to time, occasions on which he will be in doubt as to some points of his duty in relation to social intercourse and amusements. Well, in such cases he turns to his chart—on that chart (his Bible) though he find not every rock and shoal and quicksand, marked down by name—he finds it laid down plainly and decisively that the whole coast is dangerous, *i.e.*, he finds a general principle, "Be not conformed to this world"—"The friendship of the world is enmity with God." By whom is the amusement patronised? Are they those who are the votaries of other and less dubious pleasures? Are they

those who wear the world's badge and have its mark stamped on their foreheads? Then let the Christian pause—let him fear to find himself surrounded by crowds of worldlings, drinking with them of the same cup. It must be at best but a suspicious cup that meets tastes which should be opposite—it must be at best a suspicious path in which, even for a moment, the Christian walks hand in hand with the man of this world. Be quite sure the world would not be drinking of that cup, if it were not in some way spiced to their taste. Alas! it is far, far more likely that the Christian should have stepped out of his narrow path, than that the worldling should have forsaken his, to walk, even for a moment, with the Christian. And remember that in such cases there is great need that you watch against self-deception. The remark of Jeremy Taylor is but too true: "Most men choose the sin, if it be once disputed whether it be a sin or no." Although grace teaches and inclines you to distaste the world, yet corruption remains, and to that corruption sin and the world are but too palatable. See to it, then, that while you are professing to inquire into the lawfulness or unlawfulness of such an action, your mind is not biased beforehand, and you have not a secret desire to find the Word of God on your side—a secret determination to make it out, if possible to be so. Beware, too, of that religion which is anxious to take up its lodging next door to the world. If you are determined to go as far as you can you are not safe—you will very soon be on the other side of the line. And if, after all, a given case seemed doubtful, remember, religion, not the world, is to have the benefit of the doubt. It is better to abstain from mistaken scrupulosity from a hundred lawful things than to run the risk of one unlawful act of conformity to the world, or of throwing one stumbling-block in the way of another. (*Canon Miller.*) *Nonconformity to the world:*—There are two words for world, *αἰών* and *κόσμος*. The former regards time, the latter space. Once they are combined (Eph. ii. 2), "in accordance with the time-state of this matter-world." . . . The direction, therefore, is, "Be not like the men of this world, whose all is the present. Wear not the garb of time: live for eternity." (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Nonconformity to the world—inward:*—As the mother of pearl fish lives in the sea without receiving a drop of salt water, and as towards the Chelidonian Islands springs of fresh water may be found in the midst of the sea, and as the fire-fly passes through the flames without burning its wings, so a vigorous and resolute soul may live in the world without being infected with any of its humours, may discover sweet springs of piety amidst its salt waters, and fly among the flames of earthly concupiscence without burning the wings of the holy desires of a devout life. (*Francis de Sales.*) *Nonconformity to the world—outward:*—The bird of paradise, which has such a dower of exquisitely beautiful feathers, cannot fly with the wind; if it attempts to do so, the current being much swifter than its flight, so ruffles its plumage as to impede its progress, and finally to terminate it: it is, therefore, compelled to fly against the wind, which keeps its feathers in their place, and thus it gains the place where it would be. So the Christian must not attempt to go with the current of a sinful world: if he does, it will not only hinder, but end his religious progress; but he must go against it, and then every effort of his soul will be upward, heavenward, Godward. (*M. Davies, D.D.*) *The world* is fallen human nature acting itself out in the human family; moulding and fashioning the framework of human society in accordance with its own tendencies. It is fallen human nature making the ongoings of human thought, feeling, and action its own. It is the reign or kingdom of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. Wherever that mind prevails, there is the world. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *The world an atmosphere:*—It is like the dense atmosphere which on a November day hangs over your vast metropolis, the product of its countless homes and the proof of its vast industrial efforts; and yet the veil which shuts out from it the light of heaven, destroys the colour on its works of art—the dark unwholesome vapour which clogs vitality and undermines health, and from which a Londoner escapes at intervals with a light heart, that he may see the sun, and the trees, and the face of nature as God made them, and feel for a few months what it is to live. Even thus the world hangs like a deadly atmosphere over every single human soul, brooding over it, flapping its wings like the monstrous evil bird in the fable, or penetrating and entering into it like a subtle poison, to sap the springs and sources of its vigour and its life. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The world, danger of:*—As you love your souls, beware of the world: it has slain its thousands and ten thousands. What ruined Lot's wife?—the world. What ruined Achan?—the world. What ruined Haman?—the world. What ruined Judas?—the world. What ruined Simon Magus?—the world. What ruined Demas?—the world. And "what shall it profit a man, if he

shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" *The world: difficult to define*:—The world cannot be clearly marked out as if it were a kingdom on a map, and every year makes it more difficult to draw any line of demarcation or to lay down any hard and fast lines upon the subject, because society is being leavened by Christian principles, the moral conscience of the nation quickened, and a public opinion, on the whole of a healthy character, making itself powerfully felt. And, further, what is the world to one person is not the world to another. The fact that the world cannot be defined as to locality is an advantage, not a disadvantage: for it calls forth from us a constant spirit of inquiry and watchfulness before we enter upon our pursuits, form our connections, or enter into society. The believer should at all times test every relationship into which he is brought, to see whether beneath its possibly plausible and pleasant surface there may not lurk the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Christian, too, should examine not only what is without, to see whether the place he is entering is the world, but also what is within himself, and whether he is not converting even what is the kingdom of God into the world by the worldly spirit which he brings with him. We may infect as well as be infected. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The world: spirit of*:—The spirit of the world is for ever altering, impalpable; for ever eluding, in fresh forms, your attempts to seize it. In the days of Noah the spirit of the world was violence. In Elijah's day it was idolatry. In the day of Christ it was power, concentrated and condensed in the government of Rome. In ours, perhaps, it is the love of money. It enters in different proportions into different bosoms; it is found in a different form in contiguous towns, in the fashionable watering-places, and in the commercial city; it is this thing at Athens, and another in Corinth. This is the spirit of the world, a thing in my heart and yours to be struggled against, not so much in the case of others as in the silent battle done within our own souls. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Worldliness: its spirit permanent, its forms changeful*:—The world in our days is not a heathen world, as it was in the days of the apostle; but it is not a whit less "the world that lieth in wickedness." The outward developments are different, but the inward character, principles, and spirit are the very same: changing a few of the mere external circumstances, the apostle's description of the "world" of his own day is equally applicable to the "world" of ours. There are now, indeed, no idolatrous banquets, no savage gladiatorial conflicts in the blood-stained arena of the amphitheatre, no midnight orgies to some disgraceful deity. The world, perhaps, now, at least the world of the upper classes of society, is not quite so rough, but more polished in its sinfulness; but its scenes of amusement, its theatres, its luxurious tastes and habits, its nightly revels, and too lavish entertainments, partake as essentially of the elements of worldliness as the less advanced indulgences of a ruder age. In its thirst after wealth, in its restless strivings after fame and glory, in its grasping selfishness, in its love of splendour and show, we question whether the world, as it presents itself to the Christian of the nineteenth century wears any materially different aspect from that of the world of the apostle's days. But, when we speak of worldliness, either as it is developed in business or pleasure, let it not be for a moment supposed that worldliness exists only in these developments: these are only indices or marks of an inward and rooted principle, innate in every man born into this world, and dominant in every man, without exception, who has not been "born again of water and of the Spirit." (*W. H. Etchers, M.A.*) **But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.**—*Transformation*:—This word is used to denote the Lord's transfiguration, when His body was seen invested with the glory in which He is to appear at His second coming. You will then see Him thus transfigured, and the result will be your own transfiguration (Phil. iii. 21). For He is to "change your vile bodies," &c. But there is a transfiguration in the life that now is (2 Cor. iii. 18) also into the image of the Lord; and therefore it is a transformation into glory, but not into the glory that was seen on the Mount, but what was seen in the manger, in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, and on the Cross. Note:—I. THE MANNER OF IT. Christ was transformed by becoming man; you are to be transformed by becoming new men in Him. The renewing of your mind is your being brought to have the same mind which Christ had. "I come to do Thy will, O God," is the language of the Son in the very act of taking the new nature; the renewing of your mind is your making that language your own. Note the closeness of the analogy. 1. The agency is the same—the Holy Ghost. It is He alone who can make the Son partaker of your human nature, without making Him to be as fallen man; it is He alone who can make you partakers of the Son's Divine nature, without making you

to be as God. 2. These two operations fit into one another: the one effecting that supernatural birth by which the Son becomes a servant, the other that supernatural birth by which the servants become sons. The one transformation is the cause of the other: not only as being that without which the other could not have been, but also as being the means of the other. It is through your believing and appropriating His transformation, that you are yourselves transformed. For the transformation in either case is a union. His being transformed is His being united by a new creation with you; your being transformed is your being united by a new creation to Him. 3. To the Son Himself His being born of the Spirit brought a new mind. It was a new thing for Him to have the mind of a servant, and to say, "I come to do Thy will, O God." And it is a new mind in you when, as sons, you say the same. Naturally, self-will is the ruling principle of your mind. Insubordination to God is that "fashion of the world" to which you are not to be conformed. 4. The transformation effected in the case of Christ, when He humbled Himself to do the will of God, was voluntary on His part; otherwise His humiliation and obedience unto death could have had no efficacy. Equally voluntary must be the change on your part: "Be ye." You must say, with renewed minds, entering into His mind, "I come to do Thy will, O my God." It is true, that in order to your thus acting, you must be acted upon by the Holy Spirit. But you are not acted upon as inert matter may be acted upon. 5. Note two practical applications. (1) If the transformation in you is thus like the transformation in Him—see to it that it be very complete. It was so in the case of Christ; it must be in yours. He emptied Himself. Do you also empty yourselves. He laid aside His natural position of equality with God. Do you also lay aside your usurped position of seeking to be equal with God. (2) That you may be thus transformed into the image of your Lord—appropriate as available for you your Lord's transformation into your image. Behold Him transformed for you; and be you, after a corresponding manner, transformed in Him. He becomes a servant, continuing still to be the Son; you become sons in Him, feeling yourselves now, for the first time really, to be servants. He, being the Son, comes to do the will of God as a servant; you, being servants, come to do the will of God as sons. II. THE END OF THIS TRANSFORMATION. "That you may prove," &c. The will of God needs to be proved. It can be known only by trial. Essentially, the will of God is and must be the expression of His nature. But the nature of God far transcends the comprehension of finite minds; and therefore His will may well be expected to be incomprehensible too. But in that formal aspect of it as the assertion of the authority of God, let His will be put to the test of actual trial, and then will its real character as the expression of His nature come out; for while neither God Himself nor His will can be grasped in the speculative understanding, both He and it can be grasped in the obedient and loving heart. But apart from any inquiry into the reason of it, the fact is pregnant with important consequences. For one thing, it partly explains the economy of probation, and tends to show how trial must be both summary and decisive; summary, that it may be ascertained once for all whether the authority of God is to be acknowledged or disowned; and decisive, for if His will is acknowledged, the way is opened for proving it as the expression of His nature to be "good and acceptable," &c.; whereas, if disowned, all opportunity of knowing its real character is hopelessly lost. 1. The probation of man turns upon the willingness of man to put the will of God to the proof. The will of God, as it was announced in paradise, was not such as to command either approbation or consent on the part of our first parents. The command not to eat of the fruit did not obviously commend itself as "good," &c. Doubtless, if they had kept it, they would have found by experience —(1) That it was in itself "good" as the seal of God's covenant of life, and as the preparation for the unfolding of His higher providence. (2) Acceptable. Suited to their case and circumstances, deserving of their acceptance, sure to become more and more well-pleasing as they entered more and more into its spirit. (3) Perfect. That thus only could God's perfection be vindicated—the perfection of His sovereign right to rule; that thus only could the perfection of the creature be wrought out in an onward and upward path of loyalty and love. All this our first parents would have learned concerning the will of God, if only they had consented to prove it; but this they would not do; they passed judgment upon it unproved; they refused to give it a fair trial; they chose rather to make the opposite experiment, and they have left this experiment as their sad legacy to their descendants, so many of whom are now occupied in proving, trying, how they may be best conformed to the world so as to make the most of it; proving, in short, what is the will

of this world and this world's prince. 2. The probation of Christ proceeds upon the very same principle. He is tried as the first Adam was tried, and upon the same issue, namely, His willingness to prove the will of God; and in His case also the will of God may be so presented to His human soul as to appear neither reasonable nor desirable. In such a light, accordingly, Satan tries to put it before Him. The pain, shame, weariness, and blood awaiting Him, the tempter ingeniously contrasts with the shorter road to glory which he would have Him to take. The Second Adam will not, like the first, accept Satan's representation; He will prove it for Himself; and so He "learns obedience by the things which He suffers." But He proved it, and in the proving of it He found it to be "good and acceptable and perfect." He tasted the delight of obedience, as He learned it. 3. It is into this image of Jesus, thus "proving that will of God," that you are now to be "transformed," &c. You are to prove God's will—(1) In what must be the first act of your obedience—namely, your believing on Him whom He has sent. What this will of God is as an expression of His nature you cannot know until you prove it. You must "taste and see" how good the Lord is, &c. You would fain have all made quite clear to you before you surrender yourselves to the gospel call. Nay, you stand aloof, and start objections and difficulties. You do not see how this aspect of the gospel call can be incompatible with that. Nay, try this dipping in the Jordan. It may seem to you an unlikely mode of cure; but at any rate try it. In the embrace of Christ, not while you are standing out in the attitude of rebellion, all difficulties vanish. (2) Then ever after, following on the path of your new obedience, you are to be proving "what is that good," &c. At every step it will be a trial to you. It may be very hard sometimes to believe that the will of God concerning you is "good, and acceptable," &c. But give it a full and fair trial; and you will soon find that in the very "keeping of God's commandments there is great reward." Conclusion: Mark—1. How opposite are the two habits, namely, being "conformed to this world," and being "transformed," &c. There are here two types, of one or other of which you must take the fashion. To be conformed to the world is to take things as they are and make the best of them. The opposite habit is to try things as they should be. 2. How complete the transformation must be if, instead of being conformed to this world, you are to "prove," &c. You must make full proof of God's will. But that you cannot do if you yield a forced submission. A son yielding obedience to his father's will reluctantly, never can be acquainted with its true character and blessedness; but let him throw himself heart and soul into the doing of it, then will he prove it of what sort it is. To have the mind to do so implies a great change, a new creation, a new heart. 3. Now, so long as the fashion of this world lasts, so long as that second transformation which awaits you is postponed, this proving of the will of God must throughout be more or less an effort. But take courage, O child of God! "The fashion of this world passeth away." You "look for new heavens and a new earth." The fashion of that new world and the will of God will not be opposed to one another. The proving of the will of God, then, with your whole nature changed into the image of the heavenly, what a joyous exercise of liberty and love will it be! 4. In the meantime, a signal encouragement as motive. The more you prove the fashion of this world, the less you feel it to be "good," &c. It looks fair at the first, but who that has ever lived long but re-echoes the wise man's complaint—"All is vanity"? The will of God looks worse at the beginning; but on, on, child of God, and you will find a growing light, encouragement, and joy. "The path of the just is as the shining light, &c.; and in the trial of them you find that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *Transformation*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO BE TRANSFORMED? To be new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17). 1. In our judgment concerning—(1) God (Matt. xix. 17). (2) Christ (Phil. i. 21; iii. 8). (3) The world (Eccles. i. 1, 2). 2. Our thoughts (Psa. i. 2). 3. Consciences (Acts xxiv. 16). 4. Wills (Lam. iii. 24). 5. Affections (Col. iii. 2). (1) Love and hatred (Matt. xxii. 37). (2) Desire and abhorrence. (3) Joy and grief (Psa. xlii. 1, 2). (4) Hope and fear (Psa. xxvii. 1). (5) Anger and meekness (Matt. xi. 29). 6. Words (Matt. xii. 36). 7. Actions (1 Pet. i. 15, 16). Towards God and men (Acts xxiv. 16). II. WHY ARE WE TO BE TRANSFORMED. Till transformed—1. We are altogether sinful (Prov. xv. 8). 2. We can enjoy no happiness here nor be capable of happiness hereafter (Heb. xii. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 14). III. EXAMINE WHETHER YOU BE TRANSFORMED OR NO. Look to your heads (2 Cor. xiii. 5); your hearts (Prov. iv. 23); your lives (Matt. xii. 33). Note the reasons for this examination. 1. Many are mistaken about it, and think they are renewed, because turned—(1)

From one sin to another. (2) From one sect to another. (3) From debauchery to mere morality. 2. This is the most dangerous of all mistakes. 3. If you never examine yourselves, you have the more cause to fear your condition. IV. SIGNS OF OUR BEING TRANSFORMED. All our actions proceed—1. From new principles. (1) Obedience to God (1 Sam. xv. 22). (2) A desire to please Him (1 Thess. iv. 1; Heb. xi. 5). 2. After a new manner. (1) Not hypocritically but sincerely (2 Cor. i. 12). (2) Not proudly, but humbly (Luke xvii. 10). (3) Not interruptedly, but constantly (Luke i. 75). 3. To a new end (1 Cor. x. 31; Matt. v. 16). V. MEANS. 1. Read the word written (James i. 21). 2. Hear it preached. 3. Meditate upon it. 4. Pray (Psa. li. 10). 5. Receive the sacrament. Conclusion: 1. By renovation you become again as you were created (Gen. i. 26). 2. God Himself will change to you. (1) His anger to love (Isa. lxvi. 2). (2) All His actions to your good (chap. viii. 28). 3. If now transformed from the world to God, hereafter you shall be transformed from misery to happiness. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The Christian life a transfiguration*:—In the preceding verse the apostle gathers the whole sum of Christian duty into one word. And so in this. As all is to be sacrifice, so all is to be transformation. Mark:—I. WHERE PAUL BEGINS—WITH AN INWARD RENEWAL. 1. He goes deep down, because he had learned in His school who said: "Make the tree good and the fruit good." To tinker at the outside with a host of red-tape restrictions, and prescriptions, is all waste time and effort. You may wrap a man up in the swaddling bands of specific precepts until you can scarcely see him, and he cannot move, and you have not done a bit of good. The inner man must be dealt with first, and then the outward will come right in due time. Many of the plans for the social and moral renovation of the world are as superficial as a doctor's treatment would be, who would direct all his attention to curing pimples when the patient is dying of consumption. 2. There has to be a radical change in the middle. "Mind" seems to be equivalent to the thinking faculty, but, possibly, includes the whole inner man. The inner man has got a wrong twist somehow; it needs to be moulded over again. It is held in slavery to the material; it is a mass of affections fixed upon the transient; a predominant self-regard characterises it and its actions. 3. This new creation of the inner man is only possible as the result of the communication of a life from without; the life of Jesus, put into your heart, on condition of your opening the door of your heart by faith, and saying, "Come in, Thou blessed of the Lord." And He comes in, bearing in His hands a germ of life which will mould and shape our "mind" after His own blessed pattern. 4. That new life, when given, needs to be fostered and cherished. It is only a little spark that has to kindle a great heap of green wood, and to turn it into its own ruddy likeness. We have to keep our two hands round it, for fear it should be blown out by the rough gusts of passion and of circumstance. It is only a little seed that is sown in our hearts; we have to cherish and cultivate it, to water it by our prayers, and to watch over it, lest either the fowls of the air with light wings should carry it away, or the heavy wains of the world's business and pleasures should crush it to death, or the thorns of earthly desires should spring up and choke it. II. WHAT HE EXPECTS FROM THE INWARD CHANGE—a life "transfigured," the same word as is employed in the account of our Lord's transfiguration. In that event our Lord's indwelling divinity came up to the surface and became visible. 1. "A transfigured life" suggests—(1) That the inward life will shape the outward conduct and character. Just as truly as the physical life moulds the infant's limbs, and as every periwinkle shell on the beach is shaped into the convolutions that will fit the inhabitant, by the power of the life that lies within, so the renewed mind will make a fit dwelling for itself. Did you never see goodness making men and women beautiful? Have not there been other faces besides Moses' that shone as men came down from the Mount of Communion with God? Certain weeds that lie at the bottom of the sea, when their flowering time comes, elongate their stalks and reach the light and float upon the top, and then, when they have flowered, they sink again into the depths. Our Christian life should come up to the surface and open out its flowers there. Does your Christianity do that? It is no use talking about the inward change unless there is the outward transfiguration. (2) That the essential character of our transfiguration is the moulding of us into the likeness of Christ. Christ's life is in you if you are in Him. And just as every leaf that you take off some plants and stick into a flower-pot will in time become a little plant exactly like the parent from which it was taken, so the Christ-life that is in you will be growing into a copy of its source and origin. The least speck of musk, invisibly taken from a cake of it, and carried away ever so far, will diffuse the same fragrance

as the mass from which it came; and the little slice of Christ's life that is in you and me, will smell as sweet if not as strong as the great life from which it came. 2. But as with the inward renewal so with the outward transfiguration, the life within will not work up to the surface except upon condition of our own honest endeavour. The fact that God's Spirit is given to us is not a reason for our indolence, but for our work, because it gives us the power by which we can do the thing we desire. What would you think of a man that said, "It is the steam that drives the spindles, so I need not put the belting on"? III. THE ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCE WHICH THE APOSTLE REGARDS AS CERTAIN, FROM THIS INWARD CHANGE; unlikeness to the world around. "Be not conformed," &c. 1. The more we get like Jesus Christ, the more certainly we get unlike the world. For the two theories of life are clean contrary—the one is all limited by time, the other lays hold on the eternal. The one is all for self, the other is all for God. So that likeness and adherence to the one must needs be dead in the teeth of the other. 2. And that contrariety is as real to-day as ever it was. Paul's "world" was a grim, heathen, persecuting world; our "world" has got christened, and goes to church and chapel, like a respectable gentleman. But for all that it is the world still, and we have to shake our hands free of it. 3. How is the commandment to be obeyed? (1) Well, of course there are large tracts of life where the saint and the sinner have to do the same things, feel the same anxieties, weep the same tears, and smile the same smiles. And yet "there shall be two women grinding at a mill," the one shall be a Christian, the other not. They push the handle round, and the push that carries the handle round half the circumference of the millstone may be a bit of religious worship, and the push that carries it round the other half may be a bit of serving the world and the flesh and the devil. Two men shall be sitting at the same desk, two boys at the same bench at school, two servants in the same kitchen, and the one shall be serving God and glorifying His name, and the other shall be serving self and Satan. Not the things done, but the motive, makes the difference. (2) And there are a great many things in which not to be "conformed to the world" means to have nothing to do with certain acts and people. Have nothing to do with things which in themselves are unmistakably wrong; nor with things which have got evil inextricably mixed up with them, like the English stage; nor with things which, as experience shows you, are bad for you. This generation of the Church seems to be trying how near it can go to the world. It is a dangerous game, like children trying how far they can stretch out of the nursery window without tumbling into the street; you will go over some day when you miscalculate a little bit. (3) Rather "be ye transfigured," and then you will find that when the inner mind is changed, many of the things that attracted tempt no more, and many of the people that wanted to have you do not care to have you, for you are a wet blanket to their enjoyments. The great means of becoming unlike the world is becoming like Him, and the great means of becoming like Him is living near Him and drinking in His life and Spirit. 4. And then, "as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." But we must begin by opening our hearts to the leaven which shall work onward and outwards till it has changed all. The sun when it shines upon a mirror makes the mirror shine like a little sun. "We all with open face, reflecting as a mirror does the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Transfiguration:—One master word, for the whole Christian life is sacrifice, self-surrender, and that to God. Paul here brackets, with that great conception of the Christian life, another equally dominant and comprehensive. In one aspect, it is self-surrender; in another, it is growing transformation. The inner man, having been consecrated as a prince, by yielding of himself to God, is called upon to manifest inward consecration by outward sacrifice; an inward "renewing of the mind" is regarded as the necessary antecedent of transformation of outward life. I. Note, then, THAT THE FOUNDATION OF ALL TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTER AND CONDUCT IS LAID DEEP IN A RENEWED MIND. Now it is a matter of world-wide experience, verified by each of us in our own cases, if we have ever been honest in the attempt, that the power of self-improvement is limited by very narrow bounds. Any man that has ever tried to cure himself of the most trivial habit which he desires to get rid of, or to alter in the slightest degree the set of some strong taste or current of his being, knows how little he can do, even by the most determined toil. The problem that is set before a man when you tell him to effect self-improvement is something like that which confronted that poor paralytic lying in the porch at the pool: "If you can walk you will be able to get to the pool that

will make you able to walk. But you have got to be cured before you can do what you need to do in order to be cured." Only one Christ presents itself, not as a mere republication of morality, not as merely a new stimulus and motive to do what is right, but as an actual communication to men of a new power to work in them. It is a new gift of a life which will unfold itself after its own nature, as the bud into flower, and the flower into fruit; giving new desires, tastes, directions, and renewing the whole nature. And so, says Paul, the beginning of transformations of character is the renovation in the very centre of the being. Now, I suppose that in my text the word "mind" is not so much employed in the widest sense, including all the affections and will, and the other faculties of our nature, as in the narrower sense of the perceptive power, or that faculty in our nature by which we recognise, and make our own, certain truths. "The renewing of the mind," then, is only, in such an interpretation, a theological way of putting the simpler English thought, a change of estimates, a new set of views; or, if that word be too shallow, as indeed it is, a new set of convictions. It is profoundly true that "as a man thinketh, so is he." Our characters are largely made by our estimates of what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable. Why, we all know how often a whole life has been revolutionised by the sudden dawning or rising in its sky of some starry new truth, formerly hidden and undreamed of. If you want to change your characters—and God knows they all need it—change the deep convictions of your mind; and get hold, as living realities, of the great truths of Christ's gospel. If you and I really believed what we say we believe, that Jesus Christ has died for us, and lives for us, and is ready to pour out upon us the gift of His Divine Spirit, and wills that we should be like Him, and holds out to us the great and wonderful hopes and prospects of an absolutely eternal life of supreme and serene blessedness at His right hand should we be, could we be, the sort of people that most of us are? Truth professed has no transforming power; truth received and fed upon can revolutionise a man's whole character. Make of your every thought an action; link every action with a thought. Or, to put it more Christian-like, let there be nothing in your creed which is not in your commandments; and let nothing be in your life which is not moulded by these. The beginning of all transformation is the revolutionised conviction of a mind that has accepted the truths of the gospel. II. Well then, secondly, note THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE. The life is to be transfigured. Yet it remains the same, not only in the consciousness of personal identity, but in the main trend and drift of the character. There is nothing in the gospel of Jesus Christ which is meant to obliterate the lines of the strongly marked individuality which each of us receives by nature. Rather the gospel is meant to heighten and deepen these, and to make each man more intensely himself, more thoroughly individual, and unlike anybody else. But whilst the individuality remains, and ought to be heightened by Christian consecration, yet a change should pass over our lives, like the change that passes over the winter landscape when the summer sun draws out the green leaves from the hard black boughs, and flashes a fresh colour over all the brown pastures. Christ in us, if we are true to Him, will make us more ourselves, and yet new creatures in Christ Jesus. And the transformation is to be into His likeness who is the pattern of all perfection. We must be moulded after the same type. There are two types possible for us: this world; Jesus Christ. We have to make our choice. That transformation is no sudden thing, though the revolution which underlies it may be instantaneous. The working *out* of the new motives, the working *in* of the new power, is no mere work of a moment. It is a lifelong task till the lump be leavened. And remember, this transformation is no magic change effected whilst men sleep. It is a commandment which we have to brace ourselves to perform. But this positive commandment is only one side of the transfiguration that is to be effected. It is clear enough that if a new likeness is being stamped upon a man, the process may be looked at from the other side; and that in proportion as we become liker Jesus Christ, we shall become more unlike the old type to which we were previously conformed. "This world" here, in my text, is more properly "this age," which means substantially the same thing as John's favourite word "world," viz., the sum total of godless men, and things conceived of as separated from God. Only by this expression the essentially fleeting nature of that type is more distinctly set forth. And although it can only be a word, I want to put in here a very earnest word which the tendencies of this generation do very specially require. It seems to be thought, by a great many people, who call themselves Christians nowadays, that the nearer they can come in life, in ways of looking at

things, in estimates of literature, for instance, in customs of society, in politics, in trade, and especially in amusements—the nearer they can come to the unchristian world, the more "broad" and "superior to prejudice" they are. And it seems to be by a great many professing Christians thought to be a great feat to walk as the mules on the Alps do, with one foot over the path and the precipice down below. Keep away from the edge. You are safer there. There is a broad gulf between the man who believes in Jesus Christ and His gospel and the man who does not. And the resulting conducts cannot be the same unless the Christian man is insincere. III. And now, lastly, note THE GREAT REWARD AND CROWN OF THIS TRANSFIGURED LIFE. The issue of such a life is, to put it into plain English, an increased power of perceiving, instinctively and surely, what it is God's will that we should do. To know beyond doubt what I ought to do, and knowing, to have no hesitation or reluctance in doing it, seems to me to be heaven upon earth. And the man that has it needs but little more. This, then, is the reward. Each peak we climb opens wider and clearer prospects into the untravelled land before us. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 3. **For I say . . . to every man . . . not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.**—*Needful counsel*:—I. WE MUST NOT THINK TOO HIGHLY OF OURSELVES, especially of—1. Our knowledge (Jer ix. 23; 1 Cor. viii. 1). We know little either in—(1) Naturals, of which we know but few, and then largely by conjectures. (2) Spirituals. We know but little of God (Hos. iv. 1; Jer. ix. 3); of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 2); of our souls; of our estate as to God (2 Cor. xiii. 5); as to the world to come, and all knowledge we owe to God (Matt. xi. 25). 2. Our gifts. (1) None can perform their duty aright (Eccles. vii. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 5). (2) What gifts we have we are bound to God for (1 Cor. iv. 7). (3) We can do no good with it without God (John xv. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 6). 3. Our graces. (1) Few have all. (2) Those we have are imperfect (Phil. iii. 11-13). (*a*) Love to God (Matt. xxii. 37). (*b*) Faith in Christ (Luke xvii. 5). (*c*) Repentance of sin (2 Cor. vii. 10). (*d*) Justice to our neighbour (Matt. vii. 12). (*e*) Charity to the poor (1 Cor. xvi. 2; 2 Cor. ix. 6). (3) If we think too highly of them, they are no true graces (Matt. xi. 29; 1 Tim. i. 15; Eph. iii. 8). II. WHAT CAUSE, THEN, IS THERE NOT TO BE PROUD—1. Of strength (Jer. ix. 23). (1) Wherein the beasts excel us. (2) Whereof we may any moment be deprived (Isa. ii. 22). 2. Of riches. (1) Which cannot make us happy. (2) But keep us from happiness (Matt. xix. 23, 26). (3) Which we must part with before we can be eternally happy. 3. Honours. (1) Which depend on the thoughts of others. (2) May deprive us of true honours (John xii. 43). III. STUDY HUMILITY. 1. Towards God (Micah vi. 8; Isa. lvii. 17; lxvi. 2). Considering—(1) How many sins you are guilty of (Psa. xix. 12). (2) How many you are defiled with (Isa. i. 5, 6). 2. Towards men. Consider—(1) You know not but they are better and more dear to God than yourselves (chap. xiv. 3, 4; Phil. ii. 3). (2) If you excel them in some things, they may excel you in others (ver. 4). (3) The more proud you are, the less cause have you to be proud; pride causing—(*a*) Division among men (Prov. xiii. 10). (*b*) Separation from God (1 Pet. v. 5). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Church membership and ministry*:—I. IN THE WORK OF MUTUAL MINISTRY WITHIN THE CHURCH THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERY MEMBER TO PERFORM. The appeal is "to every man that is among you." The Church is "one body in Christ," "every one" being a "member" of some kind, and having his proper office. Every member, organ, nerve, vein, bone, ligament has its proper function in the natural body; and as soon as any one fails, there ensues that disturbance of the harmonic activity which we call disease. In the Church, Christ is the Head, the Centre of life, intelligence, and authority, and His Holy Spirit the organic principle. But every individual believer has his own proper sphere of influence and activity for the general good (Eph. iv. 15, 16). If he neglects that ministry, not only will he himself suffer damage or excision, but the body also will suffer loss thereby. II. IN ORDER THAT EVERY MAN MAY DO HIS OWN PROPER WORK, HE MUST FORM A SOBER, PRACTICAL ESTIMATE OF HIS OWN ABILITY. The work must be thoughtfully done. But the thought, to be productive, must be sober. The worker is admonished "not to be high-minded above that which he ought to be minded, but to be so minded as to be sober-minded." For—1. If a man thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, he will probably despise the service to which the Master has called him, and seek to undertake work for which he has not the adequate powers. This will, in all likelihood, be marred, and himself humiliated, while that will fall to more worthy hands. All such aspiring persons would do well to ponder the warning words (Mark x. 43-45). In Christ's Church the surest way towards

honourable promotion is that of prompt, earnest, humble service in that which is close at hand. 2. If a man under-estimates his ability, and thinks that he can do nothing, or nothing of profit to the Master, then he will do nothing, and the Church will lose his service and he will lose his reward (Matt. xxv. 14–30; Luke xix. 12–27). Therefore—3. The apostle supplies a standard for the measurement of thought in the work of self-estimation. Let every man "think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith"—*i.e.*, the confidence which a man has in Christ, and in himself by the grace of Christ, that he has competent ability for service. The man who has faith in himself generally succeeds; while a better man, if full of doubt and hesitation, fails. I must not so under-estimate my gifts as to decline any service; for some power has most certainly been imparted. But I must not attempt service for which I am unfit in the fanatical confidence that I shall obtain supernatural aid. Nor need I stand in doubt as to whether or not I have a Divine call to the work; the ability and opportunity ought to be sufficient. III. THE SERVICE, AND THE SPIRIT AND MANNER IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE DISCHARGED (vers. 6–8). 1. The ministry of the Word: he that "prophesieth," "teacheth," "exhorteth." The New Testament prophet was pre-eminently the preacher: and he must preach or prophesy according to the proportion of faith. But there are those who are not called to this ministry, who can nevertheless speak words of warning, exhortation, or comfort, either in the intercourse of daily life, the prayer-meeting, or the village sanctuary; and any Church which does not encourage these gifted ones is sadly defective. There are others again who, though neither apt to exhort, nor able to preach, have, notwithstanding, the gift of teaching. They can instruct in the Sabbath school. Let none of these neglect the gift that is in him. Let none ambitiously aspire to an office for which he is not equal; and, on the other hand, let none refuse to employ his one talent because he has not more and higher gifts. 2. There is also the ministry of finance and benevolence. That the apostle here speaks of the official diaconate is morally certain, because that it is mentioned in the midst of other offices which are expressly specified as such (1 Cor. xii. 28–30). To them, therefore, would fall the work of superintending and directing the active charities of the Church. He who gave would be, not the disburser of, but the contributor to, the relief fund; and he who showed mercy might be either a person appointed to the special work of relieving the sick and poor, or one who engaged in the good work out of his own impulse. These ministries, though not confined to official persons, were sanctioned by the properly appointed officers. Conclusion: Warning may be here given against two evils. 1. That of those who render very small, if any, service to the cause of Christ, but who criticise those who do. This is a crying evil, and a Christian ought to be ashamed of it. 2. That of over-estimating some particular department of service. (*W. Tyson.*) *Measurements of manhood:*—When persons are under the influence of wine, they often entertain the most extravagant notions of themselves, of which they are heartily ashamed when they come to their sober reason. And it is this figure latent that the apostle employs. Think not extravagantly well of yourselves. Form an estimate that is reasonable and in accordance with fact. I. These words assume THAT MEN SHOULD HAVE SOME OPINION OF THEIR OWN CHARACTER AND WORTH, BUT THAT THEY ARE LIABLE TO FAULTY ESTIMATES. It is impossible not to have some opinion of one's self. And the only question is, whether it shall be an idea shaped according to good rules and through right influences, or whether it shall be casually left to chance feeling. 1. There be those who say that the best way to think of yourself is not to think at all; and there is a sense in which this is true. Men may think too much of themselves, on the one hand, and too little on the other. But these dangers do not take away the wisdom of attempting a correct judgment of ourselves. There is a duty of self-knowledge, for otherwise how shall one know whether he be following the commands of his Master, or simply the impulses of his own selfish nature? How shall there be aspiration? Is it needful for the husbandman to know the extent of his territory, and which part is rich and which part is poor, and is spiritual husbandry to be founded in pretentious ignorance? You are commanded to think in conformity with facts and things as they exist. Not that we should carry self-consciousness with us every hour, and attempt to keep our hand upon the pulse of the heart or of the life. Yet one may come to a general estimate that shall be the foundation of all the processes of moral culture which he is to follow out. 2. The measurements of feeling are to be avoided; and yet those are, in many instances, the only estimates which men make. If one be constitutionally proud, he thinks a hundred times better of himself than anybody else thinks of him. It

is said that greatness of mind is inconsistent with vanity; but many men of eminent genius have been men of pre-eminent vanity. 3. The estimate of those qualities which suit our circle, and which reflect from it upon ourselves, is a false way of measuring. This is not having any knowledge of yourselves, but is simply knowing when you are pleased, without any regard to moral condition. 4. The measurement of ourselves simply in executive functions furnishes a very imperfect knowledge of what we really are. Men may have the most exaggerated ideas of their excellence or weakness who simply think of themselves as factors in society, as business men, &c. Skill is certainly a matter which a man ought not to be ashamed of, and which a man may sometimes well be proud of; but judging simply from this view is not enough. It is not wrong for a man to know whether he is a good lawyer or not. It is not necessary to humility that a man who stands second to none at the bar should say of himself, "I always feel myself to be a very poor lawyer!" A man has a right, and it is his duty, to think of himself as he is. This estimate is not incompatible with true humility. Indeed, it is indispensable to true humility. If God has given a man great power, must he make believe that he does not carry power? Must Milton, in order to be modest, believe that he did not speak in immortal numbers? 5. Men make a false estimate in judging of themselves also by selecting the best things in the best moods, and slurring over the rest. We select those excellencies which are apparent, and we usually exaggerate them. And we are inclined to omit co-ordinate qualities. If a man be strong, there are a thousand inflections of feeling which are not taken account of. He may be strong, but not gentle. A man has a blunt lip, and calls it honesty, fidelity to the truth. But where are the co-ordinate qualities of meekness, gentleness and love? The virtues which we have not we do not usually require of ourselves. We leave out of view, too, the great evil tendencies which exist in us. Our characters are dressed for inspection, as apples are when they are sent to market. There are all sorts in the middle of the barrel, and the best ones are put on the top to face off with. We deceive ourselves, not only by arranging our good qualities in the most favourable manner, but by heightening their colour a little. You have seen apple-women take a cloth and rub their apples until every one of them shines, and put them in the most tempting aspects. And do not men do the same thing with their good qualities? If there is a speck, that is turned round inside; but you will find it out after you have bought the apple and cut it. I do not say that a man should make everything put on its worst face. I say simply this: Let every man think of himself as he ought to think. A man may think himself to be far better than he is by judicious selection. I have seen my garden when the season was empty of flowers, and yet, by a skilful garnering from this nook and that, I could gather a handful of flowers that would lead to the supposition that the garden was in its summer glory. A man may select good qualities in himself and make up a bouquet of his fancy, which shall make it seem as though it were a paradise there, by a judicious picking and arranging. But the great mistake which men make is that of selecting only the secondary elements of their character, and leaving out the primary ones. A symmetrical whole is very seldom thought of in self-estimation. II. NO MAN KNOWS HOW TO MEASURE HIMSELF WHO HAS FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHERE TRUE MANHOOD IS—where the diameter is—where the equator is. And this is what the apostle gives us: "I say to every man . . . to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." 1. It is where the spiritual elements dwell in man, at that point where he understands and touches the divine, that you must measure him. You must measure, not your animal-hood, but your manhood. Now, if we over-reach our fellow-men, if we use them for our own purposes, we think ourselves strong and great men. But the feeling is malign and satanic. That only is Divine which seeks others' happiness, if need be at one's own expense. He who knows what conscience, faith, love, patience, and gentleness are, knows something about himself. And everybody is ignorant of himself who has not an estimate which is founded upon the gauge of these qualities. 2. Nor should we leave out the relation of man to the world to come. For a man may be very strong as regards this life, and very weak as regards the other life. And as we are here to prepare for the life to come, he misses his manhood and the significance of it who only lives for a time and is unfit to live for the spiritual and eternal. It is painful to think how much the grave strains out of that which men do and earn in this life. It is the work of men's hands that they are proud of mostly. But you shall take through the shadowy door nothing but what is spiritual; and how much of that have you to take through? If you were to efface from many men that which makes

them great in influence in the day in which they live, then millionaires might come out paupers. And only he can measure himself aright who knows how much of himself he can carry through and beyond. "The last shall be first, and the first last." 3. Let every man, then, measure himself, not according to his vanity, but as under the eye of God. Let one think of himself as an heir of immortality; let him believe himself to be a son of God; and then let him apply to himself the measures which belong to this transcendent conception of life and of character. Measuring yourselves thus, you will not think of yourselves more highly than you ought to. This is true humility. It is humility to think, not that you are less than somebody else, but that you are less than you ought to be. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The notion of pride stated, and the pretensions to it examined*:—1. It is a common observation that however forward men may be to repine at the unequal portion which God has allotted them of worldly blessings, yet they are generally well satisfied with their share of inward endowments: it being as hard to meet with a person who humbly thinks he has too little sense and merit, as it is to find one who fancies he has too great riches and honours. What makes men uneasy in their circumstances is that they are continually setting to view the bright side of themselves and the dark side of their condition in life; the first to find out their own grievances, and the last to discern their own faults and follies. Whereas if they took a contrary method they would perceive that God had been kinder to the worst of men than the very best of men could deserve. 2. Among the many imputations which we are willing to fasten upon those whom we have an aversion to, that of pride is, I think, one of the most common. Now, if we would examine the innermost recesses of the mind, I doubt we should often find that our own pride is the cause why we tax others with it. Men elate with the thoughts of their own sufficiency are ever imagining that others are wanting in their regard to them, and therefore very apt to conclude that pride must be the cause why they withhold from them that respect which they have an unquestioned right to in their own opinion. I. THE NOTION OF PRIDE. Our happiness, as well as knowledge, arises from sensation and reflection, and may be reduced to these two articles, viz., that of pleasing sensations, and that of agreeable thoughts. Now as to a desire of indulging the former without check or control, are owing lust, drunkenness, and intemperance; so from a desire of indulging the latter beyond measure, pride takes its original. It does not consist in the bare consciousness that we have some accomplishments, as, for instance, good sense, beauty, great abilities; but in that exultation of mind which is frequent upon that consciousness, unallayed by self-dissatisfaction arising from a survey of our sins and frailties. The difference between humility and pride consists in this, that the humble man, whatever talents he is possessed of, considers them as so many trusts reposed in him by God, which are so far from raising his pride that they excite his caution; as knowing that to "whom much is given, of him much will be required"; whereas the proud values himself as if he were not only the subject but the author of the good qualities, and so makes an idol of himself, instead of adoring and thanking God for them. Pride, then, is the thinking too highly of ourselves. To obviate mistakes it will be necessary to observe that pride is not merely to think favourably of ourselves; for then indeed pride, as some late authors have maintained, would be an universal vice, everybody being more or less biassed in his own favour. But pride is to think so favourably of ourselves as to exclude a modest diffidence of ourselves, and a salutary sense of the number of human frailties, the imperfection of our virtues, the malignity of our crimes, and our dependence on God for everything good in us and for us. II. THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THIS VICE. Are we proud of riches? Riches cannot alter the nature of things, they cannot make a man worthy that is worthless in himself; they may command an insipid complaisance, a formal homage, and ceremonious professions of respect, and teach a servile world to speak a language foreign to their hearts; but where a largeness of soul is wanting they can never procure grateful sentiments and an undissembled love, the willing tribute of a generous heart to merit only. Do we value ourselves upon our power? No; what is remarked by somebody or other is a great truth, viz., that there is no good in power, but merely the power of doing good. Upon our worldly prudence? Those who are acquainted with history know how often the best-laid designs have proved abortive. Are you proud of your distinguished virtue? He who is proud of distinguished abilities, learning, and wealth, is not the less able, learned, and wealthy, because he is proud of them. But he who is proud of distinguished virtue ceaseth to be virtuous by his being so. For the man that is pleased with

any degree of virtue, merely because it is uncommon, would be sorry if what he values himself upon as a singular mark of distinction should become common, and all mankind should rise to the same eminence as himself in morality. Now this temper argues a want of benevolence, and consequently of virtue. But if human virtue affords no just grounds for pride, much less does human knowledge, which bears no proportion to our ignorance. The greatest and the least objects equally baffle our inquiries. True knowledge is one of the strongest fences against pride. When good sense and reason speak, they come like their great Author, God, in "the still small voice," without any empty voice or loquacity, or overbearing pretensions. And those who keep the best sense within seldom hang out the sign of knowledge. Men of this stamp will own their entire ignorance in many things and their imperfect knowledge in all the rest. Whereas the ignorant are sometimes positive in matters quite above their sphere, and, like some creatures, are the bolder for being blind. In a word, the ingenuous will confess the weakness of their reason, and the presumptuous betray it by their being so. After all, what signifies all the learning in the world without a just discernment and penetration? And what is the result of our penetration but that we see through the littleness of almost everything, and our own especially? That we discern, and are disgusted with, several follies and absurdities which are hid from persons of a slower apprehension? So that our superior sagacity resembles the pretended second-sightedness of some people, by which they are said to see several uncomfortable and dismal objects which escape the rest of the world. Some may perhaps value themselves upon the strength of their genius, the largeness of their heart, even as the sand upon the seashore, and the brightness of their parts. Alas! the strength of the passions, and the quickness of the appetites, generally keep pace with the brightness of the imagination. And hence it comes to pass that those who have, with an uncommon compass of thought, inculcated excellent rules of morality in their writings have sometimes broke through them all in their practice: the brightness of their parts enabling them to lay down fine precepts, and the strength of their passions tempting them to transgress them. To a man of strong sensations every delight that is gentle seems dull, and everything but what is high seasoned flat and tasteless. The consequence of which is, that, disdaining common blessings, and not able to enjoy himself without something out of the usual road, he overleaps these bounds which confine meaner mortals, and precipitates himself into an endless train of inconveniences. But let us suppose, what is not a very common case, that a brightness of imagination and a well-poised judgment are happily united in the same person; yet the brightest genius, the greatest man that ever lived may say, "O my God! that I live, and that I please, if ever I please, is owing to Thee. May it be, then, my uppermost view to do Thy pleasure, from whom I have the ability to please." Dost thou value thyself upon popular applause and a great name? Think how many that have made a distinguished figure in the world are dead and unregarded as if they never had been, their deaths unlamented, their vacancy filled up, their persons missed no more than a drop of water when taken from the whole ocean. And is it worth our while to strive to please a vain fantastic world which will soon disregard us and think itself full as well without us, instead of laying out our endeavours to please that Almighty Being whose inexhaustible power and goodness will make His servants happy to all eternity? (*J. Seed, M.A.*) *Self-appreciation*:—1. Whatever is important is difficult. And it is exceedingly important and difficult to every man to take a right estimate of himself. 2. The cause of this difficulty is—(1) That a man's mind is too near a man's mind for a man's mind to see it clearly. (2) That in this court the judge, the witness, and the person examined are all one and the same. Note—I. TWO GREAT DANGERS. 1. Of over-estimating ourselves. (1) A man lives so much with himself and in himself. (2) Or is so fond of comparing himself with certain persons whom he likes to select for that purpose. (3) Or is so apt to compare himself with what he used to be. (4) Or is always seeing himself so entirely as a certain little loving circle sees him. (5) Or takes himself at the measure of what he is always hoping and intending to be. (6) Or has unworthy standards of what a man ought to be. (7) Or is always so fixing his eyes on his good parts, and intentionally turning away from his bad ones. 2. Of depreciating ourselves. Many, no doubt, do this simply in affectation. They "think" proudly, while they speak humbly. But besides these, there are others who "think of themselves" in a way that—(1) Is not true. (2) Brings with it much depression and distress. (3) Often incapacitates them for the very work

which God sets them to do. (4) This darkens the grace of God in them, and His purposes are frustrated. II. THE TEXT STEERS US BETWEEN THESE TWO ROCKS. 1. Before God we are, all of us, utterly bad. There is nothing in us that comes up to His standard. The memory of the past is one great humiliation; the sense of the present is all conscious weakness; the anticipation of the future is overwhelming every man who sees only himself. 2. But we should come to a false conclusion if we rested here. In every one who is born of God there are now two natures. The old one is there to abase and confound all, to drive all to Jesus Christ. In this new nature there are numberless degrees. Either God has been pleased by His sovereignty to give to one man more than He has seen fit to give to another; or some have cultivated them more than others have; and so it comes to pass that there are real distinctions between man and man. (1) Now, with these distinctions God tells us that it is so far from being a proud or wrong thing that one man should be conscious that he has more than another, that no man can take a true view of himself, or be prepared for his duties in life, unless he takes it; because every man is to "think soberly"—*i.e.*, accurately—of himself, "according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." We have all different degrees of everything in life. We have different degrees of stature, beauty, wealth, and intellectual gifts; and it would be utterly silly if a clever or rich man pretended to be ignorant of his superiority in these respects. Why then should it be less so with a man's spiritual possessions? Is not one man greater in his spiritual possessions than another? And are they not all equally the gifts of God? (2) And here I must put in a caution. We are never told to gauge other men's states, or to gauge ourselves in comparison to other men's states; but to gauge ourselves. Of course, it is impossible to do this altogether without reference to our fellow-creatures, for every man in this world is what he is comparatively to another; but we must not do it for the sake of comparison with a fellow-creature. (3) Every man's view of himself, then, is to be according to the facts of the case, neither degrading himself too low nor vaunting himself too high; but "thinking of himself" what he really is, and just as God has been pleased to make him. *E.g.*—(1) Your mind, perhaps, has been raising the question whether you are a child of God. Now you must not think there is any virtue in saying, "Oh! I am so bad! I cannot be a child of God!" You should examine the matter with a calm judgment. When you find some proofs in favour of one view, and some in favour of the other, then prayerfully, and with the Bible in your hand, set the one over against the other, and make your decision just as you would deal with any matter of business. (2) Or you want to know whether you are entitled to a particular promise, as, *e.g.*, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Does that mean a person absolutely without any evil thoughts or passions? Or does it mean one who is under the purifying influence of grace, who strives after purity, who is pure in Christ. Then how is it with me in this? Can I appropriate it? (3) Or supposing you have a distinct opportunity now opening to you. You must not at once put it away and say, "Oh, no! I am not called to that work." You must consider with yourself, "Is this a providential opening? What degree of knowledge and what degree of spiritual strength will it take? Have I so much? If not, can I obtain it? Has God been preparing me for this work, and this work for me?" (4) To guide you in such-like investigations, the apostle gives one rule—"to think according to the measure of faith." It is not, "Judge of yourselves according to your attainments," but "the measure of faith"; because everything that is good in a man's heart is "faith," and every other good thing, being proportioned to the "faith" we have, is the measure of everything that a man has or can attain, and so becomes the measure of the man—*i.e.*, is the man. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Presumption and ambition*:—I. THE SPIRIT OF PRESUMPTION CONSISTS in thinking ourselves adorned with accomplishments which we have not, in magnifying those which we have, and in preferring ourselves to others on account of these qualities, real or imaginary. 1. The first character of presumption is to imagine ourselves endued with virtues and good qualities, of which we have not the substance, but only the shadow and the false appearance. Of all the blessings which are bestowed upon the good, there is none perhaps more expedient, or more to be requested of God, than a spirit of impartiality with respect to ourselves, together with that accurate discernment, that care to distinguish between real probity and the false appearance of it, and that caution not to be imposed upon by hypocrisy and dissimulation, which we usually exert when we scan the actions and the pretensions of other people. 2. The second character of presumption is the magnifying those

good qualities which we have. And here presumption is the more dangerous, because it is not the mere effect of extravagant fancy, but hath some foundation, something real, to trust to and to build upon. It is a common observation in the learned world, that a man's genius and skill can only be estimated when his thoughts and his inventions are laid before the public; and that many a person who hath been cried up beyond measure by his friends and dependents, or by party zeal, hath fallen short of expectation. The same remark holds true in the moral qualities of the heart and mind. Hath a man resolutely exposed himself to dangers in a just cause? He is, then, a man of courage. Hath he rejected the tempting opportunities of growing great and rich by dishonest methods? He is a man of integrity. Is he uniformly just, equitable, charitable, modest, and temperate? and doth he behave himself to others as his relation to them, his station and situation require? Then may it be truly said that his virtues are real. 3. A third character of presumption is to ascribe to the qualities which we possess an eminence and an excellence that belong not to them. In general, all the qualities of mind and body, and all the external advantages which are commonly called gifts of fortune, all these are so far valuable as they are useful to ourselves and others, and no farther; so that, by being misapplied, they become pernicious. II. AMBITION is the natural effect of presumption, and may be called "a desire to obtain the rewards, which we think to be due to us." 1. The first object of ambition is glory, esteem, reputation; and, in the desire of these things, there seems to be nothing irregular and vicious. To despise them may be a kind of stupid brutality. But there are excellent rules to be observed on this occasion. (1) We must never prefer the esteem of men to the approbation of God. (2) Nothing is truly glorious unless it be truly good and conformable to the will of God. Then, though men condemn us, our conscience supports us. But if God condemns us, human applause can make us no amends. (3) When virtue is attended with disgrace, we must despise such contempt, and not be deterred by it from our duty. (4) We must not love virtue for the bare sake of reputation and human esteem: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." 2. The second object of ambition is an honourable rank and station, and places of power, trust, and profit. (1) No man should set his heart overmuch upon rising and bettering his condition, because it is ten times more probable that he shall be disappointed than that he shall succeed. (2) No man should highly value any temporal advantages, because they are temporal, and because there are higher objects which demand our more serious attention. (3) No man should desire eminent stations without comparing his strength with the burden, and having reason to hope that he shall be able to acquit himself as the laws of God and man require. (4) No man should be puffed up with power and prosperity, because it is a dangerous state and an envied state. (*J. Jortin, D.D.*) *A true ideal:*—A man who looks up all the time is never a great man to himself. Are you a poet? Then do not get poetasters to read and say, "I write better poems than they do, and therefore I am a better poet." Read Milton, read Shakespeare, read Homer. Go to the old Englishmen of immortal thought, whose drums and trumpets have sounded clear down through the ages to this day. Go to the grandest and noblest of our thinkers and writers, sit in council with them, and then see if you are not a dwarf, a pigmy. It will make you humble to have high ideals. But a man who for ever measures himself by pigmies and dwarfs, and thinks he is better than they—what is he but a mountebank among pigmies and dwarfs? A true ideal tends to cure the conceit of men, and to rank them. Says the apostle, "Let every man think of himself as he ought to think, soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." The measure of faith? What is faith? It is the sight of invisible excellence. It is the sight of noble qualities unseen. It is the sight of ideal grandeur. Let every man measure himself by that conception, and then think of himself as he ought to think; let him think of himself as lowly, and poor, and needy; and he may well call out for help and for grace. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Odiousness of conceit:*—Conceit is a very odious quality. It loses a man more friends and gains him more enemies than any other foible, perhaps vice, in the world. It makes him harsh to his inferiors and disrespectful to his betters. It causes him to live at right angles with the world. It makes him believe that he alone is in the right; it warps his opinions in all things, makes him viciously sceptical, and robs him of the most glorious inheritance of faith, while it distorts his hope and totally destroys his charity. (*Gentle Life.*)

Conceit, ignorance of:—A certain worthy of our acquaintance, being out of a situation, made application to a friend to recommend him to a place, and remarked that he would prefer a somewhat superior position, "for you know, Tomkins," said he, "I am not a fool, and I ain't ignorant." We would not insinuate that the brother was mistaken in his own estimate, but the remark might possibly excite suspicion, for the case is similar to that of a timid pedestrian at night alone, hurrying along a lonesome lane, when a gentleman comes out of the hedge just at the turning by Deadman's Corner, and accosts him in the following reassuring language, "I ain't a garrotter, and I never crack a fellow's head with this here life-preserver." The outspoken self-assertion of the brother quoted above is but the expression of the thought of the most, if not all of us. "I am not a fool, and I ain't ignorant," is the almost universal self-compliment, which is never out of season; and this is the great barrier to our benefiting by good advice, which we suppose to be directed to the foolish and ignorant world in general, but not to our elevated selves. The poet did not say, but we will say it for him, "All men think all men faulty but themselves." It would be a great gain to us all if we had those elegant quizzing glasses of ours silvered at the back so that the next time we stick them in our eyes, in all the foppery of our conceit, we may be edified and, let us hope, humbled, by seeing ourselves. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Self-knowledge:*—1. Destroys pride. 2. Encourages humility. 3. Promotes the glory of God. 4. Is only acquired through grace. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Self-knowledge, importance of:*—He (Socrates) did occupy himself with physics early in his career. In after life he regarded such speculations as trivial. "I have not leisure for such things," he is made to say by Plato; "and I will tell you the reason: I am not yet able, according to the Delphic inscription, to know myself, and it appears to me very ridiculous, while ignorant of myself, to inquire into what I am not concerned in." *Self-knowledge, value of:*—To know one's self to be foolish is to stand upon the doorstep of the temple of wisdom: to understand the wrongness of any position is half-way towards amending it; to be quite sure that our self-confidence is a heinous sin and folly, and an offence against God, and to have that thought burned into us by God's Holy Spirit, is going a great length towards the absolute casting our self-confidence away, and the bringing of our souls in practice, as well as in theory, to rely wholly upon the power of God's Holy Spirit. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Pride, the result of ignorance:*—The prouder a man is, the more he thinks he deserves; and the more he thinks he deserves, the less he really does deserve. A proud man—the whole world is not big enough to serve him. The little he gets he looks upon with contempt because it is little. The much that he does not get he regards as evidence of the marvellous inequality of things in human life. He walks a perpetual self-adulator, expecting until experience has taught him not to expect, and then he goes for ever murmuring at what he looks upon as partiality in God's dealings with men. Such men are like old hulks that make no voyages, and leak at every seam. They are diseased with pride. They have the craving appetite of dyspepsia in their disposition. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **But to think soberly.**—*Humility, Christian:*—I. ITS NATURE includes—1. A just estimate of ourselves. 2. A due esteem for others. 3. A constant recognition of Divine grace. II. ITS SOURCE. Consciousness—1. Of dependence upon others. 2. That our gifts are but a small part of the fulness of the body of Christ. III. ITS EVIDENCE. In the—1. Ready. 2. Patient. 3. Faithful consecration of our ability to the service of the Church. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Humility and knowledge:*—I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power or hesitation of speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them, only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Dürer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done"; Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellow-men, therefore, to fall down and worship them. They have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them; and they see something Divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful. (*J. Ruskin.*) **According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**—*The measure of*

faith:—The water we draw from a well depends upon the size of the bucket; God provides us with the bucket as well as the water in the well of salvation. Or, again, gifts may be compared to the air we breathe, and faith to the lungs, by which we inhale and exhale; then the strength of the lungs would be represented by the measure of faith. (*C. Neil, M.A.*)

Vers. 4, 5. **For as we have many members in one body.**—*St. Paul's view of life*:—How comprehensively he surveys the whole range of human action and conduct! He starts from the consideration of men as constituting "many members in one body," and he proceeds to direct them in their various offices. He passes in review the private and public duties to which they might be called—ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and obeying; he depicts the spirit of the Christian in business and in rest, in joy and in sorrow, in hope and in tribulation, towards friends and towards enemies, in peace and in wrath; and he lays down the Christian principles of civil government and obedience. It is a picture of life in its length and breadth, and even in all its lights and shadows, transfigured as the landscape by the sun, under the renovating influence of those spiritual rays of love which illuminated and warmed the apostle's soul. (*H. Wace, D.D.*) *Many members: one body*:—1. The early Church, like the latter, seems to have been deformed by many dissensions. Those who had the least conspicuous endowments envied those who had the more, in place of using such gifts as they had. In order to show the unreasonableness and the evil of this state of things, St. Paul often drew his illustrations from the human body, the parts of which had different offices; but no part of which could be dispensed with without injury to all the rest. So the Church was composed of many members, some of which were, comparatively, without honour, but none were without use; each had functions essential to the general well-being. 2. Observe what close links there are between the several classes in the community, and how the breaking of any one would dislocate the whole social system. "The king himself is served by the field." The throne is connected with the soil; and the proud occupant of the one is dependent on the tiller of the other. When you look on a community like our own, with its nobles, merchants, teachers, men of science, artificers, you may perhaps think little of the peasantry. But were the peasantry to cease from their labours, there would be an immediate arrest on the pursuits of the community, and, from the throne downward, society would be panic-stricken. There, can, therefore, be no more pitiable spectacle than that of a haughty individual, who looks superciliously on those who occupy stations inferior to his own. And it would be a just method of rebuking his arrogance to require him to trace the production and progress of all that wealth or rank which ministers to his pride, till he finds it originate in the bone and muscle of these objects of his scorn. 3. "That the poor shall never cease out of the land," is one of those wise and benevolent arrangements of Providence which so eminently distinguish the moral government of this world. One of the most fatal and common tendencies of our nature is to selfishness—the forgetting others, and the caring only for ourselves. And who can fail to see that the having amongst us objects which continually appeal to our compassion is wonderfully adapted for counteracting that tendency. It may be perfectly true that the indigent cannot do without the benevolent; but it is equally true that the benevolent cannot do without the indigent; and whenever you give ear to a tale of distress, and you contribute according to your ability to the relief of the suppliant, you are receiving as well as conferring a benefit. The afflicted being whom you succour, keeps, by his appeal, the charities of your nature from growing stagnant, and thus may be said to requite the obligation. 4. Observe how applicable is the principle of our text to the several classes of society. Of what avail would be the skill and courage of the general who had no troops to obey his command? what the ingenuity of the mechanic if there were no labourers to make use of his invention? what the wisdom of the legislator if there were no functionaries to carry his measures into force? In these and a thousand instances, the hand and the foot would be but of little use unless they were directed by the eye and the head; and the eye and the head would themselves be of little use if they were not connected with the hand and the foot. So true is it that we are "every one members, one of another." 5. Turn to the Church, a community knit together by spiritual ties. And here the interests of the various classes are so interwoven that it can only be through wilful ignorance that any suppose themselves independent of the others. It may be true that ministers may be likened, in the importance of their office, to the more important parts of

body, to the eye or the head; but in prosecuting their honourable and difficult employment, they are dependent on the very lowest of their people. Recur to what we said about the humanising power of the appointed admixture of the poor with the rich. If the actual presence of suffering be the great antagonist to selfishness, then the poor of his flock must be the clergyman's best auxiliaries, seeing that they help to keep the rest from that moral hardness which would make them impervious to his most earnest remonstrances. You are to add to this that there is a worth in the prayers of the very meanest of Christians impossible to overrate. A rich man may feel attachment to his minister; and he has a thousand ways in which he may give vent to his feelings. But the poor man has little to offer but prayer, and therefore will he throw all the vehemence of his gratefulness into unwearied petitions for blessings on his benefactor. 6. On this great principle we uphold the dignity of the poor man, and the beneficial influence which he exerts in the world. Poverty will never degrade a man—nothing but vice can do that; poverty will never disable a man from usefulness, seeing that it cannot change his office in the body, and there is no office but what is material to the general health and strength. Why, then, are not our honest and hardworking poor to lift up their heads in the midst of society, in all the consciousness of having an important part to perform, and in all the satisfaction of feeling that they perform it faithfully and effectually? 7. We are "every one members, one of another"; and forasmuch as no man ever hated his own flesh, let it be seen that we are all animated with the spirit of charity. It is with reference to this principle that we are to be tried at the last. If we are all members of one body, Christ is the Head of that body; and, consequently, He accounts as done to Himself what is done to the meanest of His members. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Church compared to the body*:—I. In its UNITY. II. In the PLURALITY of its members. III. In the DIVERSITY of their functions. IV. In their MUTUAL RELATION and dependence. V. In the possession of ONE SPIRIT. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian unity and diversity*:—I. DIVERSITY UNDERLYING UNITY. 1. "We have many members in" the "one" natural "body"; and just so we, being diverse Christian members of His redeemed flock, "are one" mystical "body in Christ." 2. In the natural body every part is not so much a distinct unit in itself as a fraction of one great whole; and so in the Church (John xvii. 20, 21), not the individuality of the member, but the oneness of the whole community, is to demonstrate the truth of Christ's mission. 3. This unity can only be realised by having a governing Head. Only as we abide in real heart and life fellowship with Christ do we form a body that is "at unity in itself." If not bound together in the "unity of the Spirit," the body must decay and dissolve into a mass of lifeless, separate members. II. DIVERSITY CONSISTENT WITH UNITY. 1. That diversity is consistent with unity is shown by the analogy of our frame. 2. Diversity of vocation and function is consistent in Christians (1 Cor. xii.). The Divine will is that each member should have a special function, but that all should work together for mutual help. 3. Diversity in unity is the foundation of all true beauty and usefulness (see laws of nature, waves of the sea, winds, clouds, human nature, &c.). Learn in conclusion—1. We all belong to one another. None may say, "I have nothing to do with thee," nor plead, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Therefore every Christian should try—(1) To help his neighbour, to heal differences, and to strengthen the life and work of all Christ's people. (2) To refrain from speaking or doing anything that may hurt or vex any member of the body, since the Head is thereby pained (Acts ix. 4) and the whole body shocked (1 Cor. xii. 26). 2. We are all necessary to each other—the rich to the poor and the poor to the rich; the sick to the hale as well as the hale to the sick. All can derive help from others, and all can give somewhat to others. All depend on each other in the wondrous "compacting together by that which every joint supplieth." (*Homilist.*) *Every one has his place*:—A row of richly-gilded pipes, stately and massive, reaching to the ceiling, stares majestically down upon us as we gather in our place of worship. They seem to say all the melody and music of the instrument is gathered within us, and we are the musical genii of the place, and when the keys are swept by a skilled artist how rich and grand are the tones evolved! They seem to be fairly alive, and our souls are stirred to the depths by the harmony. Desiring to know their relations to the hidden modest reeds, that we could faintly discern in the darkened chamber behind, we asked our organist what relation did they bear to their unseen companions, and what was their relative power compared with the small pipes. His reply was: "All front pipes speak with force and power, but they would be utterly valueless, so far as music was concerned, unless backed up and

supported by the delicate reeds that are hidden within." How blessed the lesson taught the modest Christian workers in every Church! They look upon the few who occupy a prominent position as leaders, and in their timidity hide themselves, not allowing their own power to be felt, forgetful of the fact that all disciples are workers together with the Lord. In these days, when a few leading spirits are marvellously blessed by God, we must remember that their power is vastly increased by the sympathy and prayers of those whose names are only known to God. As the organ is incomplete if a single pipe is missing, and as it is thrown out of tune by a single reed not acting in harmony, so the Church is hindered from receiving a blessing, and its action impeded, if a single disciple is negligent of his or her duty. So let us in our quiet field toil on, pray on, knowing that he who is faithful unto death will receive the crown. *Individuality*:—The practical aim of each man should be to perfect his own variety, not ape another's. A Luther could not be a Melanchthon. By no process could an Owen be made into a Milton. Individuality is indestructible. I am afraid that teachers and learners are often at fault in overlooking what is so very plain. You sometimes have ideal characters described and put before you for imitation, which never were and never will be realised, because they combine incompatibilities. Qualities are taken from men constitutionally different from each other, and you are told to be all that is represented in some unnatural amalgam. But God requires of you no such impossibility. Be yourself—that is the Divine will. Mature and perfect by His grace the gifts He has bestowed. Resist all easily besetting sins, and cultivate all possible good. Not excusing yourself for only doing what pleases you; for omitting acts of self-denial; for being one-sided, self-indulgent, and peculiar; strive to be as comprehensive in excellence as you can, without attempting to obliterate the stamp of your own individuality. Bunyan was a wise man, and therefore did not crush all imaginable good qualities into his Christian, but distributed them amongst a number of individuals; painting the picture of different pilgrims, and assigning to them varied offices of wisdom and love. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *Mutual relations in life*:—Consider—I. THE RELATION WHICH WE BEAR TO ONE ANOTHER. 1. Our bond of union. 2. Our mutual dependence. 3. Our individual interest. II. THE DUTIES ARISING OUT OF THIS RELATION. Mutual—1. Love. 2. Sympathy. 3. Help. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THESE DUTIES SHOULD BE PERFORMED. With—1. Care and diligence. 2. Patience and perseverance. 2. Love and cheerfulness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Spiritual order*:—There arose a fierce contention in the human body; every member sought another place than the one it found itself in, and was fitted for. After much controversy it was agreed to refer the whole matter to one whose name was Solomon Wise-in-his-own-conceit. He was to arrange and adjust the whole business, and to place every bone in its proper position. He received the appointment gladly, and was filled with joy and confidence. He commenced with finding a place for himself. His proper post was the heel, but where do you think he found it? He must needs be the golden bowl in which the brains are deposited. The natural consequences followed. The coarse heel bone was not of the right quality nor of the suitable dimensions to contain the brains, nor could the vessel intended for that purpose form a useful or comely part of the foot. Disorder ensued in foot, head, face, legs, and arms. By the time Solomon Wise-in-his-own-conceit had reconstructed the body, it could neither walk, nor speak, nor hear, nor smell, nor see. The body was, moreover, filled with intolerable agony, and could find no rest, every bone crying for restoration to its own place—that is to say, every one but the heel bone; that was mightily pleased to be in the head, and to have custody of the brains. (*Christmas Evans.*) *Church fellowship: its privileges and duties*:—I. THE ONENESS OF THE CHURCH. 1. There is one source of activity and life in every human body, and so there is in the Church. There are various spheres in which we live and act. Those who possess natural and intellectual life can enjoy the beauties of nature, the endearments of friendship, the activities of business, the quiet of home, but all the while they may have no sympathy with that which is heavenly; but those who are possessed of spiritual life rise to a higher existence in which love prompts to unwearied activity in the service of God; and the source of this life is Christ. But our Lord came not only that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly; and, aware of the influence of association and sympathy, He gathers together His followers into a society in which they may help one another. But, just as with the individual, so with the Church. It is not the most scriptural doctrine, or the most apostolic discipline, or the most impassioned preaching, or

the most crowded assemblies that can ensure the greatest prosperity, but the presence of Christ. 2. In this one body there must be harmony of character, or it would resemble the image of Nebuchadnezzar. There will be differences of gifts because there are differences of functions, but there must also be fitness for association, and to form a secure union all the members must be renewed by the Holy Spirit, be joined to Christ by a living faith, and exhibit the beauties of a consistent character. 3. In this oneness of the Church there is identity of interest. If one member of the body suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member is in health, all the members rejoice with it. Suppose a kingdom begins generally to decline, and there should be one profession which, for a time, continues prosperous, this cannot last long. And so in the Church. If discord springs up between those who ought to be bound together in the purest love, if error thrusts aside the doctrine of the Cross, if apathy spread over the people, if prayers are frozen and heartless, there may be members who will retain their spirituality for a time, but by and by they will yield to the general influence. But if peace binds Christians together—if the truth is maintained in its integrity, &c.—then each member will enjoy the benefit of the prosperity of the whole, and will find how blessed it is for them all to have one interest. And yet how frequently Church members seem to take but little interest in one another! They will see the declension of a brother and never warn him, the suffering of a brother and never sympathise with him, the want of employment of the gifts of a brother and never suggest to him that he should employ his gifts. And where there is this want of reciprocal benefit a Church rapidly declines. 4. The Church ought to have one aim. The body is created to show forth the glory of God. You see His glory in the works of nature around, in His word of truth, but chiefly in the grand work of redemption. But then, if a multitude of mankind never study this work of redemption, they cannot see its glory; and, for the most part, people will say, "We judge of the value of that system of redemption by its fruits"; and therefore ought we both by life and lip to recommend the gospel. II. EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER HAS HIS APPROPRIATE DUTIES TO PERFORM. It is by division of labour that so much can be done. One seems more fitted to advise, another to execute; one to warn and terrify, and another to cheer and comfort; and so all are called upon to employ their powers for some useful purpose. 1. All members must feel that they have joined the Church not only to receive good, but to do good. 2. Each member should strive to concentrate his efforts on the particular Church to which he belongs. Wherever there is diffusion there is a waste of power. Concentration is strength, and when God points out in His providence the particular Church to which we are to belong, He thereby points out the particular field in which we are to work. 3. The member who is doing nothing is worse than useless. When a limb is paralysed it only impedes the body. And let every person in Church fellowship remember that he cannot be simply neutral. If he is not doing good he is doing harm. His coldness benumbs, his example discourages others. 4. Every real member is essential to the completeness of the body. Every member of the human frame, however apparently insignificant, is essential. We are sometimes very poor judges of who is the best member. We are thankful for men of rank, wealth, influence, and talents, but we thank God also for the humblest spiritual Christian, whom, perhaps, God may see to be doing a greater work than those who seem great in the eye of the world. 5. All the members bear a close spiritual relationship to each other. Surely, then, there ought to be great sympathy and affection between them, because, when we have a common object and character, we generally feel sympathy and love. 6. If we are members one of another, there ought to be the absence of pride and of all assumption. God has ordained the different ranks in society, and He does not wish those ranks to be obliterated. The believing servant is not to show want of respect to the believing master, and the believing master is not to oppress the believing servant. But as members of the same Church all worldly distinctions disappear. We are all one in Christ. 7. As members one of another we ought always to aim at one another's benefit. "Bear ye one another's burdens," &c. (*J. C. Harrison.*) *Communion of saints*:—What the circulation of the blood is to the human body, that the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ which is the Church. Now, by virtue of the one life-blood, every limb of the body holds fellowship with every other, and as long as life lasts that fellowship is inevitable. If the hand be unwashed the eye cannot refuse communion with it on that account; if the finger be diseased the hand cannot, by binding a cord around it, prevent the life-current from flowing. Nothing but death can break up the fellowship; you must tear away the member,

or it must of necessity commune with the rest of the body. It is even thus in the body of Christ; no laws can prevent one living member of Christ from fellowship with every other; the pulse of living fellowship sends a wave through the whole mystical frame; where there is but one life, fellowship is an inevitable consequence. Yet some talk of restricted communion, and imagine that they can practise it. If they be alive unto God they may in mistaken conscientiousness deny their fellow Christians the outward sign of communion, but communion itself falls not under any rule or regulation of theirs. Tie a red tape round your thumb, and let it decree that the whole body is out of fellowship with it; the thumb's decree is either ridiculously inoperative, or else it proves injurious to itself. God has made us one, one Spirit quickens us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus; to deny fellowship with any believer in Jesus is to refuse what you must of necessity give, and to deny in symbol what you must inevitably render in reality. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 6–8. **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.**—*Gifts of grace*:—1. Their common source. 2. Diverse character. 3. Liberal distribution. 4. Faithful exercise. 5. Happy influence. (*J. Lyth D.D.*) *Gifts: their Divine source*:—As many vapours, rising from the sea, meet together in one cloud, and that cloud falls down divided into many drops, and those drops run together, making rills of water, which meet in channels, and those channels run into brooks, and those brooks into rivers, and those rivers into the sea; so it either is or should be with the gifts and graces of the Church. They all come down from God, divided severally as He will to various Christians. They should flow through the channels of their special vocations into the common streams of public use for church or commonwealth, and ultimately return into the great ocean of His glory, from whence they originally came. (*Bp. Hall.*) *God's gifts to the Church to be used for His service*:—I. THOSE OF WHOM THE APOSTLE SPEAKS. Members of Christ's body, *i.e.*, the Church (Eph. i. 22, 23). 1. But what is the Church? Ask Roman Catholics, the members of the Greek Church, some members of our own Church, or the various sects, they would claim each for themselves the title of the Church. Now these are equally wrong. The Church here spoken of is no particular ecclesiastical government whatsoever, but the spiritual Church of God's elect throughout the whole world. 2. Here is the test of Church membership—"the measure of faith." No person is a member of this Church but a true believer, nor can he exercise the gifts here spoken of except he has "the gift" of faith. The apostle's illustration of the human body is totally inapplicable to the nominal Church. No such sympathy can be exercised unless men be mentally and morally conformed to God. Again, the string of spiritual duties inculcated in the text cannot be performed by mere nominal Christians. If you want a description of real Church members, read the opening address of almost every Epistle. II. THE PERSONS OF WHOM THE APOSTLE SPEAKS ARE ALL POSSESSED OF GIFTS. 1. The time would fail me to tell of the gifts of God to individual members of His Church—outward gifts, such as station, property, influence, talent; official gifts, gifts of prophecy, of instruction, or those more directly spiritual gifts accumulated in the Church. 2. But the point of the passage is its reference to the diversity of gifts. Sometimes they almost appear to be capricious; one man rich, another poor; one richly gifted, another next akin to idiotcy; some with dispositions very amiable, others just the reverse. Spiritual gifts are not equally given to all. Some have such views of truth, such contemplations of heavenly things, that they seem to be admitted within the veil. Others seem just the reverse, going on heavily, and oftentimes cast down. So it is with all spiritual knowledge and attainments. This point is illustrated under the figure of the human body. What harmony, yet what diversity there! There is the head, the seat of wisdom; the countenance, of feeling and animation; then the various limbs or members of the body, more or less honourable; yet is the whole fitly framed together, each part marvellously adjusted to the other, and all mutually dependent. 3. But the most striking thought is that all are gifts of God. Money we may have earned by our own intelligence and diligence, but God gave us that diligence and intelligence. So with regard to our station in life. So most pre-eminently with His spiritual gifts. If we have any knowledge of the Scriptures, it is revealed to us by the Spirit of God. 4. Mark the lessons. (1) The least of God's gifts are talents entrusted to us, and should not be despised. Do not despise the day of small things, and say, "I have nothing," or "I can do nothing." Perhaps, too, there is a greater danger of our despising small gifts in others. (2) These

talents being the gift of God, we must not be unduly elated by them (ver. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 7). How humbling the thought that we have nothing we can call our own! (3) The lowest gifts are as much God's as the highest. He that planted the sun in the firmament taught the little glow-worm to shine on the summer bank. He that raises up the most talented to fill with honour distinguished situations is the same God that puts the candle in the cottage and bids it shine there. How encouraging is this to the weakest, the poorest, the youngest! III. IT IS THEIR DUTY AND PRIVILEGE TO CONSECRATE THOSE GIFTS TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. As masters and servants, parents and children, brothers and sisters, as individual members of Christ's universal Church, we have each gifts entrusted to us; and whether our talents be few or many, feeble or strong, they are the gifts of God, and must be thrown by us into the common treasury of the Church for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. (*Dean Close.*) *Varied gifts*:—There is not greater variety of colour and qualities in plants and flowers, with which the earth, like a carpet of needlework, is variegated, for the delight and service of man, than there is of gifts natural and spiritual in the minds of men, to render them useful to one another, both in civil society and Christian fellowship. (*W. Gurnall.*) *Gifts, diversity of*:—Every man has received some gift—no man has all gifts; and this, rightly considered, would keep all in a more even temper; as, in nature, nothing is altogether useless, so nothing is self-sufficient. This, duly considered, would keep the meanest from repining and discontent, even him that hath the lowest rank in most respects; yet something he hath received that is not only a good to himself, but rightly improved, may be so to others likewise. And this will curb the loftiness of the most advanced, and teach them not only to see some deficiencies in themselves, and some gifts in far meaner persons which they want; but, besides the simple discovery of this, it will put them upon the use of lower persons, not only to stoop to the acknowledgment, but even withal to the participation and benefit of it; not to trample upon all that is below them, but to take up and use things useful, though lying at their feet. Some flowers and herbs that grow very low are of a very fragrant smell and healthful use. (*Abp. Leighton.*) *Unity and diversity*:—Diversity without unity is disorder; unity without diversity is death. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Unity in diversity*:—The spirit resolves the variety into unity, introduces variety into the unity, and reconciles unity to itself through variety. (*Baur.*) *The requirements of true religion*:—I. FAITHFULNESS IN THE CHURCH. Our gifts must be improved for the common edification (vers. 6–8). II. LOVE TO THE BRETHREN—it must be faithful, yet kind. III. CONSISTENCY IN THE WORLD. 1. Diligence. 2. Fervour. 3. Cheerfulness. 4. Patience. 5. Prayer. IV. KINDNESS TO ALL MEN. 1. To the saints. 2. To enemies. 3. To all according to their need. V. HUMILITY. 1. In our intercourse with others. 2. In our aims. 3. In our judgments. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Usefulness, the least Christian to aim at*:—Many true saints are unable to render much service to the cause of God. See, then, the gardeners going down to the pond and dipping in their watering-pots to carry the refreshing liquid to the flowers. A child comes into the garden and wishes to help, and yonder is a little watering-pot for him. Note well the little water-pot, though it does not hold so much, yet carries the same water to the plants; and it does not make any difference to the flowers which receive that water, whether it came out of the big pot or the little pot, so long as it is the same water, and they get it. You who are as little children in God's Church, you who do not know much, but try to tell to others what little you know; if it be the same gospel truth, and be blessed by the same Spirit, it will not matter to the souls who are blessed by you whether they were converted or comforted under a man of one or ten talents. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.**—*The gift of prophecy*:—I. ITS NATURE AND REQUISITES. II. ITS DESIGN. 1. The edification of the Church. 2. The spread of truth. 3. Salvation of souls. III. ITS USE. 1. According to the analogy of faith. 2. In faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The proportion of faith*:—1. "Prophet" means one who is the interpreter of another's thought. In the Hebrew word there is involved the idea of a fountain bubbling up as from between rocks, subjected to pressure from without. The prophet often declared future events; but we must not limit his function to the prediction. He brought messages to men pertaining to the present practical duty of life. 2. "According to the proportion of faith." The sense is made clearer by inserting "the" or "our" faith, *i.e.*, the objective system of truth, the gospel. It is a vast, vital, co-ordinated system, built up a unity, like the root, the stem, and branch, or the wall, the tower, and spire of a building. The balance of every part with every other part is hinted at. What is it that God's

Word brings? I. GREAT DOCTRINES. 1. The eternal personality of God—a thought the pagan mind did not grasp. And science is dwarfed when it hides this pivotal thought. 2. His providential goodness and redeeming grace. His hand is in history. The history of the race is the history of redemption. It was God who led Paul to Damascus, Augustine to Rome, Savonarola to Florence, and Luther to Worms. His creative power, His providence and grace, like the mysterious trinity of Being to which they are related, fill us with adoring wonder. The Bible lifts the race, exalting its intellectual as well as its moral capacity. II. THE LAW OF GOD WHICH IS AS GREAT AS THE DOCTRINE OF GOD. It is high above the codes of uninspired teachers. Love to God and man are the essential elements. Every element of life is reached and ruled by it. As one sunshine floods the breadth of the sea and the face of the smallest flower, so the law touches alike the mightiest and the meanest. It enters into the whole man. Courtesy in manner is philanthropy in a trait, and heroism of character is shown in the patience of love. In a word, the law is matched to the doctrine in its supernal character and reach. III. A SAVIOUR AS GREAT AS EITHER. He was announced by angels; a star led worshippers to His cradle; at His baptism a voice proclaimed Him the well-beloved of the Father. He laid claims on man's service—blasphemous were He not God. He put Himself between parent and child, wife and husband; or, rather, above them all, in supreme authority. By His pierced hands, Christ, the crucified and risen Redeemer, has been guiding the course of empires, and is bringing in millennial eras. Really, though often unconsciously, has the world in its advancing civilisation reflected the glory of this majestic Prince of Life. He shall yet see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. On His head will rest "many crowns." IV. A UNIVERSAL SPIRITUAL KINGDOM IS COINCIDENT IN MAJESTY AND MIGHT WITH THE FOREGOING ELEMENTS. The idea of such a kingdom is unique and grand. To the Greeks other nations were but barbarians. Rome made other peoples her captives, without extinguishing their enmity or assimilating their life. But Christ founded His throne in the love of His redeemed people. All genius shall be developed, and all wealth shall be consecrated under the supremacy of Christ. Christianity shall be the glory of the nations. V. GREAT WARNINGS. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Here is, then, the "proportion of faith," the harmony of truth, the "analogy" which knits all together in a definite unity. These are the substructural truths of revelation, which are to be studied and proclaimed, each in its time, place, and proportion. Conclusion: 1. As we infer the genius of the architect from the grandeur of the building, the genius of the poet from his verse, or that of the statesman and jurist from what emanates from each, so we infer the sublime greatness of God from this revelation of truth. Can any one say that the Scriptures are the product of the Jewish mind? As well might we say that the Atlantic came from the upsetting of a child's breakfast-cup! 2. Attacking one point of this revelation is an attack on the whole. If one part be in error the value of the whole is vitiated, the entire edifice tumbles to pieces. All these facts of our common faith stand or fall together, as heart and brain are united. If one be paralysed, the whole suffers. If one stone be plucked from the arch, they all tumble in one heap; but in their entirety they reflect the Divine unity and eternity. 3. We rise into sympathy with God as we come into fuller comprehension of His truth. How unwise it is for one to try to banish God's Word from his thoughts! Here is the romance of the world. The imagination, as well as the conscience of the race, is exalted by the truth of God. It ennobles the whole man. It enriches the life that is, as well as the life that is to come. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Right proportions of truth*:—I. WHAT IS "FAITH" HERE? If we are to understand the trust of the heart towards God, then the passage will mean, that "if any man prophesy," or preach, he must do it "according to the spiritual experience which God has given him." The measure of the faith is the measure of the life; and if we wish to raise the standard of our life, we must begin by elevating our faith. We cannot go beyond our faith; and we must not fall short of it. The great business of life is to square our words and actions to the faith which God has given us. 2. But we are to take "faith" here rather as signifying not the belief, but the things believed—our creed—"the faith once delivered to the saints." II. WE MUST KEEP THE GENERAL SYMMETRY OF THE WHOLE BODY OF "THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS." 1. There is no greater danger than disproportion—the source of almost all error. For the enemy of truth to present what is palpably false would at once startle and offend! But he secures his end much better, by putting before us what is in itself perfectly true, but which

becomes false when not balanced by another and equal truth. 2. God has been pleased to give us a revelation; but He has given us also common sense. The Bible was never intended to be cut up into isolated texts. No book would bear it. If you take single sentences you may prove Socinianism, Popery, anything. What we have to do is to know all; to collate all; and to gather, from the Bible, in its integrity, the mind of God. III. ONE OR TWO THINGS IN WHICH IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO KEEP "THE PROPORTION OF FAITH." 1. Each Person in the Blessed Trinity has His own prerogative, office, and dispensation. Some persons' religion is all of the Father, others' all of the Son, others' all of the Spirit. See, however, how the works of each stand related to each other in the proportion of faith. The Father loved the world, and gave His Son to save it. The Son wrought out for us a complete salvation, and with Him we have union by faith. That union is our strength, and our life. That union once made, the Holy Spirit flows into us as the blood flows into a member of the body; or, as the sap flows into a branch, grafted into the tree. So that it is impossible to say to which we owe most. 2. According to "the proportion of faith," there is a wide distinction between the process of our justification and our sanctification. We are justified at once, and perfectly, by a single act of faith; but we are sanctified by degrees with effort, and even painfulness. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The doctrine of proportion*:—Proportion means things in their right place, *i.e.*, when one object does not unduly attract our attention above another. A well-proportioned figure, *e.g.*, is where the head is not too large, or the hands and feet too small for the body. A well-proportioned building is that in which nothing is out of place or too large or small for its place. Apply this doctrine to—I. CHRISTIAN PRACTICE. 1. It is not enough to ask what is right in itself, but what is right under the circumstances. It is a great thing to have right men in right places, but it is also a great thing to have the right man doing the right thing in the right place, in the right way. A right thing done in a wrong way is often more mischievous than a thing done wrong altogether. A saying most true loses all its savour if said at a wrong time; and it is no defence to argue that it was good years ago or miles away. Is it good for us here and now? 2. Congruity, fitness, proportion, are the graces required for the spiritual as well as the material temple. We are not mere isolated blocks of stone, but "living stones, built up into a spiritual house." What in one station or age is a grace, in another is a deformity. "To everything there is a season," &c., says the preacher in that ancient discourse on the doctrine of proportion. How many good plans have come to nought, not from wickedness or opposition, but because men have exalted a virtue or custom out of proportion, and so have driven men into an equal disproportion on the other side—over strictness leading to over laxity, excessive rashness to excessive caution, &c. 3. And so the apostle tells us to act "according to the gifts given to us." He that is endowed with the gift of preaching is to exercise his gift not in any other line, but in that. He that has the gift of practical work is not to rush out of his way in prophesying. Each has his own special calling; let us not waste our time or mar our usefulness by intruding into provinces disproportioned to our powers. Any one faculty indulged in excess becomes a curse, *e.g.*, music, study, mechanical pursuits. How fatal to Louis XVI., who in the crisis of the French monarchy devoted himself to his favourite craft rather than to the task of saving the state; how useful to Peter the Great, who made it the means of civilising his barbarian empire! 4. In the defence of Lucknow the courage, subordination and zeal of each individual was sustained by the consciousness that on him rested the safety of the whole—a single outpost lost would be the loss of all. So if the fortress of goodness and truth is to be saved, it must be by every one doing at his own post the work that belongs to him alone. What discipline effects in the army is effected in our moral duties by a sense of the apostolical doctrine of proportion. Each one has his own work assigned him by the Captain of his salvation. Allow in others, claim for yourselves a division of labour and responsibility. A good master, servant, soldier, teacher, is made in no other way but by "waiting" on his place. II. CHRISTIAN METHOD. 1. "He that giveth, . . . with simplicity." How greatly the value of a gift depends on the manner of giving! "He gives twice who gives soon"; so he who gives with simplicity, *i.e.*, with singleness of purpose, gives a hundredfold more than he who gives grudgingly, late, or ostentatiously. A thousand gifts ill given are hardly better than none. 2. "He that ruleth, with diligence." He that has charge of a household, school, or commonwealth, may rule imperiously, and so that the institution may go on in apparent prosperity; and yet there may be wanting that peculiar method which will give life and substance

to the whole. What is wanted is that he should rule with diligence, *i.e.*, with heart and soul. This is the true secret of influence. 3. "He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." How easy to show mercy in such a way that it shall be no mercy! What is wanted is the bright smile, the playful word. III. CHRISTIAN TRUTH. 1. It is important for the teacher to teach according to the proportion of his *own* faith; not to assume feelings which are not his own, not to urge truths of which he does not feel the value, but to teach according to his own knowledge and experience. 2. It is important for us all so to seek, find, and teach all truth, so as not to forget what are the due proportions of the truth itself. Christian truth is not of one kind only. It has lights and shades, foregrounds and distances, lessons of infinitely various significance. Woe be to us if instead of "rightly dividing the word of truth," we confound all its parts together. We may believe correctly on every single point, yet if we view these points out of their proper proportions our view may be as completely wrong as if on every point we had been involved in error. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The danger of exaggerations in religion:*—1. Lord Bacon compares religion to the sun, which invigorates and cheers live animal substances, but turns the dead to corruption. Similarly religion invigorates a sound mind, and cheers a sound heart, while in a morbid mind it breeds superstitions, scruples, and monstrous fancies. We have only to survey the history of Christianity to see how just their comparison is. What follies, superstitions, licentious doctrines, have been founded on the Bible! This has arisen from a certain morbid tendency in the human mind to caricature truths presented to it. I. EVERY HERESY HAS BEEN A CARICATURE OF SOME ONE POINT OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH—an exaggeration by which the fair proportion of the faith has been distorted. 1. The truth upon which the Quaker founds his system, is that the New Dispensation is spiritual. No truth can well be more vital, and through the subtle encroachments of formalism it is necessary for all of us every now and then to ask ourselves whether we are properly awake to the fact that the law, under which Christians live, is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," written on the fleshy table of the heart, and that God is a Spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The Quakers would have deserved the warmest thanks if they had done nothing more than bring these truths forward. But, unhappily, they caricatured them, and robbed the Church of her sacraments. 2. The fundamental truth of our religion is that "God is love," and that He has shown His love by the sacrifice of His dear Son. Now certain divines have perceived this truth clearly, and it is impossible to perceive it too clearly, or proclaim it too loudly. But to say that anger is inconsistent with love, or that justice is inconsistent with compassion, and to acknowledge no relations with God as a Judge, because He stands to us in the relation of a Father, is to caricature the faith and mar its fair proportions. God loves me deeply, but He hates my sin, and will never consent to save me from its guilt without saving me from its power. 3. And where there is no actual heresy, this tendency may lead to a vast amount of unsuspected mischief. In many spiritual books a strain is put upon certain precepts which caricatures them, sets them at issue with other precepts, and cramps the mind which should strive after obedience to them. Take an example. When St. Francis of Sales was dying, he said to one of his attached disciples, "Bishop, God has taught me a great secret, and I will tell it you, if you will put your head closer." The bishop did so, anxious to know what Francis considered as the crowning lesson of a life of holiness. "He has taught me," said the dying man, who was acutely suffering, "to ask nothing, and to refuse nothing." Now at this a sentimental pietism might perhaps whisper, "What beautiful resignation!" But is it in conformity to the Word of God, and the mind of Christ? We admit that we should refuse nothing which comes from our Father's hand. But where has God taught His people to ask nothing? Did not our Lord pray, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"? Good St. Francis erred by exaggeration, and caricatured the grace of resignation. Resignation is a heavenly and Christ-like grace; but if you will push it to every length, it becomes absolutely mischievous. Thus one might conceive a beggar doing nothing to improve his condition, on the plea that such was the will of God, and that mendicancy was the state of life to which he had been called; forgetting that there is a maxim which says that "if any man would not work, neither should he eat." In the lives of the Scriptural saints nothing is so remarkable as their perfect naturalness, and freedom from all overstrained spirituality. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, after a miraculous escape from shipwreck, gathers a bundle of sticks, and puts them on the fire (for St. Paul was not above feeling cold and wet); and when writing under the afflatus

of the Holy Ghost, he bids Timothy bring the cloak which he left at Troas with Carpus, in anticipation of an approaching winter, "and the books, but especially the parchments"; for what studious man can bear to be without his books and papers? Among the early disciples you would have seen nothing overcharged in character or manner; nay, you would have seen little foibles, of temper, of superstition, of prejudice—you might have heard sharp words passing between great apostles, and you might have seen a damsel, recently engaged with others in prayer, in such a joyful trepidation of nerves when the answer arrived, that she opened not the gate for gladness. II. HOW, THEN, SHALL THE DEVOUT MAN KEEP HIS MIND FREE FROM EXAGGERATIONS BOTH IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE? By an impartial study of the whole of Scripture. Pray for the Bereans' nobleness of mind who brought even the doctrine of apostles to the test of inspiration, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. How much more, when men are not apostles, must their doctrine be thus searched and sifted! (*Dean Goulburn.*)

The proportion of faith:—It has been a matter of controversy whether "the faith" is to be understood in its objective or subjective sense, in other words, whether the caution is intended to guard the preacher against violating the due relation existing between one and another of the truths of revelation; or whether he does not rather use the word "faith" in its subjective meaning, and bid the Christian who is to exercise the prophetic office so to regulate his teaching as may be in accordance with the measure of faith attained by himself or his hearers. I can myself see no reason why we should not use the words in both applications. I. First, taking THE TEXT IN ITS OBJECTIVE MEANING, what shall we say is the true proportion which is to guide us in our teaching? Surely in the first instance we must go to the Catholic creeds: these, surely, in the first place, are the natural exponents to us of the revelation of the New Testament. The great truth of the incarnation of the eternal Son lies, as we all should admit, at the root of all sound teaching connected with man's relation to God. It is the one great central truth round which a theologian would group all the subsidiary truths, which we connect with the words "atonement," "reconciliation," "pardon," "justification," and the like. A number of other points of teaching, whether we count them matters of faith or of opinion, flow out of this central head. A clergyman—a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven—ought to see this relation between the several parts of revelation; but every clergyman even is not a formal theologian; and, deep as is the reverence still amongst our people for the English Bible, St. Paul's Epistles are mostly read for other purposes than for that of tracing the interdependence of religious truth. We complain sometimes, and not without reason, of the way in which a past generation so magnified one particular doctrine, which they thought to be embodied in St. Paul's writings, as to obscure altogether collateral and complementary truths; so as to give a thoroughly distorted image of the apostle's teaching concerning the doctrine nearest to their own hearts. Our generation surely is not altogether clear from the same error. II. But I suggested that St. Paul's words, where he speaks of the proportion of faith, MIGHT FAIRLY BEAR THE SUBJECTIVE AS WELL AS THE OBJECTIVE INTERPRETATION; in other words, he seems to imply that prophecy, to be effective for the edification of the Church, must be exercised in subordination, not only to the analogy of the faith of the Church itself, but also to the faith of the preacher, and I think also of the hearer. Am I wrong in saying that the prophecy of our days has not been always mindful of this rule? And has not this forgetfulness been one fruitful source of much of the disappointment which has waited on the ministry of good and earnest men? And we hear a great deal about the importance of defending the outworks from some who do not seem to understand altogether what is the citadel which they suppose these outworks to defend. I do not at all mean that there is of necessity any insincerity in all this, but there is, I think, a measure of unreality. The learner is not attracted by very decided statements on the part of the teacher, so long as there is a certain secret instinct in his own mind that the conviction of the speaker's heart is not altogether in unison with the strength of his language. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh—words not spoken out of that abundance fall dead and powerless even upon the untaught ear. But there is a third, and a different aspect of the whole question. III. THE PROPORTION OF FAITH WHICH WE HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IS THE FAITH OF OUR HEARERS AS WELL AS THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH AT LARGE, and the force with which we ourselves have apprehended the realities with which faith deals. The days in which we live are days of excitement, of controversy; I must add also days of failure and disappointment to those who have the cure of

souls. We have gone out, many of us, full of expectation, and we have returned full of disappointment, "we have sown much and we have brought in little," and the bright lights of the early morning have ended in a very sober grey. Doubtless there are many causes working up to this result. Our expectation has been unreasonable, and it has been good for us that "tears, prayers, and watchings should fail." But I venture to think that there has been also a great forgetfulness of St. Paul's precept among us clergy. We have again and again looked for a sympathy amongst our people, which we had no right to expect; we have failed to apprehend the very wide difference between their standpoint and our own: we have expected to quicken their interest in religious truth, simply because our own has been quickened: and that new, possibly important, phases of doctrine should commend themselves to the spiritual apprehension of our people because they have so commended themselves to our own. These things are doubtless in a measure inevitable. I suppose every clergyman, in reviewing his own work and teaching, has found that he has fallen into many a mistake in his younger days from attempting to build up a super-structure where there was no sufficient foundation already laid. Sympathy with the spiritual and intellectual condition of others must of course be the result of experience. In a word, as years go on, I believe the oldest and the simplest standards alike of faith, and of devotion, and of practice satisfy us best. For dogmatic statements about the sacraments we turn to the catechism of our childhood, and we learn to see that all the refinements of more elaborate definition have added not one whit to the clearness of our apprehension of what is confessedly mystical. In like manner as the Lord's prayer becomes to us the most complete and satisfying formula of communion with God, each petition in its iteration becoming more and more formal, but ever pregnant with fresh meaning and with new life, so also do the Catholic creeds supply us with all that we want as a standard of faith. Curious and intricate questions about which we were once very much inclined to speculate, we are content to leave where the creeds leave them, implicitly contained perhaps in their statements of truth, but no more. It is in them that we learn the true balance, the real proportion; and alike for our own soul's guidance and for the teaching of our people, we fall back upon truths learnt at our mother's knee, and we find words which once sounded a little cold and formal become ever instinct with a new life; for that indeed they contain all that a Christian ought to know and "believe to his soul's health," the love of the Father, the Incarnation of the Son, and the indwelling power of the Spirit of God. (*Archdn. Pott.*) **Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering.**—*Waiting on our ministering needs extra grace*:—I was in Cologne on a very rainy day, and I was looking out for similes and metaphors, as I generally am; but I had nothing on earth to look at in the square of the city but an old pump, and what kind of a simile I could make out of it I could not tell. All traffic seemed suspended, it rained so hard; but I noticed a woman come to the pump with a bucket. Presently I noticed a man come in with a bucket; nay, he came with a yoke and two buckets. As I kept on writing and looking out every now and then, I saw the same friend with the often-buckets and blue blouse coming to the same pump again. In the course of the morning I think I saw him a dozen times. I thought to myself, "Ah, you do not fetch water for your own house, I am persuaded: you are a water-carrier; you fetch water for lots of people, and that is why you come oftener than anybody else." Now, there was a meaning in that at once to my soul, that, inasmuch that I had not only to go to Christ for myself, but had been made a water-carrier to carry the water of everlasting life to others, I must come a great deal oftener than anybody else. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **He that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation.**—*The faculties of teaching and exhorting* may be combined in the same individual; and indeed in these days, they are best laid upon one person, the ordinary minister of a congregation. Yet the two faculties are so far separate, as in other times to have given rise to separate functions; and accordingly, in the machinery of more churches than one, have we read both of the doctor and the pastor as distinct office-bearers. The one expounds truth; the other applies it, and presses it home on the case and conscience of every individual. The didactic and the hortatory are two distinct things, and imply distinct powers—insomuch, that, on the one hand, a luminous, logical, and masterly didactic may be a feeble and unimpressive hortatory preacher; and, on the other, the most effective of our hortatory men may, when they attempt the didactic, prove very obscure and infelicitous expounders of the truth. Both are best; and we should conform more to the way of that Spirit who divideth His gifts severally as He will, did we multiply and divide our offices so as to meet this

variety. It were more consonant both to philosophy and Scripture, did we proceed more on the subdivision of employment in things ecclesiastical. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Requisites to faithful teaching*:—I. STUDY—to secure right material. II. METHOD—or the right way of communicating the truth. III. DILIGENCE. IV. SIMPLICITY—or a right aim. V. Above all FAITH—or dependence upon Divine help. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Duty of teachers and ministers*:—On Egypt's far-off soil, away from friends and home, just as the morning beams lit up the Eastern sky, an officer lay dying. With gallant daring he had led his followers through many a devious path, guided alone by the pale starlight of the heavens, until at last they reached the enemy; and now the strife is over, but he is wounded, mortally! As the general, his cheeks bedewed with tears, gazed down with sadness on his face, a sudden radiancy illumined for a moment the youth's countenance as, looking up to Wolseley, he exclaimed, "General, didn't I lead them straight?" and so he died. "Oh, brothers, when o'er our eyes there steals the film of death, and when the soul flits solemnly from time into eternity, may it be ours to say in truthful earnestness to Christ concerning those committed to our care, "We led the people straight." (*H. D. Brown, B.A.*) **He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.**—*The triple lesson*:—What is the great object of human life? 1. To prepare to die, say many, an answer which contains a small modicum of right, and an overwhelming preponderance of wrong. To be prepared to meet death is, of course, a great object, but it is not itself the great object of life. If it were, on the same principle the great object of a journey would be to get home again; and of getting up in the morning to go to bed again at night, of a fire to consume fuel, and of reading a book to get through its pages. These absurdities bring out the truth that the fag end of a thing is not always the chief object of it. 2. The great object of life is to live, *i.e.*, to do one's duty as a Christian. And wherever this object is fairly and fully followed out, the last stage of life will be safe and easy. What thought is there so disheartening and disturbing as the thought that we must die, and we know not how soon? Let it be chased away with the reflection that it is our present duty to live, and the text is suited exclusively to living men; to men who will one day have to die, but whose business now is to live and do their duty. I. To GIVE "WITH SIMPLICITY." The word simplicity is the opposite of duplicity. Let him do it with a single eye and heart, and without any second or double meaning. Let there be no undercurrent of unworthy motive, but one pure and simple desire of benefiting the recipients of his bounty (Luke vi. 35). The case of those who never, or scarcely ever, give anything, is not mentioned. Perhaps the apostle left it as a case which carried its own condemnation with it, and therefore required no special mention. But those who do give are to watch the motive of their giving. They have been "bought with a price," and they must give out of a feeling of gratitude to Him who hath done so much for them. Whatever they have has been given to them by God, and sooner or later they will have to give an account of their stewardship. That they may do so with joy they must aim at "simplicity" in the exercise of their trust. II. To RULE WITH DILIGENCE. 1. Persons in authority are too apt to forget or shelve their responsibilities; and there are numbers who repudiate the idea of having any authority at all. But there are very few who do not exercise some influence. Now the text drops a word of warning to all, from the queen downwards, and condemns those who talk about taking it easy, and leaving things to take care of themselves. 2. Ruling is not a process which can be performed anyhow. It requires care, and thought, and discretion. And if parents, masters, and mistresses will not take the trouble to look after their dependents, or lack moral courage to do it, we may be sure of an unsatisfactory result sooner or later. Wherever habits of idleness and indulgence, waste and extravagance, recklessness and imprudence, of unbecoming finery in dress, and morbid delicacy in eating, go uncorrected, there the seed of a fruitful crop of social evils is being sown broadcast. Such habits cling tenaciously to young people, and in the case of servants, the humble fare of whose future homes may present a painful contrast to the profusion of domestic service, such habits make them poor and keep them so. III. To SHOW MERCY WITH CHEERFULNESS. There is a great deal in the way in which a thing is done. The man who does a kind action, accompanying it with kind words and looks, doubles the favour which he confers. The term "cheerfulness" refers particularly to looks. What a beautiful illustration of the spirit of our religion, which seeks to bring our whole man, body as well as soul, our very looks as well as our words and actions, into captivity to the obedience of Christ! How it carries us back to the example of our Master, who never said an unkind word, or gave an

unkind look, or did a favour grudgingly. There is a good deal of kindness in the world, but the kindness we experience is not always associated with "cheerfulness." Who has not heard of the poor relation, and the dependent friend, mourning in secret, not always over unkind actions, but over kind actions unkindly done? (*J. Mould, M.A.*) *Giving*:—I. Is A CHRISTIAN DUTY. Because—1. An acknowledgment of our stewardship. 2. An expression of—(1) Gratitude to God. (2) Self-denial. (3) Goodwill to man. II. SHOULD BE PERFORMED WITH SIMPLICITY. With—1. A generous heart. 2. A single eye. 3. A clean hand. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Giving with simplicity* is giving just as if giving were so natural that when a man gave he did not think of changing his countenance, manners, or air at all; but did it quietly, easily, beautifully. When you are going around for proper help, some men give so that you are angry every time you ask them to contribute. They give so that their gold and silver shoot you like a bullet. Others give with such beauty that you remember it as long as you live; and you say, "It is a pleasure to go to such men." There are some men that give as springs do. Whether you go to them or not they are always full, and your part is merely to put your dish under the ever-flowing stream. Others give just as a pump does where the well is dry and the pump leaks! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Giving, blessedness of*:—It is told of John Wesley that when he bestowed a gift or rendered any one a service he lifted his hat as though he were receiving instead of conferring an obligation. *Giving, penalty of not*:—A lady who refused to give, after hearing a charity sermon, had her pocket picked as she was leaving church. On making the discovery she said, "The parson could not find the way to my pocket, but the devil did." *Giving, a sign of perfectness*:—When wheat is growing it holds all its kernels tight in its own ear. But when it is ripe the kernels are scattered every whither, and it is only the straw that is left. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **He that ruleth, with diligence.**—*Ruling with diligence*:—I. THE NECESSITY OF THE RULER. 1. In the world. 2. In the Church. II. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE RULER. 1. To maintain order. 2. Protect liberty. 3. Secure the common weal. III. THE DUTY OF THE RULER. Diligence, implying—1. Self-sacrifice. 2. Attention to all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.**—*Showing mercy with cheerfulness*:—This instruction may mean—1. That we should carry sunshine with us in our visits to the sick chamber or distressed home. In no case is cheerfulness or brightness so needed or so welcome. 2. That we should perform kind offices to the sick or sorrowful, not of constraint, but of a ready mind, *con amore*; not because it is our business as the paid or voluntary staff of a Church, nor as a matter merely of principle or habit, but of pleasure and privilege. That manner is something to everybody, and everything to some, is a maxim we should act upon when consoling those claiming our compassion. Besides, it is our privilege to show cheerfulness in soothing the sorrows of the afflicted, for no task tends more than this, if entered upon in a right spirit, to banish gloom and discontent from our own minds, and to enliven our own souls. (*C. Neil, M.A.*)

Ver. 9. **Let love be without dissimulation.**—*Christian legislation*:—Here are laws for—I. SOCIAL INTERCOURSE. It must be—1. Honest. 2. Pure. 3. Kind. II. BUSINESS must be—1. Diligent. 2. Conducted on Christian principles. 3. In the fear of God. III. TEMPER. 1. Cheerful. 2. Patient. 3. Prayerful. IV. GENERAL BEHAVIOUR. 1. Benevolent to all. 2. Humble. 3. Forbearing. 4. Peaceable. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Marks of the Christian character*:—I. HATRED OF EVIL. "Abhor that which is evil." Hate—1. Trivial sins as well as great. 2. Secret as well as public. 3. Personal as well as social. 4. In thought as well as in act. II. STEADFAST GOODNESS. "Cleave to that which is good." 1. In temptation. 2. In dishonour. 3. In persecution. 4. In suffering loss and danger. III. MUTUAL LOVE. 1. There is something to love in the worst of men. 2. Piety gives much to love and admire. 3. We must be stimulated by the love and example of Christ. 4. We ourselves want the love of all men. 5. Humility. IV. FERVENT INDUSTRY. 1. Activity. 2. Piety. 3. Zeal. V. SPIRITUAL DISPOSITION. 1. Joy. 2. Patience. 3. Prayer. 4. Hospitality. 5. Sympathy. (*Family Churchman.*) *Sincerity the best qualification of charity*:—Sincerity is an indispensable ingredient of goodness; it stamps a valuable character upon all our actions, and recommends them to the favour both of God and man. It is an evidence of that respect which we pay to our Creator, who is the great Discerner of the thoughts of our hearts; and an instance of that justice which we owe to our fellow-creatures, who delight to converse with us with freedom and security. Hypocrisy on the other side is the

blackest of all transgressions, and bears the badge of the original liar. It is directly injurious to the Divine nature, by pretending to elude His infinite wisdom; and pernicious to human society, by deceitfully imposing upon their finite understanding. I. LET OUR LOVE OF GOD BE WITHOUT DISSIMULATION. To love God without dissimulation is to love Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength; to rejoice in His presence, to be constant in His service; and to let nothing share with Him in our hearts, so as to stand in competition with the duty which we owe Him. Now there are two qualifications which will engage us to be thus sincere in our affection. The one is the true value of the object of our love, and the other an assurance of His tenderness for us: but nowhere can we find these two strong inducements in so eminent a degree as in almighty God; and therefore nowhere else can we possibly be obliged to pay so hearty an affection as I just now mentioned. II. LET OUR LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR BE WITHOUT DISSIMULATION. III. LET OUR LOVE OF OURSELVES BE WITHOUT DISSIMULATION. To love ourselves without dissimulation is carefully to consult our truest interest; to endeavour to advance by all suitable means the real happiness both of our souls and bodies; to aim at the most lasting and most solid enjoyments. (*N. Brady.*) *Religious affections:*—I. "LET LOVE BE WITHOUT DISSIMULATION," *i.e.* without any of that pretence which goes by the name of acting. Actors represent characters which are not their own without intending to deceive; but in proportion to the excellence of their performance is the degree of illusion in the beholder. Be sure that you are not merely acting a part in your kindness to men or reverence to God. Feel what you profess to feel. Think as you seem to think. Else is your life little other than stage play. 1. How do men commonly express their love of God? By prayers, praises, honouring God's Word and day and ordinances. But what if whilst they do all these things outwardly their hearts be far from God? 2. As to our love towards each other: what can be more like acting than to conceal our dislike by words of overstrained civility, or to offer a kindness which we wish never to have to do, or to inflict chastisement on the plea of duty, when we are all the while gratifying revenge? II. "ABHOR THAT WHICH IS EVIL." Here we see what Christians are allowed to hate and how far they may carry their hatred. 1. To wish that we might sin safely, to go as near to sin as seems anyhow allowable, and to envy the wicked in their prosperity, and when out of fear or prudence we have left off their practices, how far is this from abhorring evil? 2. Questions often arise as to whether it is fitting for a Christian to partake of this amusement, to engage in that employment, or to enter into the other company. In such discussions many argue as if it were desirable to take all the liberty they can. And frequently they act on the presumption that what is easy to argue is safe also to do. But how different would be their conclusion if they would but bear this text in mind! The mere suspicion that any conduct might possibly be wrong, should be quite sufficient ground for us to desist. And where duty may seem to put us in temptation's way, we should at least take all the pains in our power to make it as little tempting to us as possible. We inquire not, when we hear of plague or famine, of battle or murder, which road will take us most into the way of them, but which will lead us altogether farthest off. 3. To abhor evil in our food is to abominate excess; in our drinking, to detest drunkenness; in our dress, to feel finery as great a burden to ourselves, as it is a folly in the eyes of others; in our thoughts, to recoil from uncharitable suspicion and unkind intentions towards men, and from unthankful regards to God; in our speech, to wish rather that our tongue should cleave unto our mouth than utter one word of bitterness or deceit; in our business, to hate idleness, and yet to loathe the very notion of heaping up hoards of wealth; in our dealings, to shrink with antipathy from dishonesty or oppression, and from that love of this present world which is treason to our Saviour Christ. 4. To abhor evil is not merely to avoid it because it is discreditable, not merely to fear to do it lest it should bring us into trouble, but to hate it for its own sake, because God has forbidden it, and especially because it was for the evil of our sins that Christ died on the Cross. III. CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD. 1. Whatsoever our Lord has revealed to be believed, commanded to be done, given to be obtained on earth, or promised to be enjoyed in heaven, this is that which is good; this is that which we should so love as to cleave to it with the most fond and persevering affection. Constancy is the highest excellence in love (James i. 8; John xiii. 1; Matt. xxiv. 13; Rom. ii. 7; 1 Pet. v. 9). 2. It is easy to think good thoughts for short seasons: but how easy to do evil between whiles! It is easy to mean well; but how common to act ill! It is easy to form purposes of amendment; but how seldom do these lead to a renewal of life! Let

us, then, lay to heart this counsel of the text. When once we have hold of any holy purpose let us never let it go. This is the only safe way to holiness and heaven. We must serve God through Christ continually. (*Canon Girdlestone.*) *Love without dissimulation*:—I. WHAT IS THIS? Love should—1. Proceed from the heart. 2. Be expressed in the actions. II. WHY SHOULD WE THUS LOVE? Otherwise it is—1. Hypocrisy before God. 2. A deceiving of our neighbour. 3. No true love. Conclusion: Love one another. 1. It is the fulfilling of the law (chap. xiii. 8-10). 2. The special command of Christ (John xiii. 34). 3. The principal mark of a true Christian (John xiii. 35). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Love without dissimulation* is sincere—I. IN FEELING AND MOTIVE. II. IN EXPRESSION AND DEED; it abhors evil. III. IN ITS CHOICE ATTACHMENTS; it cleaves to that which is good (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Dissimulating love*:—If disinterestedness is anywhere to be looked for, it is in love. Many of our faculties are known to be venal. But one can hardly repress astonishment at the implication that this most princely of all the soul's attributes is, after all, bribable. Yet it is so; and love dissimulates whenever it expresses more than it feels, and for an interested purpose. This we call blandishment. We trace this in—I. THE HOME. The gentle and unstudied ways of domestic love have nothing in the world to equal them. But because of that they are counterfeited. The wife would fain stay the anger of the husband, and she throws upon him an affection that she does not at all feel. He would fain charm away her jealousy by an affectionateness of demeanour that has only a purpose in it, and not a heart. She would subdue his obstinacy, and she throws round about him the arms of sweet caress, for the sole purpose of changing his will and gaining her end. Is there no occasion, then, to say, "Let love be without dissimulation"? If you would barter anything, let it not be the heart of love in man. I love the sturdy honesty, the simplicity, the truthfulness of love; and I abhor the arts and wiles and gaieties of love, that are mere baits. II. THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP. Men are a thousand times more friendly than the capital of friendship will allow. They behave to each other in a manner which is deceptive even where it is a good-natured habit; but still more deceptive where it has an end in view, as constantly it has. I do not refer to that general kindness which we ought to express toward all. I do not criticise that etiquette, that kindly way, which real high breeding inspires. That is right. The host should be glad to greet every guest; but what if he should impress upon every man the feeling that he had the first place in the heart of his host? The artful addresses which are continually made to the weaknesses of man as if they were virtues—the flattery of silence, of surprise, of a well-timed start, of an interjection, of title and terms, is not honest. Although there may be a half-consciousness in the victim that all this is feigned, yet it is too sweet to be refused, and he is damaged by it as much as the person that uses it. III. COQUETRY. The dissembling some of the phases of love is a lure which both men and women employ for the promotion of their personal pleasure and self-love. It is a common trick to inspire those about you with an inordinate opinion of their worth in your eyes. To all coquettes the apostle's injunction should come most solemnly. IV. SOCIAL LIFE. There is a loathsome parasite which fastens on men and upon families—viz. the toady. It is the business of such despicable creatures to suck out their own living by assuming all the airs and practising all the blandishments of a true friendship. They praise your words. They take your side in every quarrel. They are a false mirror in which you are handsomer than you are really by nature. Such persons stop at no falseness. They wear all the habiliments of affection only to soil them. They are the bloodsuckers of the heart. And applied to such, the apostolic injunction is terribly pointed. V. THE WORLD OF BUSINESS. 1. See the cunning confidential clerk, or confidential lawyer, that nestles under the wing of the rich principal. See how in everything he praises him; how he avoids his anger; how he cripples every element of manhood that he may still lie close to the favour of his rich patron—and all for his own sake. Society is full of these despicable creatures. 2. But many a merchant will put on all the airs of a flatterer in order that he may manage a rebellious creditor, or save a large debt, or prepare the way for a great success. A man comes down to the city prepared to make large purchases. The one who gets that man gets a plum! And straightway is anything too good for him? What are his vices? The clerk must feed them. He must be invited home. Your noble-hearted wife resents it. The man's character is questionable. "But," says the husband, "my interest depends upon our dining him. Mr. A. is going to dine him to-morrow, and Mr. B. next day; and he must come to our house to-day." And hospitality has to

be bribed, so that when the man has been feasted and patted, it shall be easier to drive a good bargain with him. And when the whole game has been played, the man smiles, and says, "I angled for him. He was cautious, but rose to the bait, and I landed him!" 3. On what a large scale is this carried out! It is organised. Boards of direction carry out, as a part of their schemes, the rites of hospitality. How are legislatures dined and wined! When rich, combined capitalists wish to secure some great contract, or interest, how do they put on all the guises of sympathy and intense consideration! How do they spin silver and golden webs upon men that they laugh at behind their backs! And do men think that is wrong? It is said that "When a man is in Rome, he must do as Romans do." And when a man is in hell, I suppose, he must do as hellions do! Business needs to hear God saying to it, "Let love be without dissimulation." VI. POLITICS. When once a man is bitten with the incurable fever of candidacy, see how first of all things he begins to employ the language of strong personal regard toward every man that has a vote. Before an election "condescension to men of low estate" seems to men to be the very fulness of the Bible. A vote! a vote! Anything for a vote. But as soon as the vote has done its work, and the office is secured, what a blessed balm of forgetfulness comes over him. He really does not know anybody out of his own set. The hypocrite! (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Abhor that which is evil.**—*Abhorrence of evil*:—I. WHAT EVIL. 1. Sin (1 John iii. 4). 2. Punishment (Isa. xlv. 7). II. WHAT IS IT TO ABHOR IT? 1. Our settled judgment that it is evil. 2. A hatred to it for its own sake (Psa. cxix. 113). 3. An aversion from it (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). III. WHY SHOULD WE ABHOR IT? 1. It is contrary to God's nature. 2. Repugnant to His laws (John iii. 4). 3. Destructive to our souls. IV. MEANS OF EXCITING THIS ABHORRENCE. 1. Always remember that you are Christians. 2. Avoid the occasions of sin (1 Thess. v. 22). 3. Often think whom it displeases—the great God (Gen. xxxix. 9). 4. Live always as under His eye (Psa. cxxxix. 7). 5. Remember that thou must answer for it (Eccles. xi. 9). Conclusion: 1. Repent of sins already committed; for—(1) By them you have incurred God's displeasure (Psa. vii. 11). (2) Made ourselves liable to punishment (chap. vi. 23). (3) There is no way to avoid either but by repentance (Luke xiii. 3). 2. Abhor it so as not to commit sin hereafter. Consider it is—(1) the greatest folly (Psa. xiv. 4; xciv. 8). (2) Slavery (chap. vi. 20). (3) Defilement (James i. 21; Matt. xv. 20; Job xv. 16). (4) Death of the soul (chap. viii. 24; Eph. ii. 1). 3. Unless you abhor evil God will abhor you, and you will abhor, but ineffectually, evil and yourselves too, to all eternity. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Abhorrence of evil*:—It is the peculiarity of Christianity that while it aims to exclude all sin from the heart, it does not dismember the soul by excluding from it any faculty that is natural to it. Of these hatred is one—one terribly liable to abuse, but rightly used a potent instrument in the suppression of evil. I. WHAT IS EVIL? It is twofold. A hidden power in the soul—1. Like the poison in the berry, or the deadly lightning hid in the thunder-cloud; and as it assumes a concrete form in evil men, books, institutions, &c., *i.e.*, evil appears in character and conduct. It is guilt and pollution. 2. It is vice and crime; the one personal, the other social. Crimes sometimes shock us too much; vices almost always too little. II. WHAT IS IT TO ABHOR EVIL. Abhorrence is the opposite of love. Love seeks to possess the object loved, and then to perpetuate it. Abhorrence casts the evil thing out of our heart, and then seeks to chase it out of the world. It contains the ideas of separation and destruction. III. WHY WE SHOULD ABHOR EVIL. 1. This is the very end for which Christ died—"to destroy the works of the devil." 2. It is implied in sanctification which is separation to God, and therefore separation from evil in thought, affection, purpose, practice. 3. Your personal safety lies along that line, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." 4. God employs the hatred of good men to sin as an instrument for its suppression in others. 5. No other course is open to us. We must not compromise with evil, we cannot utilise it, it is impossible to control it; we must therefore either yield to it or cast it out. IV. DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS. 1. Evil is associated with fine qualities. Don Juan and the Hebrew Lyrics are in the same volume. There are paintings in the first style of art which would be best seen at midnight without a light. Burke said, "Vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness." 2. Spurious charity. Ignorance, weakness may be used as a shield and pleaded as an excuse. 3. Social connections. 4. Self-interest. 5. Temperament. The violent and hasty, the easy and indolent are ever ready to extenuate or condone evil. 6. Timidity which shrinks from the consequences of active strife against sin. 7. Familiarity with evil. 8. Diverging views. 9. Our innate love of evil. (*W. Bell.*)

The duty of abhorring evil:—How many shun evil as inconvenient who do not abhor it as hateful; while yet the abhorrence of evil here demanded of us implies a great deal more than that shunning which satisfies, as we often think, every claim which can be made upon us. This vigorous abhorrence of evil has been the mark of God's saints and servants in all times, and from the very beginning. Let me rapidly gather a few notable proofs. More than forty years had elapsed since that treacherous murder of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi; but with what a still lively abhorrence, as though it had been the crime of yesterday, does the aged Israel, on his death-bed, disclaim any part or share in that bloody act, and detect and denounce it:—"O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Then, too, in a life which made many flaws, I mean in that of Lot, the most honourable testimony which is anywhere borne to him is this, that he was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked"; that he "dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." Still more plainly and signally does this appear in David. Hear him, as he is speaking before a heart-searching God—"I hate the works of them that turn aside"; "Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee?" with many more utterances to the same effect. The same voice finds its utterance in other Psalms, which, though they be not David's, yet breathe the spirit of David. "How often, for example, and how strongly, in the 119th Psalm—"I have vain thoughts"; or, again, "I beheld the transgressors and was grieved"; it was not, that is, a thing indifferent to him, but pain and grief that men are breaking God's law. And as with these, so no less with the righteous kings of Judah in later times—the Asas, the Hezekiahs, the Josiahs. What the others gave utterance to in word, these, as occasion offered, uttered and expressed in deed. But most signally of all this abhorrence of evil comes out in Him of whom it is written: "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." That "Get thee behind Me, Satan," uttered once to the adversary in the wilderness, was the voice of His heart at every instant, was the keynote to which His whole life was set. If all holy men have felt this abhorrence of evil, it may be well worth our while to inquire whether we have any of this righteous passion in our hearts. 1. And first, how fares it with us in regard of our temptations? Do we parley and dally with them, and to have thus, as by a certain foretaste, some shadow of the pleasure of the sin without the guilt of it? Do we plot and plan how near to the edge of the precipice we may go without falling over? Or do we rise up against temptations so soon as once they present themselves to us, knowing them afar off, indignant with ourselves that they should so much as once have suggested themselves to our minds. 2. Again, the light in which a man regards the old sins into which he may have been betrayed is instinctive, as furnishing an answer to this question, Does he really abhor what is evil? 3. But another important element is this self-examination, whether we be abhorrers of evil or no, is this: In what language are we accustomed to talk of sin, and of the violations of God's law? Have we fallen into the world's way, taken up the world's language in speaking about all this? 4. But, once more, is the sin which is in the world around us a burden to our souls and spirits? Could we with any truth take up that language of the Psalmist, "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved"? or, again, "Mine eyes run over with tears, because men keep not Thy law"? or that which found its yet higher fulfilment in the Saviour Himself, "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me"? Or do we rather feel that if we can get pretty comfortably through life, and if other men's sins do not inconvenience or damage us, they are no great concern of ours, nothing which it is any business of ours to fight against? If it be thus with us, we have not yet learned the meaning of these words, "Abhor that which is evil." One or two practical observations in conclusion. Seeing then, that we ought to have this lively hatred of evil, that, tried by the tests that have been suggested, there are probably few, if any, among us who have it to the extent we ought, how, we may very fitly inquire, shall we obtain it? St. Paul tells us how, when in the same breath he bids us to "abhor that which is evil," and to "cleave to that which is good." It is only in nearer fellowship with God, and by the inspiration of His Spirit, that we can learn our lesson of hating evil. It is in His light only that we can see light or that we can see darkness. It is holiness that condemns unholiness; it is only love which rebukes hate. Here, therefore, is the secret of abhorring evil, namely, in the dwelling with or near the God, and Him who is the Good. From Him we shall obtain weights and measures of the sanctuary

whereby to measure in just balances the false and the true; from Him the straight rule or canon which shall tell us what is crooked in our lives, what is crooked in the lives around us. (*Archbp. Trench.*) *Abhorrence of evil*:—I. EVERY FACULTY HAS IN ITSELF A CONSTITUTIONAL REPUGNANCE TO THAT WHICH TO IT IS EVIL. 1. It is a part of its health that it should have this power of rebound. The lowest forms of this feeling are simply those of dislike, then repugnance, then hatred, and then abhorrence. The very word, in its etymology, signifies that kind of affright which causes the quill or the hair of an animal to stand on end, and throws it into a violent tremor, and puts it into the attitude either of self-defence or aggression, so that every part of it is stirred up with a consuming feeling. 2. Is it not a dangerous weapon to put into a man's hands? It is a very dangerous weapon. So is fire. We must therefore use it, and use it discreetly. 3. You must learn to be good haters—but not of men. Ah! there are hundreds of men that know how to hate men, where there is one that knows how to love a man and hate evil. True, evil may in extreme cases become so wrought into individual persons that we scarcely can distinguish the one from the other; but ordinarily it is not so. 4. We are to hate all crimes against society. Whether these be within the express letter of the law or not, whether they be disreputable in the greater measure or in the less is quite immaterial. We are also to hate all qualities and actions which corrupt the individual; which injure manhood in man; all that creates sorrow or suffering, or tends to do it. II. THE WANT OF THIS MORAL REBOUND WILL BE FOUND TO BE RUINOUS. It destroys the individual to whom it is lacking, and it is mischievous to the community in which it is lacking. 1. Hatred of evil is employed by God as one of those penalties by which evil is made to suffer in such a way that it is intimidated and restrained. It makes evil hazardous. In a community where men can do as they please, wickedness is bolder. Selfishness is hateful; and if men express their hatred of it, selfish men are afraid to be as selfish as they want to be. Corrupt passions—the lava of the soul, which overflows with desolating power at times in communities—are greatly restrained by intimidations, by the threat of men's faces, and by the thunder of men's souls. 2. Abhorrence is indispensable to the purity of a man's own self who is in the midst of a "perverse and crooked generation." Now, the expressions of this feeling are by reaction the modes in which moral sense, the repugnance to evil is strengthened. And if you, for any reason, forbear to give expression to the feeling, it goes out like fire that is smothered. A man is not worthy of the name of man who has no power of indignation. I have heard it said of men that they died and had not an enemy. Well, they ought to have died a great while before! For a true man, a man that knows how to rebuke wickedness, finds enough of it to do in this world. Has a man lived forty or fifty or sixty years and never rebuked a wicked man enough to make that man hate him, so that you can put on his tomb, "He has not left an enemy"? Why, I could put that on a cabbage field. III. THE LACK OF THIS ABHORRENCE IS PITIABLY SEEN—1. In the pulpit. What are pulpits good for that go piping music over the heads of men who are guilty of gigantic transgressions? It is sad to see pulpits that dare not call things by their right names. A man had better be a John, and go into the wilderness clothed in camel's hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, than to be a fat minister in a fat pulpit, supporting himself luxuriously by betraying God and playing into the hands of the devil. 2. In public sentiment itself. It refuses to take high moral ground, and to be just and earnest. To a certain extent the evil is less in newspapers, yet it is seen very glaringly there also. We are not deficient in newspapers, which, when they are angry, avenge their prejudices and passions with great violence. But to be calm, to be just, and then without fear or favour, discriminatingly but intensely to mark and brand iniquity, and to defend righteousness—this is to make a newspaper a sublime power over the community. Alas! that there should be so few such newspapers. I think it high time that we should speak more frequently on this subject. The want of indignation at flagrant wickedness is one of the alarming symptoms of our times. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Abhorrence of evil*:—It needs no special meditation on natural history, if one meets a bear, a wolf, or a lion, to enable him to determine what he shall do. There is no time for raising questions of fact. Men do not stop to say, "After all, has not this leopard, that is so beautiful, been rather misunderstood? and may there not be a way of treating him which shall win him to beauty within as fine as the beauty that is without?" Men do not reason so about serpents, or scorpions, or tarantulas, or stinging creatures of any kind. Men have a very short process of dealing with them; they treat them to the foot or to the hand without hesitation; and they must, or accept annihilation, or else fly.

Men are instant, uncompromising in their action, at times, because there are certain great tendencies that stand connected with a man's life which, it has entered into the common sense of men, are so dangerous that they are to be abhorred instantly. If one wants to carry a tarantula into the lecture-room for the purpose of instruction in natural history, and wants to subject him to various experiments, that is one thing; that is professional; but for common life, and for common folk, we kill such creatures. (*Ibid.*) *Sin should be hateful*:—Let me illustrate this very simply. Here is a knife with a richly-carved ivory handle, a knife of excellent workmanship. Yonder woman, we will suppose, has had a dear child murdered by a cruel enemy. This knife is hers, she is pleased with it, and prizes it much. How can I make her throw that knife away? I can do it easily, for that is the knife with which her child was killed. Look at it; there is blood still upon the handle. She drops it as though it were a scorpion; she cannot bear it. "Put it away," saith she, "it killed my child! Oh, hateful thing!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Cleave to that which is good.**—*Cleaving to that which is good*:—I. WHAT IS GOOD. That which has all things required to its perfection. There is—1. Transcendent good, God (Luke xviii. 19). 2. Natural good, perfect in its nature (Gen. i. 31). 3. Moral good, conformity to right reason (1 Tim. ii. 3). II. WHAT IS IT TO CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD. 1. To approve of it. 2. To desire it. 3. To be constant in practising good works, so as to cleave to them and be one with them. III. WHY ARE WE TO CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD. Because—1. We are constantly receiving good from God. 2. We are commanded to be always doing good (Luke i. 75; Prov. xxiii. 17; Psa. cxix. 96). 3. When we do not good we sin. IV. HOW ARE WE ALWAYS TO DO GOOD. To this is required—1. Faith in Christ. (1) Nothing is in itself good, but what is done by His grace (John xv. 5). (2) Nothing accepted but by His merit (Isa. lxiv. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5). 2. It must be agreeable for the matter, to the Word of God (Isa. i. 12). 3. Done in obedience to that Word (1 Sam. xv. 22). 4. Understandingly (1 Cor. xiv. 15). 5. Willingly (Psa. cx. 3). 6. Cheerfully (Psa. xl. 8). 7. With the utmost of our power (Eccles. ix. 10). 8. In faith (chap. xiv. 23). 9. Humbly. (1) Not vainly thinking that good works come from thyself (2 Cor. iii. 5). (2) Nor expecting salvation by them. 10. To the glory of God (Matt. v. 16; 1 Cor. x. 31). V. CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD, SO AS ALWAYS TO DO IT. Consider: 1. How honourable an employment it is (1 Sam. ii. 30). The work—(1) Of angels (Heb. i. 14). (2) Of Christ (Acts x. 38). (3) Of God (Gen. i.). 2. How pleasant. (1) Thy conscience will hereby be void of offence (Acts xxiv. 16). (2) Thy heart rejoicing in the love of God (Phil. iv. 4). 3. How profitable. Hereby thou wilt gain—(1) Honour to thy religion. (2) God's favour to thyself (Isa. lxvi. 2). (3) An assurance of thy interest in Christ (James ii. 26). (4) The concurrence of all things to thy good (chap. viii. 28). (5) Eternal happiness (Matt. xxv. 46). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Cleaving to that which is good*:—We all know how the ivy clings to the wall or to the tree, casts out innumerable little arms and tentacles by which it attaches and fastens itself to it, seeking to become one with it, to grow to it, so that only by main force the two can be torn asunder. It is something of this kind which is meant here. In such fashion cleave to that which is good; and if "to that which is good," then, as the sole condition of this, to Him that is good, who is the Good, the Holy, the Just One. (*Abp. Trench.*)

Ver. 10. **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.**—*Duties of Christians to each other*:—1. All men ought to love each other as men because brethren by Adam. The world is one common family, split up by sin, but to be united again by Christian love. 2. All Christians ought to love each other, because begotten by one Spirit. Grace has done little for those who indulge in the same feelings as unregenerate worldlings. 3. All Christian Churches ought to love each other because under the rule of the same King. Alas, how little do we see of this! Paul lays down three rules for the guidance of Christians towards each other. I. BE KINDLY AFFECTIONED. The world's morality says, Take care of self. Paul teaches the reverse. Scoffers say that many moral men are better than professors. Not better than true professors. And besides, the world must remember that it is indebted to Christianity for its high-toned morality. Christianity has developed the spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice in the world. The affection of the text is not the sympathy, assistance and respect which prevail among moral men, but an affection begotten of love to God. II. IN BROTHERLY LOVE. What more beautiful than a harmonious family—defending each other's characters, and caring for each other's wants. This—only purer, brighter, more fervent—should be seen in the Church.

Each Christian should defend his brother, help the weak, and regard all with unbounded charity. Brotherly love avoids saying or doing anything that would offend the modesty or honour of a brother. III. IN HONOUR PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER. In love and honour outdoing each other. Taking the lead, showing the example in giving honour. How often we strive to outdo each other in *getting* honour! If there must be contention, let it be an honest strife who shall be most humble and useful. We should in honour prefer one another because—1. We know ourselves best. We know our evil hearts, and looking into them, we can easily believe that others are better and more deserving. 2. It would curb uncharitable thought, and uncharitable speech. 3. It would tend to the cultivation of the grace of humility. Lessons: 1. Cherish no evil towards a brother. No Church can prosper which is not united by the love of God. 2. Resentment is almost sure to beget resentment. 3. He that would be the most honoured must be the most humble. (*J. E. Hargreaves.*) *Kindly affection and brotherly love:*—The words in the original are more strong and specific than in our translation. The being kindly affectioned is expressed by a term which means the love of kindred, or by some called instinctive; and which is far more intense than the general good liking that obtains between man and man in society, or than ordinary friendship. And, to stamp upon it a still greater peculiarity and force, "brotherly love" is added to it—an affection the distinction of which from that of charity is clearly brought out by Peter (i. 7), "And to brotherly kindness add charity"—the same with brotherly love in the original; and as distinct from general love or charity in the moral, as the magnetic attraction is from the general attraction of gravity in the material world. This more special affinity which binds together the members of the same family; and even of wider communities, as when it establishes a sort of felt brotherhood, an *esprit de corps*, between citizens of the same town, or inhabitants of the same country, or members of the same profession, and so originates the several ties of consanguinity or neighbourhood or patriotism—is nowhere exemplified in greater force than among the disciples of a common Christianity, if theirs be indeed the genuine faith of the gospel. It is in fact one of the tests or badges of a real discipleship (1 John iii. 14). It gives rise to that more special benevolence which we owe to the "household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10), as distinguished from the common beneficence which we owe "unto all men," and which stood so visibly forth in the first ages among the fellow-worshippers of Jesus as to have made it common with observers to say, "Behold how these Christians love each other." (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Kindly affection and brotherly love:*—I. WHEREIN ARE WE TO EXPRESS OUR AFFECTION TO ONE ANOTHER? 1. In desiring one another's good (1 Tim. ii. 1). 2. In rejoicing in one another's prosperity (ver. 15). 3. In pitying one another's misery (ver. 15; Isa. lxiii. 9). 4. In forgiving one another's injuries (Matt. vi. 14, 15). 5. In helping one another's necessities (1 John iii. 17, 18). II. WHY SO KINDLY AFFECTIONED. 1. We are commanded to do it (John xiii. 34). 2. No other command can be performed without this (chap. xiii. 10). 3. Neither can we love God without it (1 John iii. 17). 4. This is true religion (James i. 27). 5. Because we are all brethren—(1) In Adam as to the flesh (Acts xxii. 1). (2) In Christ as to the Spirit (1 Cor. xv. 58; Phil. i. 14). Conclusion: Be kindly affectioned to all persons. Objections: 1. They are wicked. (1) Thou canst not say that they are more wicked than thyself (1 Tim. i. 15). (2) They may be saved, and thou lost (Matt. vii. 1). (3) Thou art to hate their sins, yet love them (Psa. xcix. 8). 2. They wronged me. (1) Thou knowest not but their iniquity was thy good, as in Joseph's brethren. (2) Thou hast injured God (Matt. vi. 14, 15). (3) Their sins cannot absolve thee from thy duty. 3. But they are still my enemies. Then thou hast a special command to love them (Matt. v. 44, 46). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Kindness, words of: their influence:*—Good words do more than hard speeches, as the sunbeams, without any noise, will make the traveller cast off his cloak, which all the blustering winds could not do, but only make him bind it closer to him. (*Abp. Leighton.*) *Brotherly love:*—All men are objects of God's compassion; and we are required to approve ourselves His children by manifesting a like spirit of love towards all men (Lev. xix. 18; Luke x. 25–37). But as a man, while cherishing affection for every man, is required also to have special affection for his country, near kindred, and very specially his parents, wife, and children; so a Christian is required to cultivate a peculiar affection towards his fellow-Christians. I. THE GROUND OR REASON OF THIS SPECIAL BROTHERLY AFFECTION. Their common special relationship to God and through Him to each other. They are "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The model for this love is the example furnished by Him who is "the Firstborn among many brethren" (John xv. 12, 13;

1 John iii. 16; Eph. iv. 32, v. 1, 2). The special reasons are—1. The world's hatred (John xv. 18, 19; Mark x. 28–30). It was doubtless in anticipation of the manifestation of this affection. 2. The more effectual advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world (John xiii. 31–35; xvii. 11–21). 3. That the mutual oversight and care necessary to promote each other's spiritual perfection might be ensured (Phil. ii. 4; 1 Thess. v. 14; Heb. x. 24; Col. iii. 16; Gal. v. 13). II. ITS SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Kindly or family affection. The word φιλόστοργος expresses properly the strong natural affection between parents and children. Love here is within a sacred enclosure, being more conscious of a common interest, and more profoundly affected by the joy or grief, the success or failure of any one within the circle. On this account it is more jealous of the character and reputation of its objects, because of the consciousness that anything disreputable on the part of one brings discredit on the whole. It is also more sensitive, because of its greater intensity, being painfully alive to things which outside that sacred circle would hardly be considered worthy of notice. 2. Emulousness to take the lead in showing respect to the brethren. "In honour preferring one another" (Phil. ii. 3). The apostle's meaning is not that, in respect to honour, we are to strive to excel or to anticipate each other; although of course there is a sphere for legitimate rivalry. And as every one may lawfully covet earnestly the best gifts, so every one ought to endeavour so to excel in all goodness. But it is more agreeable to the context to render, "In yielding, or giving honour to each other, taking the lead," *i.e.*, Let every one of you so love the brethren as to set an example of true Christian courtesy. (*W. Tyson.*) *Brotherly love*:—I. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE IN SOME MEASURE KINDLY AFFECTIONED ONE TO THE OTHER, WITHOUT HAVING THAT LOVE OF WHICH THE APOSTLE SPEAKS. There is a natural affection in man's heart—the love of parents and children, brothers and sisters. This affection may often be seen strongly in those who are strangers to true religion. II. HOW GREATLY IS THIS AFFECTION EXALTED WHEN GRAFTED WITH A HIGHER PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. The grace of God does not destroy natural affection, but increases and purifies. 1. It springs from higher and purer motives—from love to God and a sincere endeavour to obey the command of Christ, that "we should love one another." 2. It aims at higher ends—the glory of God, and the spiritual good of those we love. 3. It gives more entire confidence one with another. 4. It is more certain, more steady. 5. It spreads wide. While it seeks first the happiness of those most near and dear, it embraces also all who are of the household of faith. III. THE WAYS IN WHICH THIS AFFECTION WILL SHOW ITSELF. 1. In the honourable preference of one another; in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than ourselves. 2. In a constant kindness, obligingness, and courteousness; teaching us to avoid everything which is grating and painful to the feelings of others. 3. In bearing and forbearing much, and in readily forgiving. 4. In giving faithful counsel, and, if need be, faithful reproof to others. 5. In praying for others. IV. SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES, to practise it. 1. Joseph. 2. Jonathan for David. (*E. Blencowe, M.A.*) **In honour preferring one another.**—I. THE HONOUR DONE TO OTHERS. 1. An acknowledgment of what is excellent in others. (1) Authority (1 Pet. ii. 17). (2) Superiority. (3) Virtue (Prov. xii. 26). 2. Expressed by outward signs (Gen. xlii. 6; Acts xxvi. 25). II. HOW ARE WE TO PREFER ONE BEFORE ANOTHER? 1. By having modest thoughts of ourselves (Prov. xxvi. 12). 2. By having a just esteem of others' excellencies (1 Pet. ii. 17). 3. By accounting all others better than ourselves (Phil. ii. 3; Isa. lxv. 5). III. WHY SHOULD WE DO SO? It will—1. Preserve peace. 2. Avoid confusion. 3. Manifest ourselves Christians. (*Bp. Beveridge.*)

Ver. 11. **Not slothful in business.**—I. WE HAVE ALL BUSINESS TO DO. 1. In our particular calling and station in the world (1 Thess. iv. 11). 2. In our general calling (Phil. ii. 12). (1) Repentance (Luke xiii. 3). (2) Faith (Acts xvi. 30, 31). (3) To get our sins pardoned. (4) And so God reconciled. (5) And our souls in a capacity for heaven (Heb. xii. 14). II. HOW ARE WE NOT TO BE SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS? 1. Not to live as if we had nothing to do. 2. Not to be slothful in doing what we do (Eccles. ix. 10). 3. Especially, not to be indifferent as to the grand affairs of our souls (Rev. iii. 16). Conclusion: Consider—1. You have a great deal of work to do. 2. But a little time to do it in (James iv. 13). 3. Eternity depends on your doing your work here. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The influence of great truths on little things*:—These words constitute an incomplete quotation, and I use them only as representing the entire passage of which they form an organic part. The whole extends from the third verse onwards to the close

of the chapter, and contains in all twenty-six clauses, expressive negatively or positively of twenty-three graces of the Christian character. I invite attention, in the first place, to the relation in which they all stand to the life and hope of the Christian. The connecting word with which the chapter opens—"therefore"—"I beseech you, therefore"—looks both backwards to the chapters preceding and forwards to the verses that follow. In the look backwards we find the grand Christian motive. The life of holiness is to be lived, not that we may be saved, but because we are saved. Having laid down this obligation, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," the apostle next expresses, in the second verse, the grand principle of all holiness. It can only have its spring in a total change of heart and life, wrought in us by the mighty Spirit of God—in the gift of a new nature with its own spiritual senses and experiences. And then, in the remainder of the chapter, he traces this great change into its details. It is as if we watched the beginning of some great river rising, like the springs of the Jordan, where the strong clear waters rush upwards in their strength, and then followed them as they flowed into a hundred divergent streams, carrying beauty and abundance through the smiling land, till they meet again to flow into the ocean. With what rich abundance the apostle heaps grace upon grace: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." I. We may learn from these words THE INFLUENCE OF GREAT TRUTHS ON THE DETAILS OF CHRISTIAN PRACTICE. The truths, explained in the previous part of the Epistle, are almost the grandest that can possibly occupy human thought. Not only does the apostle explain in detail the method of salvation, but in doing so he takes in the full breadth of the Divine action. But I think we must be conscious of a danger arising from the very greatness of these truths. The distance between them and the apparently trivial details of daily life and conduct is so immense that we fail to bring the greatness of the one into contact with the littleness of the other. We get as far as the second verse of the chapter; but there we stop. We admit that a Christian, the object of such a love, tainted with a fatal crime, but redeemed by such a price as the precious blood of Christ, made inheritor of such a glory, should act worthy of his calling, and that, as he is different from other men in his hopes, so he ought to differ from them also in his life and in his modes of thinking, speaking, and acting; but when the time and occasion come for applying this to practice we fail. We have not faith enough to link the grand hope to the little actions. It seems to me that the whole of this chapter, and the energy with which the apostle presses the great motive into the details of the life, is one long witness against it. How minute are the graces enumerated! They do not belong to the few grand opportunities which occur now and then, but to the practical familiarities which enter into the daily life of all. The constancy of little occasions is an incalculably greater trial of faith than a few occasional opportunities, which, as it were, rally effort, and stimulate by their greatness the courage and zeal which become weary and evaporate amid the details of daily obedience. Nor is it only that the occasions are small in themselves, but it is also that so many secondary motives and influences become mixed up with them, and intervene between our clear sight of duty and the occasion of practising it as to throw us off our guard. Just as in a piece of machinery the moving force must be strong in proportion to the distance at which it needs to act, so the smallest occasions that lie, as it were, on the edge and outer confines of our life need the mightiest of motives to reach them and keep them in motion. II. We may extend the same truth a step further, and learn that EVERY GRACE HAS ITS CORRESPONDING TEMPTATION—the shadow, as it were, thrown by it on the sunshine of the other world. For instance, in giving, is there not danger of the affectation of an air of superiority and a disposition to magnify our gift? Therefore we are warned, "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." When we are placed in a position of authority are we not often tempted to relax effort and yield to self-indulgence? Therefore, he "that ruleth" let him do it "with diligence." In showing mercy is there not a danger in forgiving unwillingly, as if we reluctantly yielded to the duty of mercifulness? Therefore, "he that showeth mercy" let him do it "with cheerfulness." In cultivating love to all men is there not danger of insincerity? Therefore, "Let love be without dissimulation." So, on the other side, "be not slothful in business"; for such I still believe to be the true meaning of the words, in spite of criticism. Is there not danger of becoming absorbed in it? Therefore, "be fervent in spirit." Yet, may not an enthusiastic energetic temper take a wrong direction? Therefore let it be "serving the Lord."

So in another way, "rejoicing in hope," and therefore, because a bright hope should give us strength to bear and constancy to endure, whereas we often see persons of a bright and buoyant temperament easily depressed in sorrow, "be patient in tribulation." Then, as this twofold grace of cheerfulness and patience is not easy to human nature—though, thank God, we often see them combined in the saints of Christ—therefore let us seek strength where alone it can be had, "continuing instant in prayer." Thus there is a strict connection everywhere, and we need to learn from it. A little self-knowledge will convince us that, even when we do the right thing, we are apt to do it in the wrong way. The shadow and taint of our corrupt nature cling to us everywhere, and nothing but the most generous love of God sweeping away little temptations, as the strong river carries the fallen leaves upon its surface, will enable us to get rid of it. (*Canon Garbett.*) *Diligence in business* :—Every Christian—I. SHOULD HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO DO. If not in the world—1. In social life. 2. In the Church. II. SHOULD DISCHARGE IT WITH DILIGENCE. 1. As a Christian duty. 2. As a part of his moral education. 3. As responsible to the great Master for the use of his ability. III. IS PROMPTED TO THIS COURSE BY THE MOST IMPRESSIVE CONSIDERATIONS. 1. Life is the time for work. 2. Is soon ended. 3. Is followed by a just reward. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Business and godliness* :—Christianity addresses itself to man as he is—as a citizen of the world, having work in the world to do. But as he belongs to another, and owes duties to it—the perfection in obedience consists in maintaining a just equipoise between the two. Religion is a discipline for the whole man. The workshop may be made as good a sanctuary as the cloister. I. A LIFE OF ACTIVE USEFULNESS IS OBLIGATORY UPON ALL OF US. 1. Neither rank nor wealth can confer a prerogative to be idle. All God's gifts to us are for some beneficial use, and we dishonour them by allowing them to lie idle. Circumstances may determine for each what his work shall be. But the command to work is universal, and came in with the Fall. 2. And, for a fallen being, there is no reason but to believe such a command is merciful and wise. Continual employment keeps the soul from much evil. Active engagements, so long as they are not so engrossing as to draw our hearts away from better things, give a healthy tone to the mind and strengthen moral energy. Next to devotion (and a man cannot be engaged in that always), there is no relief against wearing anxieties so effectual as the necessity of engrossing work. With nothing to do but to sit still and hear the enemy of souls make the most and worst of our troubles, we should soon get to think ourselves the most ill-used people in the world, and murmur in secret both against God and man. II. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE BUSIEST LIFE, AS SUCH, WHICH IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CLAIMS OF PERSONAL RELIGION. 1. Scripture teems with examples of those who, while laborious in the duties of their station, were most exact in the duties which they owed to God. Leaving the greatest of all, look at Joseph, Moses, David and Daniel. And like examples the Church has had in all ages. Xavier among churchmen, Sir Matthew Hale among judges, Wilberforce and Buxton among statesmen, Gardiner and Havelock among soldiers, have all left records that prayer never spoiled work, and that work must never interfere with prayer. 2. But this compatibility of business with godliness does not rest upon specific acts or examples, though Heb. xi. is full of them. Religion consists not so much in the super-addition of certain acts of worship to the duties of common life, as in leavening the latter with the spirit of the former, and life's common work will be accepted as worship if we set about it in a religious spirit. The husbandman when he tills the ground with a thankful heart, the merchant when for all success he gives God the glory, the servant who in all fidelity discharges the duties of his trust, each offering to God a continual sacrifice. III. SO FAR FROM THE ACTIVE DUTIES OF LIFE PRESENTING ANY BARRIER TO OUR PROFICIENCY IN PERSONAL RELIGION, THEY ARE THE VERY FIELD IN WHICH ITS HIGHER GRACES ARE TO BE EXERCISED, AND ITS NOBLEST TRIUMPHS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED. We sometimes repine at the spiritual hindrances connected with our outward lot: but the hindrance is in ourselves. We have not practised ourselves in the worship of God in the world; the religion of the toiling hand or brain. Yet this is what is required of us, and that which has always distinguished the hard-working saints of God from the common run of men. Every lot in life will serve us with occasions of serving God. We may be diligent in business—even more diligent than other men—and yet the world will soon be able to take note of us that we have been with Jesus. Conclusion: Wherefore be it ours to find out the golden mean. "Be not righteous over much," as if saying prayers were everything. Be not careful over much, as if bread for the body were everything. We cannot neglect either, and may not disparage

either; and therefore that which God hath joined together let no man put asunder. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Business and religion*:—I. IT IS A FALSE OPINION WHICH WOULD MAKE LABOUR THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN. 1. Labour was God's ordinance whilst man was in paradise. The curse provoked by disobedience was not work, but painful work. 2. Employment is appointed to every living thing. The highest of heaven's angels has his duties to fulfil; and the meanest of earth's insects must be busy or perish. It is the running water which keeps fresh; it is the air fanned by winds which is wholesome; it is the metal that is in use that does not rust. 3. There is wisdom and goodness in the difference placed between man and animals. From man, the lord of this lower creation, there is demanded labour, and ingenuity, before he can be provided with the common necessaries of life. Whatsoever is beautiful in art, sublime in science, or refined in happiness, is virtually due to the operation of that law of labour, against which so many are tempted to murmur. The unemployed man is always dissatisfied and restless. II. WHATEVER IS WORTH DOING AT ALL IS WORTH DOING WELL. You frequently meet with persons who occasionally will exert much diligence to produce something excellent, but who, at other times, care nothing, so long as a duty be performed, how slovenly may be the performance. And it is against this temper that our text directs its emphasis. What a man is in one thing, that in the main will he be in another. If industrious only by fits and starts in business, he will be industrious only by fits and starts in religion —a habit injurious to both. If I fritter away my time through being "slothful in business," fewer hours are employed than I might have had for providing for eternity. III. THERE CANNOT BE A GREATER MISTAKE THAN TO DIVIDE EMPLOYMENTS INTO SECULAR AND SPIRITUAL. The businesses of life are so many Divine institutions, and, if prosecuted in a right spirit, are the businesses of eternity, through which the soul grows in grace, and lasting glory is secured. If men are but "fervent in spirit," then are they "serving the Lord" through their very diligence in business. And if this be so, then is diligence in business to be urged by precisely the same motives as diligence in prayer, in the study of the Bible, or in works of piety and of faith. For our earthly callings are the appointments of God; and are therefore means through which you are to work out your salvation; and consequently the servant, the mechanic, the merchant, and the scholar must "do with their might whatsoever their hand findeth to do." IV. BUT THERE ARE DUTIES WHICH ARE MORE OPENLY CONNECTED THAN OTHERS WITH THE SAVING OF THE SOUL. It is not the representation of Scripture that religion is an easy thing; so that immortality may be secured with no great effort. Admitting that we are justified simply through faith, nevertheless the Christian life is likened to a battle, a race, a stewardship; so that only as we are "not slothful" in religion, have we right to suppose that we have entered on its path. Be not then slothful in the great prime business of all. Is temptation to be resisted—be "not slothful" in resistance: a half-resistance courts defeat. Is prayer to be offered—be "not slothful" in offering it: a languid prayer asks to be unanswered. Is a sacrifice to be made—be "not slothful" in making it: a tardy surrender is next akin to refusal. Be industrious in religion. We can tolerate indolence anywhere rather than here, where an eternity is at stake. Work, then, "with your might," give all diligence to make "your calling and election sure." If, by industry hereafter, you might repair the effects of indolence here, we could almost forgive you for being "slothful in business"; but now that probation is altogether limited to the present brief existence, and that the boundless future is given wholly to retribution, what are ye, if ye work not "with all your might"? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Business and religion*:—I. BUSINESS MEN REQUIRE SYMPATHY. We often hear that "business is business," as if it were some lonely island at which no ship of religion ever called, or if it did call it would find but scant welcome. This morning, however, the ship calls at the port, and the captain asks what he can do for you. You are now face to face with one who understands you, in your difficulties, disappointments, and temptations. By so much I would claim your confidence. When you therefore come up out of the market-place into the church, what do you want? If you had been spending the week in gathering violets and in cultivating orchids, I should address you in a very different tone; but the most of you have just laid down your tools, you have not shaken the world from you yet, and therefore you cannot enter into high speculation and transcendental imaginings, or even into fine points of criticism. You want a broad, sympathetic gospel, standards by which you can at once adjust yourselves to God's claim upon you. Therein is the preacher's great difficulty. He is not an academic lecturer surrounded by persons who have been spending six days in

preparation for the seventh. Probably there are not six men in this house who have been able to say to the world at the door of the church, "Stand thou here, whilst I go up and worship yonder," and the world permitted to come over the threshold remains to throw a veil between the preacher and his hearer, to excite prejudice and throw the music of revelation into discord. What a weary life is that of the man of business! Always beginning, never ending. He writes a letter that is to form a conclusion, and behold it only starts a more voluminous correspondence. What with orders half completed, money half paid or not paid, responsibilities ignored, discoveries of untrustworthiness on the part of the most trusted, the wonder is that business men can live at all. The Christian preacher, therefore, must recognise their difficulties, and not regard them as if they and he had been living all the week in a great cloud full of angels. II. BUSINESS HAS ITS BOUNDARIES. You are limited by health, time, the incapacity of others, by a thousand necessities. 1. Thank God, therefore, if Parliament takes hold of you and says, "You shall rest to-day." It is your commercial, intellectual, and moral salvation. You recover yourselves within those four-and-twenty hours: the very act of closing the book and saying, "I cannot open that until Monday morning" is itself the beginning of a religious blessing. What then have you to do? You have to meet that from the other side by sympathy, by joyful acquiescence, so as to get the most and the best out of the arrangement. 2. You brought nothing into the world, and it is certain you can carry nothing out. What is the end, therefore, of all this anxiety and toil and sleeplessness? Christ says, "Which of you by multiplying worry and fret can accomplish anything beyond the limits that God has imposed upon you?" If you could show that to-day's anxiety would bring to-morrow's success, then it would be justified. III. BUSINESS IS A GREAT SCIENCE. No business man can be an uneducated man. He may never have been at school, but we do not get our education at school: there we get the tools, hints, and suggestions which we may turn to profit subsequently; but our education we get in the world, in social collisions, in having to work out the great practical problems of life and time. Why, the medical man tells me, after I have read all my books, that I must go to the bedside to learn to be a doctor. And the navigator tells me that after I have studied all the mathematics of navigation I must go to sea in order to be a high nautical authority. And so we must go into the practical, real engagements of life in order to be truly educated. IV. BUSINESS SUCCESS DEPENDS ON DILIGENCE. It is possible for a man of the very finest capacity to be put in circumstances which overpower him; to pass in at the wrong door, and not get back again. Such men have my sympathy. But there are others who often come to me in distress, whose criticism upon life would be comical if it were not too sad in its unreality and untruth. Let me suppose that I am a business man in your sense of the term. I plan, scheme, go to my work, upbraiding the light for being so long in coming, and leave it—upbraiding the light for going away so soon. I succeed, retire, and am a rich man. What does the individual referred to say? "You have been very fortunate." Is that true? What did he do? Went to business at nine with his hands in his pockets, looked over the door, came back and gossiped with the first person that was fool enough to waste his time with him—was very anxious to know from the papers what was going to be done fifteen thousand miles away from his place of business, went home at four o'clock, and he calls me a fortunate man! Fortunate? No—"be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The men who like their work, do it joyfully, and when it is done are proud of it, and those who engage them are proud of them and their work too—those men deserve success. V. I CLAIM BUSINESS MEN FOR CHRIST. Let me tell you why. 1. Without faith you could not conduct your business; you deal with men whom you have never seen, you base your connection upon written authority; you venture and incur risk. By such experiments and engagements you enter into the very spirit of faith. In the Christian kingdom we walk by faith, and not by sight; we venture upon Christ—we risk it. 2. You know what preparation is. You have apprenticeships, you say that a certain seed sown will produce a certain result—but not to-morrow: you have to wait and trust in the outworking of great eternal laws. In the Christian kingdom we have to do just the same. 3. I claim you business men for Christ, men with clear understandings, resolute wills, and ask you to accept the great mystery of this Christian kingdom. It will go with you through all your engagements, it will turn your water into wine, it will relieve your perplexities, and be the solace of your solitude. Let Christ be head of your firm. The Lord thy God giveth thee power to get wealth—praise God from whom

all blessings flow. Conclusion: Diligent in business—not absorbed in, anxious about, overmastered by it. Let your object be not to gain the mere wealth, but to gain something that is better—the discipline, patience, solidity of character, which such engagements of yours tend to work out. He who comes out of business rich in gold only will soon die. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Religion and business*:—Diligence in business should not hinder fervency in spirit. Like the pure mettled sword, that can bend this way and that way, and turns to its straightness again, and stands not bent, that heart is of the right make that can stoop and bend to the lowest action of its worldly calling, but then return to its fitness for communion with God. (*W. Gurnall.*) *Religion and business*:—The Christian must not only mind heaven but attend to his daily calling. Like the pilot who, while his eye is fixed upon the star, keeps his hand upon the helm. (*T. Watson.*) *The relative importance of religion and business*:—The common practice is to reverse these words. Business is the chief concern, and religion only secondary; whereas the text teaches us that business is to be attended to as well as the duty of our calling, but religion is to be the object of our holy enthusiasm. There is a vast distinction between the expressions "not slothful" and "fervent." The one simply denotes that there is to be no loitering, or trifling, but a steady perseverance; the other denotes that there is to be an intensity of ardour. And if we give either a greater degree of attention to business than "not to be slothful" in it, or a less degree of attention to religion than to be "fervent" in it, neither our works of business nor our works of religion are a "serving the Lord." I. THE GRACE INCULCATED, "fervour in spirit." The great propriety of this is apparent, if we call to mind—1. The infinitely important matters with which it has to do. "It is not a light thing, but it is your life." "One thing is needful." 2. The regard which is due by you to your own interest. Religion has to do with the soul, and business with the body, and therefore religion is just as much more important than business as the soul is than the body. 3. That this is the great end for which you were sent into this world. The primary object of God's giving you being, was not that you might be men of business. You have a soul to save, and God created you that you might show forth His praise. II. THE SECULAR DUTY WITH WHICH THE EXERCISE OF RELIGION IS CONNECTED. Even when man was innocent, God allowed him not to be idle. It is not good, therefore, for man to be unemployed, and it is more advantageous to the exercise of piety that our entire time is not to be given to religious employments. Be this, however, as it may, the command is explicit that we be not slothful in business. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." The Book of Proverbs contains many striking exhortations on the will of God in this matter. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings," &c. The apostle also gives his command that we "study to be quiet, and to do our own business." III. THE NECESSITY OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BEING FERVENT IN SPIRIT AND NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS. 1. For the purpose of bringing down God's blessing upon our secular employments. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," &c. 2. Because activity in the concerns of business tends to deaden the mind to the claims of religion. Worldly objects are good, but they are good only as they are "sanctified by the Word of God, and by prayer"; and he who spends a portion of his time in prayer shall sooner arrive at the attainment of his object than he who has been the most diligent, but has neglected prayer. 3. Because the principles of the gospel are intended for illustration in the common every-day occurrences of life. (*J. Garwood, M.A.*) *Religion and business: the necessity of combining them*:—A poor barefooted brother once presented himself at the gate of a convent, and finding all the monks at work, gravely shook his head and remarked to the abbot, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth." "Mary hath chosen that good part." "Very well," said the abbot, with undisturbed composure, and ordered the devout stranger to a cell, and gave him a book of prayers to occupy his time. The monk retired, and sat hour after hour, until day had passed, wondering that no one offered him the slightest refreshment. Hungry and wearied out, he left his cell and repaired to the abbot. "Father," said he, "do not the brethren eat to-day?" "Oh, yes," returned the other, with a quiet smile playing over his aged face, "they have eaten plentifully." "Then, how is it, Father, that you did not call me to partake with them?" "For the simple reason," said the abbot, "that you are a spiritual man, and have no need of carnal food. For our part, we are obliged to eat, and on that account we work; but you, brother, who have chosen 'the good part,' you sit and read all the day long, and are above the want of 'the meat that perisheth.'" "Pardon me, Father," said the mortified and confounded stranger, "I perceive my mistake." (*J.*

N. Norton, D.D.) *The busy man:*—One would have supposed that with such a large and rapidly increasing business, George Moore would have had little time to attend to the organising of charitable institutions. But it was with him as with many other hardworking men. If you wish to have any good work well done, go to the busy not to the idle man. The former can find time for everything, the latter for nothing. Will, power, perseverance, and industry enable a man not only to promote his own interests, but at the same time to help others less prosperous than himself. (*S. Smiles, LL.D.*) *A cheerful word to tired people:*—There is no war between Bibles and ledgers, churches and counting-houses. On the contrary, religion accelerates business. To the judgment it gives more skilful balancing; to the will more strength; to industry more muscle; to enthusiasm a more consecrated fire. We are apt to speak of the moil and tug of business life as though it were an inquisition or a prison into which a man is thrown, or an unequal strife where, half-armed, he goes to contend. Hear me while I try to show you that God intended business life to be—I. A SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN ENERGY. After our young people have left school they need a higher education, which the collision of every-day life alone can give. And when a man has been in business for twenty or thirty years, his energy can no longer be measured by weights, plummets, or ladders. Now do you suppose that God has spent all this education on you for the purpose of making you merely a yard-stick or a steelyard? He has put you in this school to develop your energy for His cause. There is enough unemployed talent in the churches to reform all empires in three weeks. II. A SCHOOL OF PATIENCE. How many little things there are in one day's engagements to annoy. Men will break their engagements; collecting agents will come back emptyhanded; goods will fail to come, or come damaged; bad debts will be made; and under all this friction some men break down, but others find in this a school for patience, and toughen under the exposure. There was a time when they had to choke down their wrath, and bite their lip. But now they have conquered their impatience. This grace of patience is not to be got through hearing ministers preach about it; but in the world. III. A SCHOOL FOR THE ATTAINING OF KNOWLEDGE. Merchants do not read many books, nor study many lexicons, yet through the force of circumstances they get intelligent on many questions. Business is a hard schoolmistress. If her pupils will not learn, she smites them with loss. You went into some business enterprise, and lost five thousand dollars. Expensive schooling, but it was worth it. Traders in grain must know about foreign harvests; in fruits must know about the prospects of tropical production; in imported goods must know about the tariff. And so every bale of cotton, and raisin cask, and tea box, becomes a literature to our business men. Now do you suppose that God gives you these opportunities of increasing your knowledge merely to get a grander business? Can it be that you have been learning about foreign lands, and yet have no missionary spirit? about the follies and trickeries of the business world, and yet not try to bring to bear upon them this gospel which is to correct all abuses, arrest all crime, and lift up all wretchedness? Can it be that, notwithstanding your acquaintance with business, you are ignorant of those things which will last the soul long after invoices and rent rolls have been consumed in the fires of a judgment-day? IV. A SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY. No age ever offered so many inducements for scoundrelism as are offered now. It requires more grace to be honest now than it did in the days of our fathers. How rare it is that you find a man who can from his heart say, "I never cheated in trade"; but there are those who can say it, who are as pure and Christian to-day as on the day when they sold their first tierce of rice or their first firkin of butter, and who can pray without being haunted with the chink of dishonest gold, and look into the laughing faces of their children without thinking of orphans left by them penniless. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The Christian at his work:*—Every Christian ought to be a worker. If he were not one before he became a Christian, Christianity should have made him one. There is a grievous heresy wrapped up in the phrase, "the working classes." It is just as possible to be sycophantic to the poor as to the rich. The term properly understood includes many besides those destined to the drudgery of material labour. I. THE CHRISTIAN AT HIS WORK MAY FEEL THAT WORK IS A GOOD AND NOBLE THING. Christianity greatly honours honest industry. Of our race there have been two heads—the one was a gardener in Paradise, the other a carpenter in Nazareth. 1. There is a natural voice of self-respect whose tones Christianity deepens and empowers. It is honourable to be independent. There is no disgrace in deriving riches and renown from ancestors, but there is virtue and glory in obtaining them from ourselves, and

that religion which makes everything of the will and nothing of accidents, which aims ever at deepening personal interest and impressing personal responsibility, smiles ineffably at the Christian at his work. 2. Christianity attaches great importance to the exercise of the faculties. The value of daily toil is that it prevents the evils of stagnation, the wretched results of indolence. And here comes in the blessedness of the law that to eat men must work. The merely meditative often go wrong. Many have fallen into wretched theories and more wretched moods, because their thinking powers have not been yoked to their active energies. And, therefore, Christianity, which seeks the maturity and wholesome state of our nature, looks benignly on the Christian at his work. 3. Christianity, in elevating man, elevates his engagements. It cares comparatively little for the sphere and form of our outward life, but attaches every importance to its spirit and its power. It is the "good man" that makes the good, the great man that makes the great, deed. The worker is more than the work; and it is as he is. A slave, according to Paul, may do his work "unto the Lord," and make a divine service of his hard drudgery. And therefore the gospel, which makes everything of what a man is, and raises and refines him, constituting him a servant and a child of God, has only words of impressive approbation for the Christian at his work. II. THE CHRISTIAN AT HIS WORK MAY FEEL THAT HE IS FILLING THE SPHERE INTENDED FOR HIM. 1. He is not only doing what, in general, is worth doing, but he is, or should be, able to realise the appointment of God. The Bible teaches a present providence as well as an original ordinance in reference to work. But providence is not fatalism. God's appointment does not interfere with our free agency, or release us from responsibility. "Whatever is, is right," so far as it is done by God; but it may be wrong, so far as it is done by us. It is true that, in a sense, we cannot frustrate God's purpose; but there is a limit to our right of inferring our duty from its ordinations and permissions. Our worldly lot may be a matter of volition. We need not stay in a state which necessitates transgression. If we cannot live without sinning, it is a sin to live. 2. It is, then, our duty to ascertain the will of God in reference to our worldly pursuits. That which is presented to us; that which we are fitted for; that to which we are directed by circumstances; these are the evidences, interpreted by a just and godly spirit. 3. Of course, the calling must be a lawful one. A man must be satisfied of this before he can take comfort from the thought that he is "in his place." As a general rule, it is not difficult for any Christian to distinguish between lawful and unlawful callings. He who wishes to be right may be so. If a man cannot pursue his calling without violating the law of God, his course is plain. If others do wrong, that is no excuse for us. Nor is it any excuse for us if quite as much wrong will be done, whether we do it or not. We are accountable for our actions in themselves, and for our moral example. Nor may we ask Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" 4. And is it not a soul-inspiring thought for any toiler in this hard world, that he is doing the work of his heavenly Father? It is not the nature of the service, but the Being that is served, that gives importance to it. III. CHRISTIANITY WILL EXERT A DIRECT AND POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON THE CHRISTIAN AT HIS WORK. 1. It will regulate it—especially it will make work subservient to godliness. The Christian will not permit himself to be so engrossed with it as to hinder the higher work of eternal redemption. Work is a blessing; but it may become a curse. It is quite necessary that even lawful business should have its limits and intermissions. Speaking spiritually, it is good only with something else. It has to the direct means of spiritual growth the relations of exercise to food. Exercise is healthy; but it is no substitute for nourishment. (1) In this light, what a blessing is the Sabbath! It is, to take the lowest view, the drag-chain on the wheels of the soul on its secular incline. It is, to take the highest view, the replenishing it with power from on high. (2) Christianity should make us endeavour to abridge the labouring hours, when excessive, of our brethren as well as our own. The excessive toil of multitudes is, if not fatal to religion, a terrific obstacle to it. One thing at least can be done—there is no earthly need why the thousands who serve in our shops should not be earlier released from their daily drudgery. 2. The Christian at his work may be with God. "Let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God." There is no necessity for the exclusion of religious things from the mind during secular engagements. It is a strange occupation which has no moments of intermission; and to fill these with Christian meditations and prayers is the great privilege of the saint. A mind thus kept spiritual will be able to make some use of work for the purposes of the soul. How much of the carnality of worldly things, which we

lament, is owing to our own want of a fresh and lively grace? How many water-pots are there in our earthly life which, if filled by us with water, would be filled by Christ with wine? We have to do with—(1) Men. What a field of profitable thought is human nature! (2) Things. And these are suggestive. Objects, places, times, all may be yoked to the soul's chariot. He who has put his lessons of Divinest wisdom into parables taken from agriculture and commerce has taught us how we may make our secular labour the mirror and voice of most spiritual truth. 3. God may be with him. "Acknowledge Him in all thy ways, and He shall direct thy steps." And if the guidance of God may be had, His prospering blessing may be had also. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." And may there not be the presiding sense of the Divine love, "the love of God shed abroad in the heart," whatever the course of providential events, giving strength in adversity, and infusing a nobler joy in prosperity? (*A. J. Morris.*) *A consecrated merchant*:—When a certain New England merchant waited on his pastor to tell him of his earnest desire to engage in work more distinctively religious, the pastor heard him kindly. The merchant said, "My heart is so full of love to God and to man that I want to spend all my time in talking with men about these things." "No," said the pastor; "go back to your store, and be a Christian over your counter. Sell goods for Christ, and let it be seen that a man can be a Christian in trade." Years afterwards the merchant rejoiced that he had followed the advice, and the pastor rejoiced also in a broad-hearted and open-handed brother in his church, who was awake not only to home interests, but to those great enterprises of philanthropy and learning which are an honour to our age. (*Clerical Library.*) *Diligence and fervour in serving the Lord*:—1. The word rendered "business" is rightly rendered "diligence" (ver. 8), "haste" (Mark vi. 25), "care" (2 Cor. vii. 12), "carefulness" (2 Cor. vii. 11), "earnest care" (2 Cor. viii. 16), "forwardness" (2 Cor. viii. 8). It properly denotes promptness in action, earnestness in effort, and zeal in execution. Its special reference in this place is not to secular, but to Christian work. 2. It is quite true that the two first clauses express the manner in which the third is to be obeyed; but this third does not denote a distinct service, but rather requires that all service shall be rendered as unto the Lord. I. IN RESPECT TO EVERY KIND OF SERVICE, TO WHICH AS CHRISTIANS YOU ARE CALLED, LET THERE BE NO SLOTHFULNESS, BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, PROMPTNESS AND ZEAL. This exhortation will apply to—1. The conduct of secular business, inasmuch as that implicates Christian character and duty (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 7–12). The religion of Christ gives no countenance to an idle and thriftless spirit (Prov. vi. 6–8, x. 4, xxiv. 30–34). Only it will have a man to attend to his secular business in another than a secular spirit. 2. To the work of our own religious life. This will no more survive continued neglect and starvation than will the bodily life. There is for us the work of searching the Scriptures for spiritual food; of prayer and meditation for the assimilation of that food; of securing fresh air and healthful exercise by the "work of faith and labour of love." 3. To the manifestation of the graces of the Christian life. The apostle has just written of love and brotherly kindness, and he presently gives examples of the conditions under which these graces must be exercised with special care. But both involve active service (James ii. 15, 16; Prov. iii. 27, 28). 4. To all church work. In whatever department of spiritual ministry you may find your appropriate sphere of activity—whether in teaching, administration, &c.—be punctual, resolute, diligent. II. IT IS REQUIRED THAT THE INNER DISPOSITION SHALL CORRESPOND WITH THE OUTWARD ACTIVITY. As to the spirit in which the active service shall be rendered, let it be fervent. Christ was "clad with zeal as with a cloak" (Isa. lix. 17; John ii. 17; Psa. lxix. 9). Apollos "being fervent in spirit, he taught diligently the things of the Lord" (Acts xviii. 25). And wherever there is true fervour of spirit, there will certainly be diligence in service. But there may be diligence without fervour: diligence from servility, pride, ambition, selfishness (Rev. iii. 15, 16). It is important that our "zeal of God" should be "according to knowledge" certainly, but still more important that zeal there should really be (Gal. iv. 18). III. BE THUS DILIGENT AND FERVENT AS THOSE WHO ARE SERVING THE LORD. It is our boast and glory that we are the servants of the Lord Christ. We are His by right, by consent, and by open avowal. Even in our secular work, if we live up to the spirit of our profession, we are still serving Him (Eph. vi. 5–8). This it is which imparts to all labour its true dignity. (*W. Tyson.*) *On industry*:—Industry denotes the steady application and vigorous exercise of our active powers in the pursuit of some useful object. Our minds, indeed, by their

own nature, are active and restless; while we are awake they are never wholly unemployed—they are continually thinking, contriving, and imagining even in those seasons in which we are scarcely conscious of their operation. But there is a negligent state of mind in which some waste a great proportion of their time. To this negligence industry stands directly opposed. I. That if you would cultivate the industry which Christianity recommends you must SELECT PROPER OBJECTS OF PURSUIT. 1. It is the nature of the objects which we pursue that characterises our industry as useful or frivolous, as virtuous or vicious. The wicked sometimes discover the most unwearied activity in executing their schemes of guilt. They who are most negligent of their own affairs are often officially attentive to the affairs of their neighbours. There is a frivolous industry which others display in the pursuit of vanity and folly. They fly from scene to scene, seeking in every amusement a relief from that languor of mind with which indolence is always accompanied. Such persons forget that amusement ceases to be innocent when it is followed as the business of life. 2. The things which are innocent and useful are the only proper objects of that industry which the text recommends. What are these? Religion and morality. 3. But as our minds cannot be continually fixed on those great and interesting concerns; there are a variety of inferior objects in the pursuit of which our industry may be usefully exercised. Our worldly affairs, for example, demands a portion of our attention and care. It is surely pitiful in any person who is capable of exertion to be altogether ignorant of his own concerns, and to acknowledge himself unworthy of the station which he fills by committing to others the whole arrangement of his interests. He who attends not to his own affairs is not prepared either to reward the services of the faithful or to check the encroachments of the dishonest; he becomes a prey to the indolence of one, to the profusion of another, and the rapacity of a third: his wealth is dissipated he knows not how. Those who are placed in stations of trust will find in the discharge of the duties which more particularly belong to them an extensive sphere of employment, and for the faithful performance of these every person to whom they are committed is accountable to himself, to the world, and to his Maker. There are also works of general utility which, though not immediately connected with the duties of any particular station, may exercise the industry of the higher classes of men, and which their extensive influence may enable them to forward. To them it belongs to reform public abuses, to encourage useful arts, and to establish such wise regulations as may contribute to maintain the order and advance the happiness of society. 4. Even in his hours of relaxation from the more serious concerns of life the industrious man finds a variety of engagements in which he may exert the activity of his mind. II. That in the pursuit even of such objects as are innocent and useful in themselves you cannot hope to be successful unless you PURSUE THEM ACCORDING TO A REGULAR PLAN. 1. Among the objects in the prosecution of which our industry may be lawfully exercised there are some which claim our first attention, and there are others to which only a secondary regard is due. Religion first. To cultivate useful knowledge is also a proper exercise of our powers. But we value knowledge too highly if we suffer the love of it so completely to fascinate our minds as to leave to us neither leisure nor inclination for performing the duties of active benevolence; and our benevolence itself becomes excessive when we indulge it beyond the limits of our fortune, so as to involve ourselves in distress or bring misery and ruin on those who are more immediately committed to our care. 2. If you wish, then, that your industry may be successful, let it be conducted with order and regularity. Assign to every duty a suitable portion of your time. Let not one employment encroach on the season allotted for another. Thus shall you be delivered from that embarrassment which would retard your progress. Your minds, when fatigued with one employment, will find relief in applying themselves to another. The seasons which you consecrate to devotion will hallow your worldly cares; and your worldly business, in its turn, will prevent your piety from degenerating into moroseness, austerity, or enthusiasm. III. Having selected proper objects of pursuit and arranged the plan according to which you resolve to pursue them, it will be necessary that you ACT ON THIS PLAN WITH ARDOUR AND PERSEVERANCE. There may, indeed, be an excess of ardour in the pursuit even of the most valuable objects. Too close an application of mind wastes its strength, and not only unfits us for enjoying the fruits of our industry, but also obstructs our success. When our faculties are fatigued and blunted, we are no longer in a condition to make advancement in any pursuit. IV. I proceed now to suggest some arguments, with a view to RECOMMEND THE DUTY which I have

thus endeavoured to explain. 1. Consider that industry is the law of our condition. Nothing is given us by God but as the prize of labour and toil. The precious treasures of the earth lie hid from human view, and we must dig in order to find them. Our food, our raiment, our habitations, all the conveniences that minister to the defence and the comfort of our lives, are the fruits of those numberless arts which exercise the ingenuity of mankind. The circumstances in which we are placed declare the purpose of Heaven with regard to the human race, and admonish us that to abandon ourselves to sloth is to forget the end of our being. 2. Nor is industry to be chosen by man only for the sake of the many advantages which cannot otherwise be attained. It is itself a source of happiness. The mind delights in exercise. The comforts which industry procures have a relish peculiar to themselves. Business sweetens pleasure as labour sweetens rest. Recreation supposes employment; and the indolent are incapable of tasting the happiness which it is fitted to yield. 3. Industry contributes to the virtue no less than to the happiness of life. The man whose attention is fixed on any useful object is in little danger of being seduced by the solicitations of sinful pleasure; his mind is pre-engaged, and temptation courts him in vain. Among the lower orders of men idleness leads directly to injustice. It first reduces them to poverty and then tempts them to supply their wants by all the arts of dishonesty and baseness. In the higher ranks of life it leads to dissipation and extravagance. (*W. Moodie, D.D.*) *The happy combination*:—1. Business made an act of religion. 2. Religion made a business. 3. Both sanctified to the service of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Industry*:—I. THIS PRECEPT IS VIOLATED—1. By those who have no business at all. You may have seen attached to an inundated reef in the sea, a creature rooted to the rock as a plant might be, and twirling its long tentacula as an animal would do. This plant-animal's life is somewhat monotonous, for it has nothing to do but grow and twirl its feelers, float in the tide, or fold itself up on its foot-stalk when that tide has receded, for months and years together. But what greater variety marks your existence? Does not one day float over you like another, just as the tide floats over it, and find you vegetating still? Are you more useful? What real service to others did you render yesterday? And what higher end in living have you than that polypus? You go through certain mechanical routines of rising, dressing, visiting, dining, and going to sleep again; and are a little roused by the arrival of a friend, or the effort needed to write some note of ceremony. But as it curtseys in the waves, and vibrates its exploring arms, and gorges some dainty medusa, the sea-anemone goes through nearly the same round. Is this a life for a rational and responsible creature to lead? 2. By those who are diligent in trifles—whose activity is a busy idleness. Fancy this time that instead of a polypus you were changed into a swallow. There you have a creature abundantly busy. Notice how he pays his morning visits, alighting elegantly on some house-top, and twittering politely to the swallow by his side, and then away to call for his friend at the castle. And now he is gone upon his travels, gone to spend the winter at Rome or Naples, or perform some more *recherché* pilgrimage. And when he comes home next April, sure enough he has been abroad—charming climate—highly delighted with the cicadas in Italy, and the bees on Hymettus—locusts in Africa rather scarce this season; but upon the whole much pleased with his trip, and returned in high health and spirits. Now this is a very proper life for a swallow; but is it a life for you? Though the trifler does not chronicle his own vain words and wasted hours, they are noted in the memory of God. And when he looks back to the long pilgrimage, what anguish will it move to think that he has gamboled through such a world without salvation to himself, without any real benefit to his brethren. 3. By those who have proper business, but—(1) Are slothful in it. There are some persons of a dull and languid turn. They trail sluggishly through life, as if some adhesive slime were clogging every movement, and making their snail-path a waste of their very substance. They do nothing with healthy alacrity. Having no wholesome love to work, they do everything grudgingly, superficially, and at the latest moment. (2) Others there are who are a sort of perpetual somnambulists: not able to find their work, or when they have found it, not able to find their hands; too late for everything, taking their passage when the ship has sailed, locking the door when the goods are stolen. (3) Besides these there is the day-dreamer. With a foot on either side of the fire, with his chin on his bosom and the wrong end of the book turned towards him, he can pursue his self-complacent musings till he imagines himself a traveller in unknown lands—the solver of all the unsolved problems in science—the author of something so stu-

pendous that he even begins to quail at his own glory. The misery is, that whilst nothing is done towards attaining the greatness, his luxurious imagination takes its possession for granted; and a still greater misery is, that the time wasted in unprofitable musings, if spent in honest application, would go very far to carry him where his sublime imagination fain would be. Some of the finest intellects have exhaled away in this sluggish evaporation, and left no vestige except the dried froth, the obscure film which survives the drivel of vanished dreams; and others have done just enough to show how important they would have been had they awaked sooner, or kept longer awake at once. II. To AVOID THIS GUILT AND WRETCHEDNESS —1. Have a business in which diligence is lawful and desirable. The favourite pursuit of Æropus, king of Macedonia, was to make lanterns. And if your work be a high calling, you must not dissipate your energies on trifles which, lawful in themselves, are as irrelevant to you as lamp-making is to a king. Those of you who do not need to toil for your daily bread, your very leisure is a hint what the Lord would have you to do. As you have no business of your own, He would have you devote yourself to His business. 2. Having made a wise and deliberate selection of a business, go on with it, go through with it. In the heathery turf you will find a plant chiefly remarkable for its peculiar roots; from the main stem down to the minutest fibre, you will find them all abruptly terminate, as if shorn or bitten off, and superstition alleges that once it was a plant for healing all sorts of maladies, and therefore the devil bit off the roots in which its virtues resided. This plant is a good emblem of many well-meaning but little-effecting people. All their good works terminate abruptly. The devil frustrates their efficacy by cutting off their ends. But others there are who before beginning to build count the cost, and having collected their materials and laid their foundations, go on to rear their structure, indifferent to more tempting schemes. The persevering teacher who guides one child into the saving knowledge of Christ is a more useful man than his friend who gathers in a roomful of ragged children, and after a few weeks turns them all adrift on the streets again. So short is life that we can afford to lose none of it in abortive undertakings; and once we have begun it is true economy to finish. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Industry, power of*:—There is no art nor science that is too difficult for industry to attain to: it is the power of the tongue, and makes a man understood all over the world. It is the philosopher's stone, that turns all metals and even stones into gold, and suffers no want to break into its dwelling. It is the north-west passage, that brings the merchant's ships to him by a nearer and shorter path. In a word, it conquers all enemies, and gives wings to blessings. (*A. Farindon.*) *Labour and religion*:—"Business" means everything which occupies our attention, but more particularly our temporal pursuits. I. SLOTH IS INFAMOUS. It draws after it a multitude of vices and a load of sorrows. Man's nature proves that he is made for action. Without being employed, his faculties are spoilt like metals eaten by rust, but polished by use. No condition is exempt from labour. The mind is a fertile soil, and if not cultivated will bring forth weeds. God brings men into judgment for neglecting to cultivate mind, body, talents, and conveniences of life which He has bestowed. II. LABOUR IS PROFITABLE. It restrains from sin, keeps from temptation, and satisfies cravings which could only otherwise be gratified by dissipation. III. PIETY IS COMPATIBLE WITH INDUSTRY. 1. The fervent spirit is one that desires to please God. It is the same disposition directed to higher objects as actuate those who are in love with any earthly object. 2. Serving the Lord means doing good. Earthly affairs must not employ all our time. IV. ARGUMENTS TO URGE THIS. 1. The character of Him we serve. 2. The nature of the service. 3. The reward which ensues. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*) *Religion in common life*:—1. To combine business with religion is one of the most difficult parts of the Christian's trial. It is easy to be religious in church, but not so easy in the market-place; and passing from one to the other seems often like transition from a tropical to a polar climate. 2. So great is this difficulty that but few set themselves honestly to overcome it. In ancient times the common expedient was to fly the world altogether; the modern expedient, much less safe, is to compromise the matter. "Everything in its place." Prayers, &c., for Sundays, practical affairs for weekdays. Like an idler in a crowded thoroughfare, religion is jostled aside in the daily throng of life as if it had no business there. But the text affirms that the two things are compatible; that religion is not so much a duty as something that has to do with all duties, not for one day, but for all days; and that, like breathing and the circulation of the blood and growth, it may be going on simultaneously with all our actions. 3. True, if we could only prepare for the next world by retirement from this, no one

should hesitate. But no such sacrifice is demanded. As in the material world, so in the moral, there are no conflicting laws. In the latter there is a law of labour, and as God has so constituted us that without work we cannot eat, so we may conclude that religion is not inconsistent with hard work. The weight of a clock seems a heavy drag on the delicate movements of its machinery, but it is indispensable for their accuracy; and there is an analogous action of the weight of worldly work on the finer movements of man's spiritual being. The planets have a twofold motion, in their orbits and on their axes—the one motion being in the most perfect harmony with the other. So must it be that man's twofold activities round the heavenly and earthly centres jar not with each other. And that it is so will be seen from the following considerations—I. RELIGION IS A SCIENCE AND AN ART, a system of doctrines to be believed and a system of duties to be done. 1. If religious truth were like many kinds of secular truth, hard and intricate, demanding the highest order of intellect and learned leisure, then to most men the blending of religion with the necessary avocations of life would be impossible. But the gospel is no such system. The salvation it offers is not the prize of the lofty intellect, but of the lowly heart. Christianity affords scope indeed for the former, but its essential principles are patent to the simplest mind. 2. Religion as an art differs from secular acts in that it may be practised simultaneously with all other work. A medical man cannot practise surgery and engineering at the same time, but Christianity is an all-embracing profession—the art of being and doing good, an art, therefore, that all can practise. It matters not of what words a copy set a child learning to write is composed; the thing desired is that he should learn to write well. So when a man is learning to be a Christian, it matters not what his particular work in life may be, the main thing is that he learn to live well. True, prayer, meditation, &c., are necessary to religion, but they are but steps in the ladder to heaven, good only as they help us to climb. They are the irrigation and enriching of the spiritual soil—worse than useless if the crop become not more abundant. No man can become a good sailor who has never been to sea, nor a good soldier by studying a book on military tactics; so a man by study may become a theologian, but he can never become a religious man until he has acquired those habits of self-denial, gentleness, &c., which are to be acquired only in daily contact with mankind. II. RELIGION CONSISTS NOT SO MUCH IN DOING SACRED ACTS AS IN DOING SECULAR ACTS FROM A SACRED MOTIVE. There is a tendency to classify actions according to their outward form rather than according to their spirit. We arbitrarily divide literature and history into sacred and profane; and so prayer, Bible reading, public worship, &c. —and buying, selling, &c., are separated into two distinct categories. But what God hath cleansed, why should we call common? Moral qualities reside not in actions, but in the agent and his motive. A musical instrument may discourse sacred melodies better than the holiest lips, but who thinks of commending it for its piety? Just as there is no spot on earth but a holy heart may hallow, a base one desecrate; so many actions materially great and noble may, because of the spirit that pervades them, be ignoble and mean, and *vice versa*. Herod was a slave though he sat on a throne, but what kingly work was done in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth! A life spent among holy things may be intensely secular, and a life spent in the throng may be divine. A minister's preachings may be no more holy than the work of the printer who prints Bibles, or of the bookseller who sells them, and public worship may be degraded into work most worldly. But carry holy principles with you into the world, and the world will become hallowed by their presence. A Christlike spirit will Christianise all it touches. Marble or clay, it matters not with which the artist works, the touch of genius transforms the coarser material into beauty, and lends to the finer a value it never had before. Rude or refined as our earthly work may be, it will become to a holy mind only material for a godlike life. Your conversation may not consist of formally religious words, but if it be pervaded by a spirit of piety it will be Christian nevertheless. To promote the cause of Christ by furthering every religious enterprise is your duty, but you may promote it as effectually in the family and society. Rise superior, in Christ's strength, to all equivocal practices in trade; shrink from meanness, and let the abiding sense of Christ's love make you loving, and then, while your secular life will be spiritualised, your spiritual life will grow more fervent. III. As bearing on the same topic, note THE MIND'S POWER OF ACTING ON LATENT PRINCIPLES. 1. In order to live a religious life every action must be governed by religious motives. True, we cannot always be consciously thinking of religion, yet unconsciously we may be always acting under its control. As I do not think of gravitation when I

move my limbs, or of atmospheric laws when I breathe, so with religion and daily work. There are undercurrents in the ocean which act independently of the movements of the waters on the surface: so there may dwell the abiding peace of God beneath the restless stir of your worldly business. 2. Remember, too, that many of the thoughts and motives which govern our actions are latent. While reading aloud, *e.g.*, we are often carried along by the secret impression of the presence of a listener. So while business is being prosecuted may there not be a latent impression of the presence of God? 3. Have we not all felt anticipated happiness blending itself with busy work? The labourer's evening release from toil, the schoolboy's coming holiday, may illustrate that rest which remaineth for the people of God, the anticipation of which intermits not but gives zest to faithful service. Conclusion: 1. The true idea of Christian life is not periodic observances, or acts of heroism. It is a great thing to be ready to die for Christ, but it is equally great to live for Him. 2. All who wish to live that life must—(1) Devote themselves heartily to God through Christ. Life comes before growth. The soldier must enlist before he can serve. (2) Continue with Christ. You cannot live for Him unless you live much with Him. (3) Carry religious principle into everyday life. Then will your life be—(*a*) Noble; (*b*) Useful; (*c*) Permanent. No work done for Christ ever perishes. (*J. Caird, D.D.*)

Religion in daily life:—I. THE GREAT DUTIES OF DAILY LIFE ARE INDISPENSABLE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE NATURE OF MAN. The prayer-meeting, &c., were once spoken of as "means of grace," and they are such when they produce grace. But it would seem as if they were meant to exclude common occupations; whereas, everything that pertains to the well-being of the individual and the community is part and parcel of the Divine scheme. Therefore the man who bends over his bench may be as really worshipping God as he who bends over the altar. Let us look at a few points which are needed to constitute a true manhood. 1. Order. How will you learn that? Not by hearing sermons about it or thinking of it; but by the conduct of business. Business trains. Punctuality and exactitude are learned in life. 2. Carefulness, frugality, benevolence, also spring out of dealing with practical life. If you shield your child from all avocations, he may learn a small round of such things in the family; but no such education does he receive as one that is pushed out into life. One may learn boating on a pond; but a man who does well on a pond may do poorly on the Atlantic. I am not one of those who revile the denizens of Wall Street. If some sink nearly to the bottom of the scale, others rise nearly to the top. If a man in that street goes steadily on with fidelity and trustworthiness, I think he reaches about as high a mark of honesty as any man on the globe. On the other hand, there may be many who are virtuous in the farmhouse, who, when they are brought into the street and under its influence, have been destroyed. They have not been drilled in street operations. How is it with soldiers? Raw recruits are easily scattered. Why? Because they have not had drill. So, in worldly affairs, a man cannot be trusted who has not been trained in the school of those affairs. When the spiritual disposition goes with diligence in business, men find more that follows manhood in its essential elements than can be found in any temple. II. EVERY MAN OUGHT TO FIND HIS CHRISTIAN LIFE IN CONNECTION WITH THAT WHICH GOD HAS MADE HIS DAILY BUSINESS. 1. There be many with whom religion is a kind of luxury, and business a necessary evil. They mean to be religious, therefore, on the Sabbath and in the church. But religion is right-acting as well as right-thinking. The schoolboy's religion must lie in the duties of the schoolboy; the sailor's in those of the mariner; the merchant's in commercial life. You have no business to touch a thing which it is not right to do; and whatever it is right to do is compatible with fervency of spirit and real service to the Lord. 2. How cold and cheerless is the palace where there is no love; but the old brown house where you were brought up, and the old fields over whose hills you have climbed—homely as these scenes are, is there anything so beautiful when you go back to them? It is what you have put on to these old things that makes them so dear to you. So the duties of life become more agreeable by their association with that which is dear to us. The service of a mother to a child is invested with a feeling which makes it to the mother one of the most delightful of occupations; but the same service performed by any other would be odious to her. And that which we see in the mother extends more or less through every part of life. That to which you bring diligence, conscience, taste, and gladness becomes transformed. A noble-spirited man can redeem many duties which are in themselves unattractive, and make them beautiful. 3. There is no place where God puts you where it is not your duty to say, "How shall I perfume this

place and make it beautiful as the rose?" If you are a boy in school you are to perform the duties which are assigned you by your master, by reason of your allegiance to Christ. You are working in a joiner's shop; you are a shoemaker, a street-sweeper, or a boot-black; but, whatever you are, unless in some business that you know is wrong, you are not to say, "How shall I get out of this occupation in order that I may be made a Christian?" but, "How, being a Christian, shall I work grace out of this occupation?" 4. Exactitude, trustworthiness, where there is no eye but God's to see. These things constitute taking up the cross. Parents say, "Now, my son, if you won't eat any sugar or butter for six months in order that you may give to the missionaries, that will be taking up the cross." But there are enough crosses to take up without resorting to such modes as that. When a boy does not want to get up in the morning, and he gets up, he takes up the cross. When a person is cross before breakfast, that is a good time for him to take up the cross, by keeping his temper. Where one does not like to be punctual, there is a good opportunity for him to take up the cross. It is better to take up the cross in things that mean something. Men often seek artificial crosses to take up; but mostly we have crosses enough to take up in subduing the recreancy of our selfish nature to true kindness, and noble enterprise, and faithful manhood. III. MARK THE STRANGE AND INCONGRUOUS ETHICS WHICH MEN INTRODUCE INTO DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS OF THEIR LIVES. Men say that you cannot expect one to act in politics as he does in private life. Why not? Are there ten commandments for politics different from the ten commandments for the rest of life? Was the Sermon on the Mount given for men unknown to politics? It is said that you cannot expect a man to act in business as he would in his household. Why not? A man should be the same under all circumstances; and that which is true, honest, fair in the household, is true, honest, fair in the store and in the state. The scrupulousness of honour ought to augment in proportion to the enlargement of the sphere in which one acts. You cannot be a man of honour, though you tell the truth in your household and neighbourhood, if you lie without scruple in public affairs. IV. NOTE THE MISTAKE AND UNREASONABLENESS OF THOSE WHO PROPOSE TO LEAD A CHRISTIAN LIFE BEFORE THEY DIE, BUT WHO THINK THEY CANNOT FOR THE PRESENT ENTER UPON IT ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR BUSINESS. If religion were something apart from daily life, there might be some validity in this excuse; but if religion is the right conduct of a man, then everything is religious that tends to build up men in perfect manhood. Then why should one wait? Religion is to the soul what health is to the body. One does not say in respect to health, "I will wait till I have perfected this or that before I recover." On the contrary, he says, "In order that I may perfect my plans, I will seek health." A man's capacity to do business is improved by religion. There is nothing that one is called to do in life that he will not do better with a conscience void of offence and a heart at peace with God. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *A royal rule of life*:—I. CHARACTER COMES OUT OF WORK. It is what we do that educates us, rather than what we read or speculate about. Integrity of act cultivates integrity of heart; enthusiasm in effort resupplies the founts of enthusiasm in the will, and sympathetic activities nourish the emotion out of which they flow. As the roots of the oak reach down and out in the soil to the slenderest end, so strength of character is found in those unseen acts that run through the moments of each day. II. DAILY WORK ASSISTS US TO LARGER AND CLEARER VIEWS OF DIVINE TRUTH. The crazy fancies that have shattered or darkened communities came not from artisan, miner, or sailor, but from recluses. Work gives strength to the mind, and brings it to that point to which the gospel makes its appeal. Leisure has a charm, and inquiry a zest after toil. The best scholars have been trained in cities. In the country there is something of languor, but in the emulous activities of metropolitan life we make our faculties more acute and our inquisition of truth is more successful. III. BY WORK WE ENABLE OURSELVES TO INFLUENCE OTHERS FOR GOOD. In society every one affects all. There is indeed peril in this fact. An unfaithful workman may introduce into your dwelling disease and death. A negligent pilot may plunge hundreds into sorrow. A bludgeon is not needed to destroy the eye, or a hammer to ruin a watch. A grain of dirt is sufficient in either case; and so it is with secret influences at work in society. Noble work will bless those we may never see, and give progress to what is best in human life. It is not wealth inherited that is the mightiest lever, but that which is gained by work. He who lays aside for Christ a portion of his daily wage of work, preaches to the world and thereby advances the cause of the Redeemer. IV. IF WE ARE OBEDIENT TO THIS RULE OF LIFE, WE SHALL GAIN THE CLEAREST IMPRES-

SION OF IMMORTALITY. It is not in dreams that we come under the full power of the world to come; but often in toil we feel the dignity of manhood within us that is not yet revealed. The philosopher may doubt, and the enthusiast may feel that he has not grasped it; but the mother, busied with her humble service, does feel that a time is coming when her work will be recognised and rewarded. Of course, we may be so ardent in earthly pursuits as to forget everything else; but to the thoughtful worker this truth comes as an inspiring impulse. Conclusion: We gaze on the loveliness and quiet of the country, and fancy that there is the place to lead an unworldly life. Nay, there is worldliness there as truly as in Wall Street. Men fight about fences as we do about contracts. Here, indeed, in wealth and fashion and sensuality, worldliness takes root with satanic force; but here also are the finest specimens of Christian character illustrated. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Sanctified toil*:—1. The rights of wealth are secured by diligence. 2. The snares of wealth are obviated by a fervent spirit. 3. The responsibilities of wealth are discharged by serving the Lord. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Worship at work*:—Here is—1. The diligent hand. 2. The fervent heart. 3. The single eye. (*Ibid.*) **Fervent in spirit.**—I. WHAT IS IT TO BE FERVENT IN SPIRIT? To be serious and earnest in—1. The exercise of graces; in our—(1) Love to God (Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37). (2) Desires of Him (Psa. xlii. 1, 2). (3) Trust in Him (Job xiii. 25). (4) Rejoicing in Him (1 Pet. i. 8). (5) Zeal for His glory (1 Cor. x. 31), which yet must be—(*a*) Tempered with knowledge (chap. x. 2). (*b*) Regulated by His Word. (6) Repentance (Job xlii. 5, 6). (7) Faith in Christ (James ii. 26). 2. The performance of duties in—(1) Prayer (1 Cor. xiv. 15). (2) Hearing (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). (3) Meditation (Psa. xxii.). II. WHY THUS FERVENT IN SPIRIT? 1. The end of God's giving us such active spirits is that we might employ them for Him (Prov. xvi. 4). 2. Those are businesses of the greatest concern (Deut. xxx. 15). 3. Whatsoever is not done fervently is no good work (Eccles. ix. 10). Conclusion: 1. Bewail your former indifference. 2. Be more serious for the future. Consider—(1) They are great works you perform (2 Cor. ii. 16). (2) You cannot be too serious in them (Luke xvii. 10). (3) Heaven will recompense all your labours (1 Cor. xv. 58). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Fervency of spirit*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS—1. In zeal for God's glory. 2. Prompted by God's love in the heart. 3. Awakened and sustained by God's Spirit. II. WHAT ARE ITS EVIDENCES? 1. Diligence. 2. Fidelity. 3. Cheerful effort. 4. Constancy. III. WHERE IS IT NECESSARY? Everywhere. 1. In the Church. 2. In the world. 3. In the family. 4. In retirement. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Fervency a test of spirituality*:—Among the wonders which science has achieved, it has succeeded in bringing things which are invisible and impalpable to our senses within the reach of our most accurate observations. Thus the barometer makes us acquainted with the actual state of the atmosphere. It takes cognisance of the slightest variation, and every change is pointed out by its elevation or depression, so that we are accurately acquainted with the actual state of the air, and at any given time. In like manner the Christian has within him an index by which he may take cognisance, and by which he may measure the elevation and degrees of his spirituality—it is the spirit of inward devotion. However difficult it may seem to be to pronounce on the invisibilities of our spirituality, yet there is a barometer to determine the elevation or depression of the spiritual principle. It marks the changes of the soul in its aspect towards God. As the spirit of prayer mounts up, there is true spiritual elevation; and as it is restrained and falls low, there is a depression of the spiritual principle within us. As is the spirit of devotion and communion with God, such is the man. (*H. G. Salter.*) *Fervour of spirit*:—The word "fervent," in our tongue, would seem to indicate heat that prevails to such an extent as to break into a flame. In the Greek it is to be boiling hot. But whether it be the dry heat or the wet, it comes to the same point—namely, feeling, carried up to the point of disclosure. I. FERVENCY IS THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT, FEELING, AND LIFE. We are to have "fervid charity"; not languid and somnolent charity, but a charity that flames, that boils. There is no feeling which answers to the test of the Word of God that is not fervent. 1. But are not the deepest feelings often voiceless? Yes, and latent feeling is often the deepest and the best; and there are other expressions of it besides those of the tongue. The eye expresses it, the hand expresses it. The best mother is not the one who kisses her babe the oftenest, but the one that takes care of it the best. The best friends are not those that for ever hang upon your neck, but those whose whole life and occupation have found out how to serve you by the ten thousand amenities of love. But feeling must develop itself somehow. Feeling that does

not do anything is like a candle unlighted, or a fire of green wood that smokes and does not burn. 2. The religious side of human nature must glow. "Let your light shine before men." We must carry the light of feeling out to a boisterous world; and the feeling is to be carried up to an intensity such that it will burn or shine out, and be able to withstand the influences that are streaming from life on every side. Therefore you see it coupled with "Not slothful in business." You are to carry your fervency into business; you are to adapt it to your business; you are to make it a part of your business, and so a part of your religion. 3. A great many Christians claim that there is a living force in them; but when you look you never see it—it is never disclosed. For the law of force is fervency, and no man can work with any great competency except by strong feeling. II. THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL ARE TO BE ACCEPTED IN THEIR PLENITUDE AND REALITY ONLY IN A FERVENT STATE OF MIND. As I understand faith, it is such a quickening of the mind, such an expansion of its power, such a luminousness shining through it of the fires of a sanctified imagination working on moral and spiritual elements, that the whole man is lifted up into a higher sphere, and reasons upon things that are not in the vulgar court of a mere justice of the peace, but in the spiritual court of the Holy Ghost. What is God to the great mass of men? A fate; a fear; a dread; an abstraction; a machinist; a power hid behind government; a law; a something; a nothing. But when the soul has been kindled, and the understanding is regnant, and all the best affections cluster around the reason to give it expression, the heavens cannot contain God, and the earth is full of His glory and companionship. There is but one way in which you can have a sound theology, and that is by living so near to God that you have the witness of the Divine Spirit in you that you are the sons of God. If you can breathe into the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ such a vitality of faith as that the members of it are living in a fervent and burning zeal of Christian charity, you need not trouble yourself about doctrinal beliefs; they will take care of themselves. But if you spend all your force upon the externalities of doctrine and of church organisation, you will have a huge casket with a spurious jewel in it. III. ALL UNFERVENT, DULL, AND DROWSY PREACHING IS HERETICAL. Anything that turns people out of the way, and imperils their souls, is heresy; and of all heresies there is none more deadly than a drowsy preacher. And yet, when a man comes that wakes up the congregation, there are a great many men that look up and say, "Who knows whereunto this thing will grow?" Why, yes, if sleep be piety, what will become of religion if men wake up? But life is above all price; and a man who is fit to preach at all, must be fit to preach because he has the power of inflammation. A man that cannot boil, and that cannot make anybody else boil; a man that cannot be blown into a flame, and cannot kindle a flame in others, is not fit to preach. IV. ALL THE CONCEPTIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE THAT ESTEEM STRONG FEELING TO BE VULGAR ARE UNCHRISTIAN AND UNPHILOSOPHICAL; they are utterly unallied to the whole nature of grace, or to the disclosure of God's feeling in the human soul; and yet there are a great many who have such a conception. The substitution of decorum for emotion, of polish for deep feeling, of taste for conscience—in other words, the worship of culture—there can be nothing wider from the true spirit of the gospel than that. When men are thoroughly trained and cultivated, and have religious feeling, and have it fervently and deeply, it is a great deal better that they should express it with refinement and with genius, if it can be so expressed; but to have decorum, and taste, and cold intellectuality, and none of the fire of feeling, is to be idolatrous. It is to worship the senses, and that on a very low plane of life. It is better, a hundredfold, that there should be the utmost tumult of revival than that there should be simply a decorous stupor. Conclusion: And now, are you, that are grouped into a church, living, with real glow and fervour, a religious life? Do you love God, or do you only say you love Him? Do you love your fellow-men as yourself, or do you only say that you do in routine? Do you enjoy religion? Are you working in your several spheres with fervour? Is it not time that you should wake out of your sleep? The Master is going by, and the cry, "The Bridegroom cometh," will sound in your ears before long. Are your lamps filled and burning? Do men feel the fire and the flame? Are you a power among men? May the Spirit of light, life, fire, and power come down into the hearts of every one of the members of this church, and of all disciples of every name gathered together this morning, brushing the ashes of the past away, kindle on the old altar a new flame that shall never go out. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *On the obligations to fervour of spirit*:—1. Fervour of spirit is, in general, opposed to lukewarmness and indifference. It denotes an

uncommon application of mind, and a warmth of zeal bordering on transport, that moves every faculty of the soul, and carries all before it in the pursuit of what we highly value and desire. It does not consist merely in a few emotions of natural piety, neither is it a sudden blaze of religious fervour, which flashes for a moment like a meteor and as quickly disappears. It is a permanent and abiding principle of action, a beam from the Sun of Righteousness, which, bright at the outset, shineth more and more, till it reaches the fulness of its meridian splendour. 2. When this is displayed in its fullest extent, it is one of the noblest ornaments of the Christian. It is to the spiritual life what health is to the natural. It renders that active and spirited which, without it, were dull and almost lifeless. 3. As to our obligations to be fervent, note that—I. IT IS ENJOINED BY GOD'S POSITIVE COMMAND. The Scriptures abound in exhortations not merely to serve the Lord, but to do so with fervency and zeal, to work while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work. Many are the precepts which require us to be up and doing, to be zealous in good works, &c. There is nothing so offensive to God as lukewarmness and indifference. II. GOD HAS A JUST RIGHT TO IT. He gave us our being at the first; by His providence our lives are daily sustained. Is it possible to render unto God more than His goodness gives Him a right to claim? All this, however, is but a small part of the obligation which His mercy has laid you under. Think only on the wonders of redeeming love. Can you, then, exceed in gratitude to such a Friend, and serve Him with too much zeal? III. THE DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH THE SERVICE OF GOD REQUIRE IT. Religion is not a matter of easy acquirement. The enemies we have to encounter are numerous and powerful, and, through them, we must fight our way to the ground which shall be our reward. Within, our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; then we have depraved appetites to restrain, and passions fed by indulgence to subdue. Has any of you made the attempt, and do you find it an easy matter? Besides, all who would love God and Christ Jesus must expect to meet with persecution. Amid so many perils, what need is there of fervour! Amid such obstacles, what but a zeal that knows no bounds would enable us to resist and overcome the enemies of our salvation! IV. LET THE EXAMPLE OF THE SAINTS ANIMATE YOU TO CULTIVATE IT. What was the distinguishing characteristic of Abraham, of Elijah, of Samuel, of Daniel, and of the others? It was zeal for the Lord, manifesting itself by obedience, holy, fervid, and strenuous exertion to promote the glory of God. In none, however, did this spirit more immediately display itself than in our blessed Lord and Saviour. "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." (*G. Milligan.*)

Enthusiasm:—I. WHAT IS ENTHUSIASM? *Enthusiasmos* means the fulness of Divine inspiration, an absorbing, a passionate devotion to some good cause, the state of those whom St. Paul here describes as "fervent," literally boiling in spirit, the spirit of man when transfigured, uplifted, dilated by the Spirit of God. Without enthusiasm of some noble kind a man is dead, and without enthusiasts a nation perishes. There are two forms which enthusiasm has assumed—the enthusiasm for humanity, and the enthusiasm for individual salvation. When the two have been combined; when the sense of devotion has been united with the exaltation of charity, it has produced the most glorious and blessed benefactors of the world. What was Christianity itself but such an enthusiasm? Learnt from the example, caught from the Spirit of Christ, the same love for the guilty and the wretched, which brought the Lord of glory down to the lowest depths, was kindled by His Spirit in the heart of all His noblest sons. Forgiven, they have longed with others to share the same forgiveness, and they have been ready to do all, and to dare all, for His sake who died for them. Again and again this Divine fire has died out of the world; again and again has it been rekindled by God's chosen sons. What would the world have been without them? Ask what the world would be without the sun. II. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE STUDENT, ARTIST, DISCOVERER, MAN OF SCIENCE—what else could have inspired their infinite patience and self-sacrifice? It plunged Roger Bacon into torture and imprisonment; it made Columbus face the terrors of unknown seas; it caused years of persecution to Galileo, to Kepler, to Newton, to the early geologists, to Charles Darwin. What supported them was the fervency of spirit which prefers labour to sloth, and love to selfishness, and truth to falsehood, and God to gold. III. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE REFORMER. Think what Italy was fast becoming when Savonarola thundered against her corruption and apostacy. Think how an intolerable sacerdotal tyranny would have crushed the souls of men had not Wycliffe braved death to give the people of England their Bible. Think what truths would have been drowned in deep seas of oblivion if Huss had not gone calmly to the

stake. Think what a sink of abominations the nominal Church of God might now have been if the voice of Luther had never shaken the world. Think how the Church of England might now be settling on her lees if such men as Wesley and Whitefield had not driven their fellows back to the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus. IV. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE MISSIONARY. In the first centuries every Christian looked on it as a part of his life to be God's missionary, and for centuries the Church produced men like Boniface and Columban. Then for one thousand years the darkness was only broken by here and there a man like St. Louis of France, or St. Francis of Assisi. It is to Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians that we owe the revival of missionary zeal. In the last century missionaries were regarded as foolish and rash, and I know not what. When Carey proposed to go as a missionary to India, he was told that if God wished to convert the heathen He would doubtless do so in His own way. Think of John Eliot, the lion-hearted "apostle of the Indians," and his motto that prayer and painstaking can accomplish everything. Think of young and sickly David Brainerd going alone into the wild forests of America and among their wilder denizens, with the words "Not from necessity but from choice, for it seems to me that God's dealings towards me have fitted me for a life of solitariness and hardship." Think of Adoniram Judson and the tortures he bore so cheerfully in his Burmese prison. And we, too, in these days have seen Charles Mackenzie leave the comforts of Cambridge to die amid the pestilent swamps of the Zambesi, and Coleridge Patteson, floating, with his palm branch of victory in his hand, over the blue sea among the Coral Isles. Nor do I know any signs more hopeful for the nation than these, that our public schools are now founding missions in the neglected wastes of London, and our young athletes are going out as poor men to labour in China and Hindustan. V. THE ENTHUSIASM OF OUR SOCIAL PHILANTHROPISTS. Who can measure the good done by St. Vincent de Paul when he founded his Sisterhoods of Mercy? What man has done more for multitudes of souls than John Pounds, the Plymouth cobbler, who became the founder of ragged schools? What a light from heaven was shed on countless wanderers by Robert Raikes, John Howard, and Elizabeth Fry! Think, too, of the effort of Clarkson, Wilberforce, Sharp and Garrison in their efforts to liberate the slave. Conclusion: There are questions even more pressing and vital now than the slave trade was in the days of our fathers. Shame be on us if we prove ourselves degenerate sons! There are two particular evils which we must either conquer or be ruined by them. One is drink, the other is uncleanness. Are we to be such cowards as to leave these arrows to rankle and gangrene in the heart of England? If the Parliament of England will not deal with them, then the people of England must deal with them. (*Archdn. Farrar.*) *A fervent piety*:— I. THE IMPORTANCE AND THE ADVANTAGES OF SERVING THE LORD. Piety is enforced in these respects. Its obligation is indispensable; its beauty is supreme, and its utility is universal. It is not so much a single virtue, as a constellation of virtues. Here reverence, gratitude, faith, hope, love, concentre their rays, and shine with united glory. The most illiterate man, under the impressions of true devotion, and in the immediate acts of Divine worship, contracts a greatness of mind that raises him above his equals. Thereby, says an admired ancient, we build a nobler temple to the Deity than creation can present. Piety is adapted to the notions of happiness and chief good which all men entertain, although these notions were as various in themselves as the theories of philosophers have been about their object. Hither let the man of the world turn, that he may find durable riches, more to be desired than gold and all earthly possessions. Piety is the foundation of virtue and morality. True devotion strengthens our obligations to a holy life, and superadds a new motive to every social and civil duty. A good man is the guardian angel of his country. I shall only add on this head, that by serving the Lord here, we have an earnest and anticipation of the happiness of the heavenly state. Here the sun faintly beams, as in the dubious twilight; there he shines forth in full meridian glory. II. TO EXPLAIN THAT FERVOUR OF SPIRIT SO REQUISITE IN THE EXERCISES OF DEVOTION, AND ENFORCE IT WITH A FEW ARGUMENTS. 1. By fervour of spirit, in general, is meant an uncommon application of mind in the performance of any thing, a warmth bordering upon transport, that moves every spring of the heart, and carries all before it, to gain its end. So that by a fervency of spirit in serving the Lord must be understood an ardent and active desire of loving the Lord, of worshipping Him in sincerity, and obeying His commands with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. True fervour of spirit proceedeth from above. It is a beam from the Father of lights,

pure and benign, which at once enlightens and warms the mind. 2. To engage us more effectually to the performance of this part of our duty, let us consider the general obligations we lie under, as rational creatures, to serve the Lord with fervency of spirit, and then the particular obligations that arise from Christianity. (1) In the first place, as the Almighty is the Creator of the world, and the Father of the human race, He is likewise their Preserver, and the Author of order and harmony in the universe. Seeing then He upholds our existence, and is the Parent of so many mercies, has He not, as our supreme Benefactor, a title to the service of our whole lives, and to all the fervour of our spirits? (2) This will appear still more when we consider the superior obligations which we are laid under by Christianity. While many nations are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, on us hath the Sun of Righteousness arisen in full glory. What thanks, what services, shall we not then render to our Supreme Benefactor, who has translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Son! (*J. Logan.*) *Religious fervour*:—I. FERVOUR, in general, is opposed to lukewarmness or indifference, and denotes that edge or keenness, that activity and diligence, which we commonly exert in the pursuit of any object we highly value and wish to possess. Now the fervour whereof my text speaks hath religion, or the service of God, for its object. Love to God is the principle, the law of God is the rule, and His glory the end of all its operations. But as there are several counterfeits of this gracious temper, I shall endeavour to exhibit the properties of true Christian fervour. 1. That as the service of God is the proper object of true Christian fervour, this renders it necessary that we be thoroughly acquainted with the laws of God, that we may know what particular services He requires of us, and will accept at our hands. 2. As our fervour should be employed in the service of God, or in those duties that God hath plainly commanded, so it ought likewise to aim for His glory, otherwise it is unhallowed passion, which debaseth everything that proceeds from it. If God is glorified by his sufferings, the fervent Christian hath gained his end. 3. That this gracious temper extends its regards to all God's commandments. It declines no duty that bears the stamp of His authority. 4. The distinguishing property of true Christian fervour is this: It will make us peculiarly attentive to our own behaviour, and begin with correcting what is faulty in ourselves. 5. Though true fervour begins at home, yet it is not always confined there. It was the speech of a wicked Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The warm-hearted Christian extends his good offices to all around him, and useth all that power and influence which his station gives him to discourage vice and to advance the kingdom of Christ in the world. 6. That this fervour must be always under the direction of Christian prudence, that it may not break out into indecent heats, and carry us beyond the limits of our office or station in the society to which we belong. II. To RECOMMEND AND ENFORCE THIS GRACIOUS TEMPER. Consider—1. That God deserves the most zealous and active service we can pay to Him. 2. God not only deserves such service as I am pleading for, He likewise demands it, and will not be put off with anything less. If any imagine that Christ came into the world to relax their obligations to a holy life, they are grossly mistaken; and if they act upon that principle, they shall find themselves fatally disappointed at last. 3. A motive to fervour and diligence in the service of God ariseth from the difficulties that attend our duty. It is no easy matter "to pluck out a right eye, and to cut off a right hand." Besides, in the ordinary course of events, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution" in one kind or other. Such are the difficulties that attend religion; and do not these make zeal or fervour necessary. 4. That we should be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; because it is absolutely impossible that we can do too much. One thing is certain, that the most serious Christians, when they came to die, have always lamented their former negligence; and the time is at hand when all the world shall confess that holy diligence was the truest wisdom. (*R. Walker.*) **Serving the Lord.**—*Serving the Lord*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO SERVE GOD? It implies—1. Our devoting ourselves wholly to Him and His way (2 Cor. viii. 5; Matt. vi. 24). 2. Subjecting ourselves to His will and laws (Psa. ii. 11, 12). 3. Worshipping Him (Matt. iv. 10; Luke ii. 37). 4. Walking in holiness and righteousness before Him (Luke i. 74, 75). 5. Improving all for His glory. II. HOW SHOULD WE SERVE HIM? 1. Reverently (Heb. xii. 28, 29; Psa. ii. 11). 2. Obediently (1 Sam. xii. 14). 3. Sincerely (John iv. 24; Psa. li. 6). 4. Readily and willingly (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). 5. Only (Matt. iv. 10). 6. Wholly (Deut. x. 12; Psa. cxix. 6). 7. Continually (Luke i. 75). III. WHY SERVE THE LORD? 1. He made us (Prov. xvi. 4). 2. Maintains us (Acts xvii. 28). 3. Has redeemed us (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). Conclusion:

1. Unless you serve Him you must serve sin and Satan (Matt. vi. 24). 2. His service is the only liberty (Rom. viii. 21), and the highest honour (1. Sam. ii. 30). 3. You vowed to serve Him in baptism (Deut. xxvi. 17, 18). 4. All you can do is much less than you owe Him (Luke xvii. 10). 5. If you serve Him He will cause all things to serve you (chap. viii. 28). 6. He will reward you hereafter. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Serving the Lord*:—I. WHAT THIS IMPLIES. 1. Self-consecration. 2. The repudiation of all other service. 3. Complete devotion to His cause. 4. A steady aim at His glory. II. WHY SHOULD WE UNDERTAKE IT? It is—1. Due. 2. Reasonable. 3. Honourable. 4. The end of our being. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Serving the Lord*:—It is said of Sister Dora that no matter at what hour the hospital door-bell rang, she used to rise instantly to admit the patient, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." *Serving the Lord*:—The harmony of Scripture is admirable. 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Unto the wicked God saith, "What hast thou to do to declare My statutes?" (1) Hast thou then been bought with the great Master's money? Only the redeemed ones are reckoned by the Lord as servants in His household. The ungodly are slaves to Satan. (2) God's servant has been won by power as well as bought with price. Hast thou been compelled by Divine grace to leave thy sins? Israel would for ever have made bricks in Egypt if the Lord had not brought them forth with an outstretched arm. (3) God's servants are always such as are born in His house as well as bought with His money. Preliminary to all holy service must be regeneration. That which cometh from the crab will still be sour, plant the tree where you will. A sinner is unsuitable for service till he be new-created. 2. We must render our obedience to the Lord Himself. Much that is done religiously is not done unto God. Whose honour do you seek? for remember that which is uppermost in thy heart is thy master. 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and the dying. 2. That which will give a joyous hope is moral goodness—assimilation to the image of God. II. A CERTAIN FOUNDATION. Unless a man has good reason to believe that the object he hopes for is to be gained, he cannot rejoice in his hope. Three reasons for believing that a soul, guilty and depraved, can be brought into possession of true goodness, and restored to the very image of God, are—1. The provisions of the gospel. The life and death of Christ, the agency of the Spirit, and the disciplinary influences of human life are all divinely appointed methods to re-create the soul and to fashion it into the very image of God. 2. The biographies of sainted men. History abounds with examples of bad men becoming good. 3. The inward consciousness of moral progress. The man who has got this hope is conscious that he has made some progress, and that the steps he has taken have been the most difficult. His past efforts are aids and pledges to future success. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Patient in tribulation.**—I. WHAT ARE TRIBULATIONS? Whatsoever—1. Is hurtful to us. 2. Vexeth us. II. WHAT IS IT TO BE PATIENT? 1. Not to murmur against God (Exod. xvi. 3). 2. Nor despair of deliverance (Psa. xlii. 5). 3. Nor use unlawful means to get out of them. 4. To rest satisfied with them (1 Sam. iii. 18). 5. To be thankful for them (Job i. 21, 22; 1 Thess. v. 18). III. WHY ARE WE TO BE PATIENT? 1. They come from God (2 Sam. xvi. 10–12; Psa. xxxix. 2). 2. Are no more (Lam. iii. 39), but less than we deserve (Ezra ix. 13). 3. Impatience does not heighten them. 4. By patience we change them into mercies as in Job, Joseph, David. Conclusion: Be patient. 1. No afflictions but others have borne (1 Pet. iv. 12, v. 9). 2. Christ has undergone more than we can (chap. viii. 29; 1 Pet. ii. 23, iv. 13). 3. God knows how to deliver us (2 Pet. ii. 9). 4. By patience you make a virtue of necessity. 5. Will do you much good by them (Heb. xii. 6–8). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Patient in tribulation*:—I. TRIBULATION IS UNAVOIDABLE IN THIS LIFE. 1. Ordained of God. 2. For wise purposes. II. SHOULD BE BORNE WITH PATIENCE. 1. Not indifference. 2. But in silence. 3. Without repining. 4. With resignation. III. THE REASONS. 1. God is kind. 2. Life is but a probationary state. 3. Consolations are provided. 3. The results are glorious. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Patient in tribulation*:—Some have floated on the sea, and trouble carried them on its surface, as the sea carries cork. Some have sunk at once to the bottom, as foundering ships sink. Some have run away from their own thoughts. Some have coiled themselves up in stoical indifference. Some have braved the trouble, and defied it. Some have carried it, as a tree does a wound, until by new wood it can overgrow and cover the old gash. A few in every age have known the divine art of carrying sorrow and trouble as wonderful food, as an invisible garment that clothed them with strength, as a mysterious joy, so that they suffered gladly, rejoicing in infirmity, and, holding up their heads with sacred presages whenever times were dark and troublous, let the light depart from their eyes, that they might by faith see nobler things than sight could reach. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Patient in tribulation*:—All birds when they are first caught and put into the cage fly wildly up and down, and beat themselves against their little prisons; but within two or three days sit quietly on their perch, and sing their usual notes with their usual melody. So it fares with us, when God first brings us into a strait; we wildly flutter up and down, and beat and tire ourselves with striving to get free; but at length custom and experience will make our narrow confinement spacious enough for us; and though our feet should be in the stocks, yet shall we, with the apostles, be able even there to sing praises to our God. (*Bp. Hopkins.*) **Continuing instant in prayer.**—I. WHAT IS PRAYER? 1. The hearty desire. (1) Mental (1 Sam. i. 13; Eph. v. 10). (2) Oral (John xvii. 5). 2. Of necessary things. (1) Spiritual, for the life to come. (*a*) Sense of sin (Luke xiii. 3). (*b*) Faith in Christ (Luke xvii. 5). (*c*) Pardon of former transgressions (Psa. li. 9). (*d*) Subduing present corruptions (Psa. xix. 12, 13, cxix. 133). (*e*) The continual influences of His grace and spirit (Psa. li. 10; Luke xi. 13). (2) Temporal, for this life (1 Tim. iv. 8; Prov. xxx. 8). 3. From God. (1) God alone is to be worshipped (Matt. iv. 10). (2) God alone understands our prayers (Isa. lxiii. 16). (3) He alone can answer them (Psa. lxv. 2). (4) He commands us to call to Him (Jer. xxxiii. 3; Psa. l. 15). (5) Christ directs us to pray to Him (Matt. vi. 9). See the error of Papists, who pray to the Cross. To the Virgin Mary, &c. St. Roche for the plague. St. Apollonia for the toothache. St. Eulogius for horses. St. Anthony for hogs. St. Gallus for geese, &c. II. WHY SHOULD WE PRAY? 1. God hath commanded it (1 Thess. v. 17). 2. Encouraged us with a promise (Psa. l. 15; Matt. vii. 7). 3. Made it the condition of all promises (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). 4. It is part of Divine worship. 5. Hereby we give glory to God. (1) Of omnipresence (Psa. cxxxix. 2, 3). (2) Of

omniscience (Psa. cxxxix. 7). (3) Of omnipotence. 6. All blessings are sanctified by it (1 Tim. iv. 5). 7. Only by this we acknowledge our dependence upon Him. III. How SHOULD WE PRAY. 1. Before prayer, consider (Psa. x. 17). (1) Who is it you go to pray to (Exod. xxxiv. 6). (2) What you have to pray for (1 John v. 14). (3) How unworthy you are to ask or receive (Gen. xxxii. 10). (4) That Christ is interceding for you (Eph. iii. 12; Heb. vii. 25). 2. In prayer. (1) Pray with that humility, reverence, and submission, as becomes a sinful creature (Gen. xviii. 27; Luke xviii. 13; Ezra ix. 6). (2) Utter nothing rashly before Him, nor mingle stories with petitions (Eccles. v. 1, 2). (3) Let every petition proceed from the heart (John iv. 24). (4) Pray only in the name of Christ (John xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 23; Heb. vii. 25). (5) Let your affections and apprehensions go together (1 Cor. xiv. 15). (6) Pray in faith (Mark xi. 24; James i. 6). (7) Without wrath (1 Tim. ii. 8; Matt. vi. 14, 15). (8) For others as well as for yourselves (1 Tim. ii. 1; Eph. vi. 18). (9) To the right end (James iv. 3). (10) Add praise to prayers (Phil. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 1). (*a*) Praising God is all that He expects for His mercies. (*b*) It is the best sacrifice we can offer (Psa. lxix. 30, 31). (*c*) It is the work of Heaven (Rev. vii. 9, 10, xix. 1). 3. After prayer. (1) Consider what you have prayed for. (2) Expect it (Psa. v. 3). (3) Use means for obtaining it. IV. WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY? Or how continue instant in prayer (Eph. vi. 18; 1 Thess. v. 17). 1. Be always in a praying frame. 2. Take all occasions of praying. 3. Never faint in prayer (Luke xviii. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9). 4. Make prayer your daily exercise. (1) We must serve God daily (Luke i. 75). (2) The sacrifices of the Old Testament were daily (Numb. xxviii. 3; Acts iii. 1). (3) Christ directs us to ask our daily bread (Matt. vi. 11, 33). (4) The saints in all ages prayed daily (Psa. lv. 17, cxix. 164; Dan. vi. 10; 1 Kings viii. 48; Luke ii. 37). (5) The heathen and the Turks do it. (6) We need daily mercies. (7) We receive them. 5. Objection. I have oft prayed, but am never heard (Job xxi. 15). (1) However, we are bound to serve God. (2) If we get no good it is our own fault. (*a*) As to the matter (1 John v. 14). (*b*) Means (James i. 6). (*c*) End, of prayer (James iv. 3). (3) Perhaps you never expected it. (4) Or have not used the right means for it. (5) You have not prayed long enough (2 Cor. xii. 9; Luke xviii. 1). (6) Though you have not received that required, you have other mercies (2 Cor. xii. 9). (7) You may be answered, and not know it. Conclusion: Continue instant in prayer. 1. Otherwise ye live in continued sin. 2. Prayer is the most honourable work. 3. The most pleasant (Psa. lxxxiv. 10). 4. The only way of getting real mercies (James i. 5). 5. Right praying is a sign of a true convert (Acts ix. 11). (*Bp. Beveridge.*)

Instant in prayer:—Prayer is the natural duty of religion. Its observance is as natural as conversation between men. The Scriptures urge a constant and careful performance, then, not only as a duty, but a privilege. The subject suggests an inquiry as to—I. THE MATTER AND SUBJECT OF PRAYER. 1. Generally, it is to petition God to bestow upon us all that is good, and to deliver us from all that is evil: the pursuit of virtue, the direction of our affairs, immortal happiness. 2. Particularly, our own individual requirements, according to our particular weaknesses and difficulties, should form the groundwork of our petitions. II. THE SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS OF THE APOSTLE—"Continuing instant." We are not to make it a mere formal duty. It is to be the constant effort and breath of our very existence. We are hereby taught—1. That worldly duties are not inconsistent with heavenly thoughts. 2. That God may be worshipped at all times. 3. That religion is not a thing to be put off till we have leisure and opportunity. III. THE CONTRAST WHICH THIS DIRECTION AFFORDS TO ALL FALSE SYSTEMS. We are taught that God is worshipped by the mind and thoughts, and not by external observances. How different to heathen worship! Even the Jews' religion was, to a great extent, formal. (*J. Jortin, D.D.*)

Instant in prayer:—When a pump is frequently used, but little pains are necessary to have water; the water pours out at the first stroke, because it is high. But if the pump has not been used for a long while, the water gets low, and when you want it you must pump a long while, and the water comes only after great efforts. It is so with prayer; if we are instant in prayer, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray, and desires and words are always ready. But if we neglect prayer it is difficult for us to pray; for the water in the well gets low. (*Felix Neff.*)

Instant in prayer doesn't exactly mean that we should be praying every instant, though we can be doing that also, but not if we are to think a prayer, or speak a prayer, for how could we then be getting on with other things that need all our attention at the time? But there are prayers that are not spoken or even thought of. You have seen the mariner's compass. When the ship is tossing about, the

compass trembles and swings to and fro, but it always comes back and points straight to the north. That's where it wants to go to; every time it points to the north it seems to pray, "Let me go there!" Now why is this needle so constant about this wish to go northward? Because it has got in it a spirit that belongs to the distant Pole, and so, even while it is busy in telling the sailors how to steer, it is itself always turning to the north, because its life lies that way. So we may be very busy about other things, and need to fix all our attention upon them; but if our heart is right with Jesus, we shall be always wanting to do things for His sake, and do them right; and that big wish that is always in the heart is a continual prayer. (*J. R. Howat.*) *Instancy in prayer*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THE INJUNCTION. This is indicated by the employment of the word in other Scriptures (*e.g.*, Acts i. 14, ii. 42; Rom. xiii. 6; Acts viii. 13, x. 7; Eph. vi. 18). These show the meaning of the word; steadfastness or perseverance as a habit. In this sense the passage has many parallels (Eph. vi. 18; Philip. iv. 6; 1 Thess. v. 17). In the widest sense, therefore, the injunction lays upon us—1. The habitual maintenance of a prayerful spirit. 2. The embracing of opportunities for prayer. 3. The improvement of occasions of prayer. You will find these everywhere, in the commonest experiences of every day. 4. Watchfulness. II. CONSIDERATIONS BY WHICH THE INJUNCTION MAY BE COMMENDED AND ENFORCED. 1. What a mighty power of restraint would such an "instancy of prayer" exercise! 2. What a spiritual elevation! 3. What peace amid conflicting cares! 4. What strength! (*J. M. Jarvie.*) *Prayer, daily*:—As those who keep clocks wind them up daily, lest the weights should run down, and the clock stop; so we must set apart some portion of every day for meditation and prayer, lest our hearts should so far descend, through the weight of the cares of this world, that our course in godliness should be hindered and stopped. (*Cawdray.*) *Prayer hindered, not defeated*:—For so I have seen a lark rising from his bed of grass and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the liberation and frequent weighing of his wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *Prayer, nightly*:—It is said of that good old man, John Quincy Adams, that he never went to his rest at night until he had repeated the simple prayer learned in childhood—the familiar "Now, I lay me down to sleep." *Perpetual prayer*:—I. WHAT IS HERE REQUIRED? 1. Continuance in personal and secret prayer primarily. In these times Christ's saying is reversed. Men seem to say, If you pray openly, the Father will reward you in secret. And if a man have a taste for prayer meetings and none for private prayer, he should give up the prayer meetings until he recover the taste for secret prayer. 2. Paul speaks of continuance in the sense of importunity and perseverance. "Instant," means earnest, pressing, and urgent. The precept implies the danger of non-continuance—of a lack of earnestness and urgency. Now this danger arises from—(1) Scepticism about prayer. Men are often tempted to ask, "What profit shall we have if we pray to Him?" Then we may be beset by unbelief as to God's hearing *our* prayers in particular. (2) Indifference. Men do not care to pray. There is no very pressing want; no very urgent danger. The man is looking simply on the surface of his life. II. WHY IS THIS REQUIREMENT MADE? Habitual prayer—1. Keeps in habitual exercise the first principles of our religious life, &c. You cannot pray without bringing into exercise faith, trust, hope, and love. Now these principles are not intended to be within us like gems in a casket, but are like muscles. Work them, and they will be strengthened; give them nothing to do, and they will shrink, and when you want them, they will not be in a state to serve you. 2. Keeps a man face to face with God. This is the right position. We never see any matter as we ought to see it, except we look God in the face about it. 3. Recognises the two great blessings of the Christian economy. And what are these? (1) The mediation of Christ. (2) The ministration of the Holy Ghost. 4. Is the constant use of the highest agency which Christians can employ. What has prayer done? Conquered the elements, healed the diseased, restored life, &c. Prayer moves the hand which moves the world. 5. Is second only to ceaseless praise in the loftiness and in the sacredness of the habit. 6. Is in harmony with God's present method of government. The basis of that government is atonement, *i.e.*, an embodied supplication

for mercy. (*S. Martin.*) *Prayer unceasing*:—Fletcher's whole life was a life of prayer; and so intensely was his mind fixed upon God that he sometimes said, "I would not move from my seat without lifting up my heart to God." "Wherever we met," says Mr. Vaughan, "if we were alone, his first salute was, 'Do I meet you praying?' And if we were talking on any point of divinity, when we were in the depth of our discourse he would often break off abruptly and ask, 'Where are our hearts now?' If ever the misconduct of an absent person was mentioned, his usual reply was, 'Let us pray for him.'" *Constant, instant, expectant*:—I. INSTANT. The Greek word means "always applying strength in prayer"; "blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee." Brooks saith that the word is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs, which will never give up the game till they have got it. Prevalent prayer is frequently spoken of in Scripture as an agony—"striving together with me in your prayers," and as "wrestling." We must go with our whole soul to God or He will not accept us. We are to pray as if all depended upon our praying. How are we to attain to this urgency? 1. Let us study the value of the mercy which we are seeking at God's hand. Whatever it is that thou art asking for, it is no trifle. If it be a doubtful thing, lay it aside: but if thou art certain that the blessing sought is good and necessary, examine it as a goldsmith inspects a jewel when he wishes to estimate its worth. 2. Meditate on thy necessities. See thy soul's poverty and undeservingness. Look at what will happen to thee unless this blessing come. 3. Endeavour to get a distinct consciousness of the fact that God must give thee this blessing, or thou wilt never have it. 4. Eagerly desire the good thing. Stand not before God as one who will be content whether or no. There are times when you must say, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." 5. Now comes the tug of war; you are to plead with all your might. Gather up all your faculties to see whether this thing be a matter of promise or no. When you have found the promise, plead it by saying, "Lord, do as Thou hast said." If you do not seem to prevail with one promise seek out another and another, and then plead, "For Thy name's sake, for Thy truth's sake, for Thy covenant's sake"; and then come in with the greatest plea of all, "For Jesus' sake." 6. Still there is one thing more wanted, and that is strong faith. You cannot be instant in prayer, nay, you cannot offer an acceptable prayer at all except as you believe in the prayer-hearing God. II. CONSTANT—"continuing." Go back to the hunting dog. We saw him rushing like the wind after his game, but this will not be enough if it only lasts for a little; he must continue running if he is to catch his prey. It is a sign of failure in the iron trade when the furnaces are blown out; when business flourishes the fire blazes both day and night; and so will it be with prayer when the soul is in a flourishing state. If prayer be the Christian's vital breath, how can he leave off praying? "That is difficult," says one. Who said it was not? All the processes of the Christian life are difficult; but "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Prayer must be continuous, because—1. It is so singularly mixed up with the whole gospel dispensation. 2. It is connected with every covenant blessing. 3. It has been connected with every living spiritual experience you have ever had. 4. There is no time when we can afford to slacken prayer. 5. Such remarkable gifts are vouchsafed to importunity. 6. The continuance of our instancy in prayer is the test of the reality of our devotion. Earnest men of business cannot afford to open the shop and do a little occasional trade, and then put up a notice, "The proprietor of this shop has gone out for an excursion, and will resume his business when he feels inclined to." Beware of spasms of prayer. III. EXPECTANT. It is not in the text verbally, but it must be there really, because there will be no such thing as instancy or constancy unless there is an expectation that God can and will give that which we seek. Go back to our dog again: he would not run at so great a rate if he did not expect to seize his prey. If some people looked out for answers to prayer they might soon have them, for their prayers would be answered by themselves. I was reminded of that by a little boy whose father prayed in the family that the Lord would visit the poor and relieve their wants. When he had finished, his little boy said, "Father, I wish I had your money." "Why so?" "Because," he said, "I would answer your prayers for you." I like better still that story of the good man at the prayer-meeting, who reading the list of prayers found one for a poor widow that her distress might be relieved, so he began to read it, but stopped and added, "We won't trouble the Lord with that, I will attend to that myself." The Lord might well say to us, "Thou sayest, Thy kingdom come; arise and help to make My kingdom come!" I shall close by recommending to all of you one simple but very comprehensive prayer. It was offered by a poor man in Fife, and it was

copied out by the Duchess of Gordon, and found among her papers when she died. "O Lord, give me grace to feel my need of Thy grace! Give me grace to ask for Thy grace! Give me grace to receive Thy grace! And when in Thy grace Thou hast given me grace, give me grace to use Thy grace!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **Distributing to the necessity of saints.**—I. WHO ARE THE SAINTS? 1. All that truly believe in Christ are sanctified. 2. All that profess to believe in Him (Philip. i. 1; Col. i. 2; Rev. vii. 9). II. WHAT NECESSITIES? That they need our—1. Advice. 2. Prayers (1 Tim. ii. 1). 3. Estates. III. WHAT IS IT TO DISTRIBUTE? 1. To give them freely. 2. To communicate with, because Christians (1 Cor. xii. 26, 27). IV. WHO OUGHT TO GIVE? 1. Every one is to be willing to give (2 Cor. viii. 13). 2. They only are actually to give, who have anything of their own to give (1 John iii. 17; Isa. lxi. 8). 3. Hence men of a lower estate are bound to give too something (Eph. iv. 28). V. HOW MUCH IS EVERY ONE BOUND TO GIVE? 1. In general, bountifully (2 Cor. ix. 6). 2. Proportionably to our estates (1 Cor. xvi. 2). 3. More than we spend on our lusts. 4. As much as is not necessary for ourselves (2 Cor. viii. 14). 5. Sometimes what is necessary (2 Cor. viii. 3). VI. HOW OUGHT WE TO GIVE? 1. Out of a sense of duty, not for vainglory (Matt. vi. 1, 2). 2. Out of love and pity to our brother (1 Cor. xiii. 3). 3. Willingly (2 Cor. viii. 10, 12). 4. Cheerfully (Rom. xii. 8; 2 Cor. ix. 7). 5. Readily, without delay (Prov. iii. 27, 28). 6. Thankfully (1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14). 7. For a right end. (1) Not for praise from men. (2) Much less salvation from God. (3) But for His honour (Prov. iii. 9). Conclusion—Repent of your neglect of this duty. Perform it for the future. Consider—1. The law of God commands it. 2. The law of nature (Matt. vii. 12). 3. God hath made it our brother's due, and so we rob him unless we give. 4. A blessing is connected with it (Acts xx. 35). 5. Hereby we imitate God (Matt. v. 48; Luke vi. 36). 6. Unless we give we have no love for God (1 John iii. 17). 7. Nor true religion (James i. 27). 8. What we have is not our own, but God's, to be laid out according to His will (Luke xvi. 12; 1 Chron. xxix. 11). 9. Yet Himself will repay us what we have so disbursed (Prov. xix. 17). 10. Hence this is the way to lay up our treasures in heaven (1 Tim. vi. 17–19; Matt. vi. 19, 20). 11. It is the best way to prosper and sanctify what ye have here (Prov. xxviii. 27; Deut. xv. 7–11). 12. You shall be judged according to your performance or neglect of this duty (Matt. xxv. 34–42). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Liberality to Christian brethren*:—I. Specially NEEDED. II. Specially CLAIMED. III. Specially REWARDED. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Expressions of Christian love*:—I. BENEVOLENCE. 1. To the brethren. 2. To strangers. 3. To enemies. II. SYMPATHY. 1. With the happy. 2. With the sorrowful. III. UNITY. 1. In Christian feeling. 2. This requires humility in aim, in thought. (*Ibid.*) **Given to hospitality.**—*Hospitality*:—I. IMPLIES—1. Our indifferency about the world. 2. Willingness to communicate what we have to others (1 Tim. vi. 17). 3. Our supplying strangers as well as others with necessaries (1 Pet. iv. 9). II. REASONS. 1. *A priori*. We should do to others as we would have them do to us (Matt. vii. 12). 2. *A posteriori*. Because of the good we may get by it. Some have entertained angels (Heb. xiii. 2; Gen. xviii. 3, xix. 2); and prophets (1 Kings xvii. 10–16; 2 Kings v. 8–34; Matt. xxv. 43). (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Christian hospitality*:—I. ITS TRIALS. 1. The whim and eccentricity of the guest. There are a great many excellent people whose temperament makes them a nuisance in any house where they stay. On short acquaintance, they will keep unseasonable hours, have all the peculiarities of the gormandiser or the dyspeptic, and in a thousand ways afflict the household which proposes to take care of them. Added to all, they stay too long. Gerrit Smith, the philanthropist, asked at his breakfast table, on the day when he hoped that the long-protracted guests would depart, "O Lord, bless this provision, and our friends who leave us to-day!" But there are alleviations. Perhaps they have not had the same refining influences about them that you have had. Perhaps it is your duty, by example, to show them a better way. Perhaps they are sent to be a trial for the development of your patience. Perhaps it is to make your home the brighter when they are gone. When our guests are cheery, and fascinating, and elegant, it is very easy to entertain them; but when we find in them that which is antagonistic to our taste and sentiment, it is a positive triumph when we can be "given to hospitality." 2. The toil and expense of exercising it. When you introduce a foreign element into the domestic machinery, though you may declare that they must take things as they find them, the Martha will break in. The ungovern-

able stove, the unmasticable joint, the delayed marketing, the difficulty of being presentable, &c. Yet we may serve God with plate, and cutlery, and broom, just as certainly as with psalm-book and liturgy. But you are not to toil unnecessarily. Though the fare be plain, cheerful presidency of the table and cleanliness of appointments will be good enough for anybody that ever comes to your house. I want to lift this idea of Christian entertainment out of a positive bondage into a glorious inducement. Suppose it were announced that the Lord Jesus Christ would come to town this week, what woman in this house would not be glad to wash for Him, or spread for Him a bed, or bake bread for Him? He is coming. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it to Me." II. ITS REWARDS. 1. The Divine benediction. When any one attends to this duty, God's blessing comes upon him, upon his companion, upon his children. 2. The good wishes and prayers of our guests. I do not think one's house ever gets over having had a good man or woman abide there. George Whitefield used to scratch a text on his window, and in one case, after he left, the whole household was converted by it. The woman of Shunem furnished a little room for Elisha, and all the ages have heard the consequences. On a winter night my father entertained Trueman Osborne, the evangelist, and that, among others, was the means of saving my soul. How many of our guests have brought to us condolence, and sympathy, and help! It is said of St. Sebald, that in his Christian rounds he used to stop for entertainment at the house of a poor cartwright. Coming there one day, he found him and his family freezing for the lack of fuel. St. Sebald ordered the man to bring some icicles and throw them on the hearth; whereupon they began to blaze immediately, and the freezing family were warmed by them. How often have our guests come in to gather up the cold, freezing sorrows of our life, kindling them into illumination, and warmth, and good cheer. He who opens his house to Christian hospitality, turns those who are strangers into friends. Some day you will be sitting in loneliness, watching a bereavement, and you will get a letter, and there you will read the story of thanks for your Christian generosity long years before, and how they have heard afar off of your trouble. When we take people into our houses as Christian guests, we take them into our sympathies for ever. In Dort a soldier stopped at a house, desiring shelter. At first he was refused admittance, but when he showed his credentials he was admitted. In the night-time two ruffians broke in, but no sooner had they come over the door-sill than the armed guest met them. There are no bandits prowling around to destroy our houses; but how often our guests become our defenders. We gave them shelter first, and afterwards they fought for our reputation, for our property, for our soul. 3. We shall have hospitality shown to us and to ours. In the upturnings of this life, who knows where we may be thrown, and how much we may need an open door? There may come no such crisis to us, but our children may be thrown into some such strait. Among the Greeks, after an entertainment they take a piece of lead and cut it in two, and the host takes one half and the guest the other as they part. These are handed down from generation to generation, and after awhile perhaps one of the families in want or in trouble go out with this one piece of lead and find the other family with the corresponding piece, and no sooner is the tally completed than the old hospitality is aroused, and eternal friendship pledged. So the memory of Christian hospitality will go down from generation to generation, and the tally will never be lost. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) **Bless them which persecute you**—*Never curse, but only bless your persecutors:*—1. From virtues towards suffering brethren, the apostle now passes to the spirit to be maintained towards persecutors. 2. All wrongs are hard to be endured; and the Christian knows that he ought not to suffer for righteousness' sake, and that his persecutors are deserving of punishment. If, therefore, he can secure protection by an appeal to legal authority, he ought to make that appeal. But when there is no such appeal then comes in the temptation, not simply to lodge an appeal with the great supreme Judge, but to invoke His interposition to smite the persecutor with a curse. The feeling that I am wronged is strengthened by the conviction that my wrong is detrimental to God's kingdom, and therefore an injury to the race. Punishment, therefore, would be agreeable to strict justice, but would it also be good for me to invoke or for God to inflict? Not so, says the apostle. Not so, says Jesus. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are made of," &c. Therefore "bless them which persecute you," &c. 3. The command and example of our Lord ought to be decisive for all Christians (Matt. v. 43–48). But why ought we thus to act towards persecutors? I. THE PERSECUTOR USUALLY

IS BUT RESENTING WHAT HE CONCEIVES TO BE A WRONG, not only against himself and society, but against his religion and his God. There are, no doubt, men who avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the prevalence of the persecuting spirit to give effect to their private hatreds, or to enrich themselves by unrighteous plunder. And others are stung into persecuting activity because the Christian's holy conversation rebukes their iniquity. But real persecutors are moved by zeal for what they conceive to be religion. It may be a false religion, as idolatry or an incomplete religion, as Judaism, or a corrupted religion, as Romanism; but whatever the special character of the religion whose interests are supposed to be in danger, it will be that which is generally regarded as being true. This it is which gives such relentless and terrible earnestness to persecutors. They verily think with themselves that they ought to do these things; and that they are doing God service. This, of course, will not avail to justify their conduct; but it furnishes one reason why we should bless those who persecute us. For they are impelled by conscience, and by their apprehension of what is due from them to society and to God. II. THE TIME FOR THE CURSING HAS NOT YET COME, but is kept back, in order that if possible the injurious men may be brought to a better mind. God was more wronged by men than we can ever be. Yet He not only exercised a marvellous forbearance, but, out of earnest pity for the offenders, spared not His own Son in order to bring back the guilty race. We have been saved, and therefore these people who are still without hate us. But God loves them still, and His purpose is to save them, and He requires of us to do what we can to accomplish this desirable result. III. REAL PERSECUTORS ARE USUALLY MEN WHO ARE WORTH WINNING. They are men whose force of character and power of aggressive work would be of immense service in the cause of truth and righteousness. Hence Saul is far more likely to become a chosen vessel of the Lord than his prudent master Gamaliel. And though every persecutor is not a Saul, yet if he is earnest of persecution he is a man of more than ordinary power for service in the cause of Christ. Therefore curse him not, but only bless him still. IV. THERE IS MUCH MORE HOPE OF THE CONVERSION OF EARNEST PERSECUTORS THAN MIGHT AT FIRST APPEAR. There is small hope of those who can listen to the gospel and go away as indifferent as when they came. But the man who persecutes earnestly, feels strongly, and thinks vigorously; and when his violence has somewhat abated his wrath, and he begins to feel in what an unpleasant business he is engaged, he is almost sure to think of some other aspects of the question. The truth may then begin to scintillate within his soul, growing brighter as he pursues the meditation, till, by the grace of the Spirit of truth, his heart relents, his conscience begins its work of self-accusation, and he is won. Maintaining, as we do most firmly, the miraculous character of Saul's conversion, that does not hinder us from admitting the probability that the spirit in which Stephen died, and in which others less noted submitted to the fiery persecution, may have made a profound impression on the zealot's mind. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Men learned to live and die in the spirit of our text, and the exhibition of such a spirit has availed to save myriads. Conclusion: Whatever the result of such self-denial here, it will not fail of its reward hereafter (Matt. v. 11, 12; Heb. xii. 2). (*W. Tyson.*) *Blessing persecutors:*—When the trial of Sir Thomas More was ended, and he was judged guilty of death, being asked if he had anything to say, he replied: "My lords, I have but to say that, like as the blessed apostle St. Paul was present at the death of the martyr Stephen, keeping their clothes that stoned him, and yet be now both saints in heaven, and there shall continue friends for ever, so I trust, and shall therefore pray, that though your lordships have been on earth my judges, yet we may hereafter meet in heaven together, to our everlasting salvation: and God preserve you all, especially my sovereign lord the king, and grant him faithful counsellors." (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Blessings on persecutors:*—At Samatave (Madagascar) on the eve of the bombardment by the French, all the natives, from the governor downwards, were at a prayer-meeting, and there were no prayers for the lives of their enemies, and no cries for vengeance upon them. Prayers for a righteous vindication, for guidance, for faith to trust where they could not see, and for eventual peace and goodwill were the only petitions of the much-injured Malagasy. (*G. Shaw.*) *How to treat persecutors:*—The text teaches us—I. HOW WE SHOULD NEVER TREAT OUR PERSECUTORS. "Curse not." The temptation to revengeful retaliation is not easy to be resisted by even the most docile. We "must be manly," and when annoyed by persecution we are extremely liable to regard manliness as the synonym of pugnacity. To turn again upon a formidable foe

requires courage, but that may be moral cowardice. Much of the courage that is crowned with honours is mere animalism. To refrain from injuring one who has injured us is the highest type of manliness. To persecute persecutors—1. Will do you no good. Is revenge sweet? Yes; if the triumph of devils over a soul taken captive is sweet. 2. Will do you harm. It will only inflame those passions which Christ came to stamp out. 3. Will injure your persecutors. It will only incense them in their persecuting work. II. How WE SHOULD ALWAYS TREAT OUR PERSECUTORS. "Bless them that persecute you." The word is twice used. All our treatment of persecutors must be in harmony with it. God, Christ, the Spirit, and the angels are saying to you, "*Bless* your persecutors!" But how? 1. With your pity, *i.e.*, the pity which can weep over the erring ones (Luke xix. 41). All who are antagonistic to Christianity need, if they do not deserve, it. 2. With your patience. They may see their folly by and by, and repent of it. Christ had patience with Saul, the champion of persecutors. And since the "chief of sinners" was converted, do not despair of any. 3. With your prayers (Matt. v. 44). In proportion as we can pray for God to bless our bitterest enemies are we Christ-like (Acts vii. 60). 4. With your pardon. There is no force in the universe so mighty and God-like as that of forgiving love. 5. If need be, with the blessings of your purse (ver. 20). No persecutor can stand that long (1 Pet. iii. 9). "It is hard," you say. Yes; but, like every other difficult thing, it becomes easy by practice and perseverance. The lesson is only to be learnt at the Cross. (*E. D. Solomon.*)

Ver. 15. **Rejoice with them that do rejoice.**—*The Christian's joy and grief:*—There are some who only rejoice over their own happiness, only weep at their own miseries. They are ruminating animals—always chewing the cud of their own private joy or grief. If they are in good health, if they are getting on in business, if the world smiles upon them, they are happy. If they are unwell, or poor, or in bad reputation, they are miserable. A thoroughly selfish man would grieve more over an attack of dyspepsia, or the loss of a five-pound note, than over the destruction of a nation, or the ruin of a world. Note—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY. 1. He rejoices in all the happy lower creatures. "God looked upon all that He had made, and behold it was very good." In this the Christian man is a follower of God as a dear child. "He prayeth well, who loveth well, both man and bird and beast," &c. 2. He rejoices in all the pure human joys of his fellow-men, like Him who attended the wedding-feast of Cana of Galilee. 3. He rejoices in the progress of the kingdom of God. Every conversion, every time of hallowed fellowship, every act of kindness, all tidings of good being done in any part of the world, fill his heart with joy. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S GRIEF. He grieves—1. Over the special sins and sorrows with which he is brought into contact. 2. Over the sin and sorrow of the world, when he "enters into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings." The more shallow any nature is, the less capacities it has for joy and grief; the finer and deeper a nature, the more sensitive it is to both. A racehorse is more sensitive both to pleasure and pain than a dray-horse. The Christian has both a deeper joy and a deeper grief than others, because he lives a deeper and a wider life, because his heart trembles into sympathy with human gladness and sorrow all over the world. (*R. Abercrombie, M.A.*) *The cordial interest in the events that befall our fellow-creatures:*—I. WHAT WE ARE TO DO, AND HOW WE ARE TO BE DISPOSED, FOR TAKING A CORDIAL INTEREST IN THE PROSPEROUS OR ADVERSE CONTINGENCIES OF OUR FELLOW-CREATURES. 1. Would we rejoice with the joyful and weep with the sorrowful, or, would we take a cordial interest in the good and ill that happens to other persons, we should before all things seriously consider in what a variety of ways mankind are connected together, and how great an influence the happiness or the misery of one has upon the happiness or the misery of others. We should therefore call to mind how many things we possess in common, and how much more important these things are than those whereby we are distinguished from each other. We have all the same rational, immortal nature, the same origin and the same destination. We are likewise obnoxious to the same wants, infirmities, passions, errors, follies, and failings, and the greater or less degree in which we are obnoxious to these evils, depends not so much on our behaviour and our deserts, as on the circumstances in which the Ruler of the world has placed us. Can or should differences weaken or dissolve the ties of affinity and the social benefit that connect us all together? Are there not similar discrepancies even between the children of one father, who were born and brought up in the same

house? 2. Would we farther rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep, would we take a cordial interest in the good and ill that happens to others; we must understand the good and the ill that befalls them, that which occasions them joy or sorrow. We must therefore pay attention not only to what passes among our friends or acquaintance, or in the place and the country where we happen to live, but likewise to what is going forward in the rest of the great world, in order to form just and lively conceptions of it. How many opportunities and motives will then occur to the Christian philanthropist to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, as he perceives here the light of knowledge, of the sciences, and of true religion making progress, and there still the clouds of ignorance, of superstition and error, hanging heavily over a country; if he here see courage, liberty, generous sentiments, there pusillanimity, bondage, and a servile disposition prevail; if he in this place hear a happy people rejoicing in the blessings of the harvest, or the vintage, and yonder another groaning beneath the sword of the destroyer or under the arrows of pestilence. Is he, however, unable or unwilling to travel in his imagination so far; yet vivid representations of what passes in his place, among his neighbours, in his district, will warm his heart to charity, and one while inspire him with joy, at another bring tears into his eyes. 3. In order to this we must thirdly take a real interest in the good and ill that befall others. We must consider their joys and sorrows, their prosperous or disastrous adventures not as objects irrelative to us, and about which it would be absolute folly in us to be either glad or sorry, because we, perhaps, can discern only an exceeding remote connection, or even none at all, between their situations and ours. II. How we should express and evince, both in word and deed, our cordial participation in the good and ill that befall others. 1. That we may rejoice with them that rejoice, we should not disapprove, not condemn, not scare away their joy, if it be but rational and innocent, by dark looks and churlish gestures, not censure it as being incompatible with virtue and godliness. 2. Neither should we kill nor diminish the joy of others by requiring that it should always be exactly proportionate to the value of the objects at which they rejoice, and indeed to the worth that we attribute to them. Joy is a matter of sensation, and the feelings admit not of being rigidly restricted to those regulations which cold-hearted philosophers lay down for them. 3. Would we rejoice with them that rejoice, let us rather put ourselves in their situation, view the good and agreeable that happens to them, as it were with their eyes, and in this respect too become all things to all men. 4. Would we be of the number of such as rejoice with them that rejoice, we should show it in action or by works. We should try to promote the satisfaction and happiness of others by all manner of means. We should procure them encouragements, opportunities and means for the enjoyment of a harmless and genial pleasure, according to their inclinations, their circumstances, their wants, and capacities. 5. Parallel duties lie on us in regard to the afflicted and unhappy. Throw no violent obstruction in the way of that flood of tears which relieves their heart; rather mingle your tears with theirs. Have indulgence and compassion for them, even though the expression of their grief be really excessive. (*G. J. Zollikofer.*) *Fellowship in joy*:—Sympathy is a duty of our common humanity, but far more of our regenerated manhood. Those who are one in the higher life should show their holy unity by true fellow-feeling. Joyful sympathy is doubly due when the joy is spiritual and eternal. Rejoice—I. With the converts. 1. Some delivered from lives of grievous sin. All saved from that which would have ruined them eternally, but certain of them from faults which injure men in society. 2. Some of them rescued from agonising fear and deep despair. Could you have seen them under conviction you would indeed rejoice to behold them free and happy. 3. Some of them have been brought into great peace and joy. The blissful experience of their first love should charm us into sympathetic delight. 4. Some of them are aged. These are called at the eleventh hour. Rejoice that they are saved from imminent peril. 5. Some of them are young, with years of happy service before them. 6. Each case is special. In some we think of what they would have been, and in others of what they will be. There is great gladness in these new-born ones, and shall we be indifferent? II. With their friends. 1. Some have prayed long for them, and now their prayers are heard. 2. Some have been very anxious, have seen much to mourn over in the past, and feared much of evil in the future. 3. Some are relatives with a peculiar interest in these saved ones. Parents, children, brothers, &c. 4. Some are expecting, and in certain cases already receiving, much comfort from these newly saved ones. They have already brightened the family circle, and made

heavy hearts glad. Holy parents have no greater joy than to see their children walking in the truth. Do we not share their joy? III. WITH THOSE WHO BROUGHT THEM TO JESUS. The spiritual parents of these converts are glad. The pastor, relative, teacher, or friend, who wrote or spoke to them of Jesus. What a joy belongs to those who by personal effort win souls! Endeavour to win the same joy for yourself, and meanwhile be glad that others have it. IV. WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. He sees—1. His strivings successful. 2. His instructions accepted. 3. His quickening power operating in new life. 4. The renewed mind yielding to His Divine guidance. 5. The heart comforted by His grace. Let us rejoice in the love of the Spirit. V. WITH THE ANGELS. 1. They have noted the repentance of the returning sinner. 2. They will henceforth joyfully guard the footsteps of the pilgrim. 3. They expect his life-long perseverance, or their joy would be premature. He is and will be for ever their fellow-servant. 4. They look one day to bear him home to glory. The evil angel makes us groan; should not the joy of good angels make us sing in harmony with their delight? VI. WITH THE LORD JESUS. His joy is proportioned—1. To the ruin from which He has saved His redeemed ones. 2. To the cost of their redemption. 3. To the love which He bears to them. 4. To their future happiness, and to the glory which their salvation will bring to Him. Conclusion: Do you find it hard to rejoice with these newly baptized believers? Let me urge you to do so, for you have your own sorrows, and this communion of joy will prevent brooding too much over them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Fellowship in joy*:—Mr. Haslam, telling the story of his conversion, says, "I do not remember all I said, but I felt a wonderful light and joy coming into my soul. Whether it was something in my words, or my manner, or my look, I know not; but all of a sudden a local preacher, who happened to be in the congregation, stood up, and putting up his arms, shouted out in Cornish manner, 'The parson is converted! the parson is converted! Hallelujah!' And in another moment his voice was lost in the shouts and praises of three or four hundred of the congregation. Instead of rebuking this extraordinary 'brawling,' as I should have done in a former time, I joined in the outburst of praise; and to make it more orderly, I gave out, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' which the people sung with heart and voice, over and over again." *Sympathy*:—1. Sympathy, it may be said, is an accident of temperament, and cannot be a duty. There are those who cannot help being distressed by the troubles of others, and being made happier for the happiness of others. On the other hand there are those who are naturally cold and cannot help it. But the same objection might be urged against other duties. Indolence and intemperance may be largely the result of hereditary tendencies, but as industry and temperance are manifest duties it is unsafe to regard their opposites merely as diseases. Some children are naturally docile and affectionate, others the reverse; but to be obedient and loving are duties and their opposites grave faults. Some have naturally a kind disposition, others have a bad temper. And yet good temper is not a mere fortunate accident, nor is a bad one a mere constitutional calamity—it is a vice. So while some men find it easier than others to rejoice, &c., sympathy is one of the great moral virtues. 2. There is nothing about it in the Ten Commandments, but in the Christian code it stands side by side with justice, truthfulness, &c. It is not merely an ornament of character, but as essential a part of Christian life as worship. The obligation must not be so qualified as to be practically suppressed. There are people with whom it is easy to sympathise, but as it is our duty to be honest to all, the obligations of sympathy are equally general. This precept is only an application of the great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The duty arises from the discovery that has come to us through Christ of the intimacy of our relations to all mankind. All men are dear to the heart of God, and therefore they must be dear to us. 3. We owe sympathy to other men because it is an effective means of contributing to their moral perfection, and because by withholding it we inflict on them grave moral inquiry. In men and women who have many admirable qualities there are grave defects of temper and spirit. They remind one of noble trees that require warmth and sunshine, but which have been discouraged by gloomy skies, and chilled, tormented, by cold, harsh winds. We may not be able to do much to recover those who are morally lost, but we may all do something to lessen the hardness and add to the moral grace of those with whom we live. Sympathise with a man in his prosperity and you do much to protect him from its perils. If you know that a man is carrying on his business on dishonourable principles, whether he is getting richer or poorer, you are bound to refuse him your

moral approval. But if you begin to have hard thoughts of him, and if he feels that you have no delight in his honest prosperity, you are not only unjust to him, you may do him serious moral harm. If you are cold to him because he is richer than you, he will be cold to you because you are poorer than he is. If you think of his wealth with discontent, he will think of it with exaggerated complacency. There is always danger that when a man gets rich he will cease to have a brotherly heart towards other men; it is the duty of his old friends to do what they can to save him from that, not by preaching to him, unless they are sure they can preach well, but by rejoicing with him in his riches. The same law holds in relation to success in public life, &c. So when trouble comes upon men your sympathy may lessen the bitterness of their grief, and may prevent them from yielding to a hard resentment against God and the whole order of the world. But remember that what they want is not your ingenious philosophy, but just a touch of your heart. 4. Some people have what is called the *gift* of sympathy, and a charming gift it is, but it is necessary to distinguish between the gift and the *grace*. Sympathy with misfortune may be followed by no endeavour to lessen it, and sympathy with joy may be followed in an hour by a sarcasm or a sneer. 5. If it is a duty to give sympathy, it is also a duty to receive it. By rejecting it we harm the person who offers it, for we check the growth of a form of moral perfection. It is a sin to discourage a man who wants to be truthful; it is also a sin to discourage the man who wants to show that he shares our trouble or our gladness. And we wrong ourselves, for we confirm our unbrotherly selfishness. 6. This sympathetic spirit has not really to be created even in those whose natural temperament is unsympathetic. It is in our heart somewhere, and would show itself if it had a fair chance. But it must be cultivated, and it is only by a deliberate effort to measure the magnitude of a great trouble, and to realise some of the innumerable elements of misery in it, that some of us can ever come to feel adequate sympathy with it. And a similar effort is necessary to sympathise perfectly with a great happiness. But self-discipline is not enough. If we abide in Christ we may come to have that sensitiveness to suffering which moved Him to compassion when He saw the blind, &c., and which made Him weep over the grave of Lazarus; and we may come to have that sympathy with common joys which prompted Him to change water into wine. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Benefit of sympathy*:—Every man rejoices twice when he has a partner of his joy. A friend shares my sorrow, and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy, and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river, and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable, and apt to be drunk up by the first revels of the Syrian star; but two torches do not divide, but increase the flame. And though my tears are the sooner dried up when they run on my friend's cheeks in the furrows of compassion, yet, when my flame hath kindled his lamp, we unite the glories and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God, because they shine by numbers, by light, and joy. *Human sympathy*:—Though the lower animals have feeling, they have no fellow-feeling. Have not I seen the horse enjoy his feed of corn when his yoke-fellow lay a-dying in the neighbouring stall, and never turn an eye of pity on the sufferer? They have strong passions, but no sympathy. It is said that the wounded deer sheds tears; but it belongs to man only to "weep with them that weep," and by sympathy to divide another's sorrows, and double another's joys. When thunder, following the dazzling flash, has burst among our hills, when the horn of the Switzer has rung in his glorious valleys, when the boatman has shouted from the bosom of a rock-girt loch, wonderful were the echoes I have heard them make; but there is no echo so fine or wonderful as that which, in the sympathy of human hearts, repeats the cry of another's sorrow, and makes me feel his pain almost as if it were my own. They say, that if a piano is struck in a room where another stands unopened and untouched, who lays his ear to that will hear a string within, as if touched by the hand of a shadowy spirit, sound the same note; but more strange how the strings of one heart vibrate to those of another; how woe weakens woe; how your grief infects me with sadness; how the shadow of a passing funeral and nodding hearse casts a cloud on the mirth of a marriage party; how sympathy may be so delicate and acute as to become a pain. There is, for example, the well-authenticated case of a lady who could not even hear the description of a severe surgical operation, but she felt all the agonies of the patient, grew paler and paler, and shrieked and fainted under the horrible imagination. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Law of sympathy*:—As in the electric shock every one feels the same shock who holds the same chain; or as in the singular acoustic law by which

several instruments have a sympathetic vibration, so that, if one note be struck violently on one, there will be a faint vibration on the other; or like the still more delicate and mysterious tracery of nerves which run throughout the whole human body, the meanest member cannot suffer without all the members feeling with it. *Sympathy*:—I want to tell you how, a few years ago, I got up sympathy with a family in Chicago, where I was living. It is very unhealthy in the summer, and I attended the funerals of a good many children. I got hardened to it, like a doctor, and could go to them without sympathy. One of my little scholars was drowned, and word was sent by the mother that she wanted to see me. I went. The dripping body was there on the table. The husband was a drunkard, and was then in the corner drunk. The mother said she had no money to buy a shroud or coffin, and wanted to know if I could not bury Adeline. I consented. I had my little girl with me then. She was about four years old. When we got outside she asked: "Suppose we were poor, pa, and I had to go down to the river after sticks, and should fall in and get drowned, and you had no money to bury me, would you be sorry, papa?" and then she looked up into my eyes with an expression I had never before seen, and asked: "Did you feel bad for that mother?" I clasped her to my heart and kissed her, and my sympathy was aroused. My friends, if you want to get in sympathy with people, consider how you would feel in their place. Let us, working for the Master, have compassion on the unfortunate, and sympathy for those who need our sympathy. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The demands of Christian sympathy*:—1. Joy and sorrow are the two chief elements of life. They often meet in the one event; what is sorrowful to one is joyful to the other. They are often very near each other in this life of uncertainty and change. An hour beyond the present time may transfer us from one to the other. Often the morning is bright, but the evening dull and cloudy and *vice versâ*. 2. Joy and sorrow modify each other, and life requires both to make it complete. Continual sorrow would make men sad and sour; and perpetual joy would make men too light in character, and disqualify them as the comforters of the afflicted; but by their co-operation they make men more fit in this world to work and sympathise. The sweet makes the bitter tolerable; and the bitter imparts a kind of tonic quality to the sweet. Confining ourselves to the latter clause, we shall view calamities—I. THROUGH SOME OF THEIR CAUSES. 1. A willing ignorance of law. Many fevers, explosions, shipwrecks, &c., arise from ignorance of the laws of things; and there is no excuse for our ignorance of most of them. 2. Presumption. Repeated transgression of law, because it has often happened hitherto without any calamity, often costs men dearly. 3. Mercenary selfishness and ambition. From a love of money sanitary improvements are neglected; and in our mines means of safety are neglected because there is a little expense in the introduction of them. 4. Careless indifference. We by custom become used to things, and act carelessly; where others, unused to the same things, are timid and careful, and often save themselves. II. THROUGH SOME OF THEIR HARROWING DISTRESSES AND RESULTS. Calamities, by reason of their frequent occurrence, lose their impression upon us. Like the loss of life in times of war, they become things of little power because of their frequent occurrence. However we view and feel them, it is clear that the results from them are grave and glaring. 1. They reduce our estimate of human life. We value our own life above all things, and the simplest duty of religion is, to do to others as we would that others should do unto us. We too often reverse this, and by blindness and selfishness make human life the meanest of all things. 2. They harden men religiously. People are amazed that they do not change the heart and life of men. But can the widow melt into tenderness of religious emotions when she broods over her great loss and hard lot, and all the while attributes it to the carelessness of others? Can the orphan be made more religious when he thinks of the way his nearest friend in life has been taken away? If they attribute their calamities to God, do they present Him in that amiable character as to attract the heart in love to Him? 3. They diminish the goodness and enjoyment of life. 4. They increase the burden of society. Who are to provide for the widows and the fatherless? 5. But the distress of such calamities to the immediate individuals themselves is beyond language to describe. III. ON CHRISTIAN GROUND AND IN CHRISTIAN LIGHT. Christianity—1. Brings out the purest and the noblest sympathies of the soul to meet and comfort distress. All done to the distressed under its influence is done by love, hence it is both pleasurable and lasting. It leads the afflicted to an ever-living Father, to the sympathy and love of a Saviour, and the comfort of His Spirit; it brings them into fellowship with all the good; and gives a hope of a heaven of

happiness after the sorrows of life will end. 2. Teaches men to make earthly things subordinate to the want and support of persons in their woes and sorrows. 3. Makes it a part of Christian life to assist the needy and ameliorate the woes of men. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" is its first and last teaching. 4. Is catholic and impartial in its aid and comfort to distress and misery. It asks no questions as to nationality, rank, sect, and creed; it views all as human creatures in want and distress. 5. Lessens the misery of humanity. It does this to the mind of men by its spiritual provisions, and to their bodies and outward wants by making all material things subordinate to human want and woe. 6. Unites men so closely to each other as to make them responsible for the good and comfort of one another. IV. THROUGH THEIR LESSONS TO US. Calamities as these teach us—1. To be more submissive and satisfied with the ordinary ills and misfortunes of life. 2. The necessity of studying the laws of human life more, and understanding them better. 3. That we are so nearly related to one another that the life and interest of all are very much in the hands of each other. 4. That great calamities all result from the repeated neglect of small things. 5. To do all we can to comfort and help those in distress. (*T. Hughes.*)

Ver. 16. **Be of the same mind one towards another.**—*Unity*:—I. WHAT IT IMPLIES. 1. One spirit. 2. One aim. 3. One way. II. HOW TO SECURE IT. 1. Suppress ambition. 2. Be condescending to inferiors. 3. Be modest in the expression of your own opinion. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Mind not high things*:—I. WHAT HIGH THINGS? 1. Negatively—not the highest or heavenly things (Col. iii. 1-2; Matt. vi. 33). 2. Positively—of this world (Jer. xlv. 5). Great—(1) Riches (Tim. vi. 19); (2) Honours; (3) Power and place (Acts v. 36); (4) Employments; (5) Pleasures. II. HOW NOT MIND THEM? Not so as—1. To think of them (Psa. i. 2). 2. To desire them (Col. iii. 2; Psa. lxxiii. 25). 3. To hope for them. 4. To admire them (Luke xxi. 5, 6). 5. To labour after them (John vi. 27; Matt. vi. 33). III. WHY NOT MIND THEM? 1. They are below you. (1) As ye are rational creatures. (2) As believing Christians. 2. You have higher things to mind (Phil. iii. 20). 3. Minding of earth and heaven both is inconsistent (Matt. vi. 24; 1 John ii. 15). Conclusion: Mind not high things. Consider they are—1. Uncertain. 2. Inconstant (Prov. xxiii. 5). 3. Unsatisfying (Eccles. i. 8; iv. 8). 4. Dangerous (1 Tim. vi. 10). 5. Momentary (Luke xii. 20). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Mind not high things*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THIS PROHIBITION. It forbids—1. Pride. 2. Assumption. 3. Foolish ambition. II. ITS IMPORTANCE. These evils are—1. Very offensive to God. 2. A source of misery to ourselves. 3. A cause of serious evil both in the Church and the world. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Condescend to men of low estate.**—*Condescension*:—I. THE CONDUCT ENJOINED. A behaviour—1. Humble. 2. Affable. 3. Condescending. II. ITS EXCELLENCIES. It is—1. Magnanimous. 2. Christlike. III. ITS IMPORTANCE. It is essential to the Christian character. IV. ITS MOTIVES. Differences of condition are accidental, temporal, designed to afford opportunity for the development of this spirit. (*Ibid.*) *Considerateness towards inferiors*:—Knowing how anxious the troops in Cabul would look for their letters, Captain (afterwards Sir Henry) Lawrence and his wife—because the Government could not afford a post-clerk!—would sit up half the night sorting them, after the multiform duties of revenue collector, engineer, commissariat officer, and paymaster, had been discharged. But this was only one instance out of many of Lawrence's exquisite regard for others. (*H. A. Page.*) **Be not wise in your own conceits.**—I. AS TO RATIONAL WISDOM OR KNOWLEDGE. 1. Of natural causes. (1) You know not the first constitution of them (Job xxxviii. 4-6). (2) Nor God's present disposal of them (Acts xvii. 28). (3) Nor their own working and nature. 2. Future events (James iv. 13, 14.) (1) You know not the causes that must concur to produce them. (2) Nor whether God will set them on work or no, or hinder them (James iv. 15; 1 Cor. iv. 19). 3. The providences of God (Psa. cxxxix. 5, 6). (1) To the evil (Psa. lxxiii. 3, 22). (2) To the good. 4. The intrigues of state (Prov. xx. 3). 5. The spiritual estate of others (Matt. vii. 1). (1) You know not your own condition (1 Cor. ii. 11). (2) There is no way in the world whereby to know others. 6. The interpretation of Scripture (Mark xii. 24). (1) Prophecies (Acts viii. 30, 31). (2) Mysteries (Rom. xi. 33). (3) Difficult places (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16). 7. Determination of theological controversies. 8. Be not then wise in your own conceits. (1) It is a sin (Isa. v. 21; Prov. iii. 7). (2) You are not wise (Job xi. 12). (3) This will hinder you from true wisdom (Prov. xxvi. 12). But—(1) Have low thoughts of your own knowledge. (2) Labour each day to know more—(*a*) Of

God; (*b*) Of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 2). II. As to practical wisdom. 1. Wherein? (1) We must not conceit ourselves to be saints (1 Tim. i. 15; Isa. lxv. 5; Luke xviii. 11). (2) Nor that we are holier than others. (3) Nor that we perform duties aright. (*a*) Reading the Scripture. (*b*) Praying (James iv. 3). (*c*) Hearing (Acts ii. 37). (*d*) Mediation (Phil. iii. 20). (4) Nor that we exercise graces aright. (*a*) Repentance (2 Cor. vii. 10). We may repent of some sins, not of all: and our repentance is proportional to none of our sins. (*b*) Faith. It may be only historical, or partial (John i. 12), or upon wrong grounds—education, not Divine testimony (1 John v. 10), or, not on Christ only (Phil. iii. 8, 9). (*c*) Love. We do not love God with all our hearts (Matt. xxii. 37), nor constantly. (*d*) Trust. It may be only for spirituals (1 Pet. v. 7), and not with all our heart (Prov. iii. 5). (*e*) Thankfulness. Not proportional to our mercies, or not for all things (1 Thess. v. 18). (*f*) Charity. It may be from wrong principles (Matt. vi.), or in a wrong manner (Rom. xii. 8). 2. Why not thus conceited of ourselves? (1) We know not our own hearts (Jer. xvii. 9). (2) We are too apt to have too high thoughts of ourselves. (3) This will keep us from looking after true holiness. 3. Uses: Be not wise in your own conceits. (1) Many have been mistaken (Matt. vii. 22). (2) The less holy you are, the more you are apt to conceit yourselves to be so. (3) These conceits of holiness are not consistent with true grace (James iv. 6). (4) Therefore, so long as you conceit yourselves to be holy, you may conclude yourselves to be sinful. (5) You shall not be judged by your own conceits, but by the law of God. 4. Directions. (1) Oft consult your own hearts (Psa. iv. 4). (2) Compare your actions with God's laws. (3) Still remember what a fearful thing it is to be mistaken in a thing of this weight. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Be not wise in your own conceits*;—I. The conduct condemned. 1. An undue estimate of one's own opinion. 2. The immodest expression of it. II. Its prevalence. Even among Christian professors. III. Its origin. 1. Ignorance. 2. Pride. IV. Its impropriety. 1. It is offensive to others. 2. It destroys unity. 3. It is utterly opposed to the Spirit of Christ. 4. It exposes a man to merited humiliation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Be not wise in your own conceits*:—I. The temper described. The persistent assertions of your own—1. Opinions. 2. Judgment. 3. Plans. II. Its folly. It assumes—1. That you have nothing to learn. 2. That you are incapable of error. 3. That you are wiser than everybody else. III. Its evil. 1. It offends others. 2. Generates strife. 3. Is inconsistent with the Christian spirit. (*Ibid.*) *Self wisdom v. Divine wisdom*:—The text repeats the warning of xi. 25, and recalls Prov. iii. 7. But it is not to be understood of speculative opinion. It refers to the practical "prudence" which guides men in business and in the ventures and contingencies of life. It might be rendered—"Become not prudent by yourselves." The accepted translation is unfortunate, suggesting a sense the word never bears. Note—I. The special danger Christians are in with respect to this prudence. I. It is the result of a natural instict. The general source of it is the tendency to make "self" the measure and end of everything. The selfish man is short-sighted and self-opiniated; or he gives undue weight to the maxims of earthly prudence. 2. It is confirmed by the general opinion and practice of men. The proverbs of the world are for the most part mercenary; the moralitics of heathen philosophy, so far as practical, are but a refined selfishuess. 3. The nobler life of man is thereby prevented. In modern times the recognition of the independence of all nations in regard to the highest interests has been wondrously fruitful. For a mau or a nation, therefore, to shut out wilfully the consideration of others, and to "become prudent, merely for or by itself," is for it to lose its place in the commonwealth of knowledge, civilisation, and true progress. 4. The gravest dangers threaten within the sphere of religion. How common is the error "Save yourself" as a religious duty. Let us beware lest we have but exchanged the honest "competition" of the market-place for a "consecrated selfishness" baptized with the name of Christ! The Gentile converts were iu danger of despising the "cast off" Jews, and of thinking the grace of God was henceforth to be their own monopoly. Paul warned them against the error (chap. xi. 33–36). Because of similar prejudices, missions to the heathen have been obstructed. Only when we rise to the height of this conception of Christianity can it bo a perfect salvation for ourselves as individual Christians. II. How this danger is to be averted. 1. By constant and prayerful study of the Word of God. 2. By considering the examples of holy men, especially of Christ Himself. 3. By remembering that we are all members of the body of Christ, which is His Church. The good of all men is to be sought. Each must labour towards the universal ends of Christ's kingdom as a "member in particular." 4. By giving

heed to the voice of God's Spirit within us. It led Peter and Paul to wider fields of usefulness. The "mind of Christ" will ever lead us to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Him. But in so doing we shall discover a Diviner wisdom. In losing our life we shall find it. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," &c. (*St. John A. Frere, M.A.*)

Ver. 17. **Recompense to no man evil for evil.**—*Non-retaliation*:—I. WHAT EVILS ARE WE NOT TO RECOMPENSE? 1. Not to hate others because they hate us (Matt. v. 44). 2. Not to curse others because they curse us (2 Sam. xvi. 10; Matt. v. 44). 3. Not to defraud others because they defraud us (Lev. xix. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 6). 4. Not to speak evil of others because they speak evil of us (Tit. iii. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 9). 5. Not to neglect our duty to them because they do it to us. (1) Praying for them (1 Tim. ii. 1). (2) Pitying their miseries (Rom. xii. 15). (3) Helping them in their necessities (Gal. vi. 10). II. WHY NOT? 1. It is contrary to the rule (Matt. vii. 12). 2. Hereby we do ourselves more injury than they did. 3. Yea, and more than we can do them. Conclusion: Consider—1. None can hinder us without God (Isa. xlv. 7). 2. Injuries patiently borne are both occasions of virtue. 3. It is better to bear an injury than to cause one. 4. We must follow the Saviour's example (1 Pet. ii. 23). 5. It is one of the noblest virtues of a Christian to live above injuries. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Retaliation* is—I. NATURAL. II. FOOLISH. It—1. Fails to accomplish its own end. 2. Makes matters worse. III. UNJUSTIFIABLE. Because it is—1. To take the law into our own hands. 2. To assume the prerogative of God. IV. UNCHRISTIAN. Because—1. Opposed to the Spirit of Christ. 2. Inimical to our own moral development. 3. Utterly forbidden. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Provide things honest in the sight of all men.**—1. How PROVIDE? 1. Think of them (1 Tim. iv. 15). 2. Intend them (Psa. xvii. 3). 3. Endeavour them (2 Pet. i. 5). 4. Practise them (1 John iii. 18). 5. Continue the practice of them (1 Cor. xv. 58; Rev. ii. 25, 26). II. WHAT HONEST THINGS? 1. Towards God. (1) Love to His person (Deut. vi. 5). (2) Faith in His words (1 John v. 10). (3) Trust on His promises (Heb. xiii. 5, 6). (4) Fear of His threatenings (Amos iii. 8). (5) Obedience to His precepts. 2. Towards men. (1) To our superiors, subjection (Rom. xiii. 1). (2) To our inferiors, humility. 3. To all: (1) Truth (Lev. xix. 11). (2) Equity (Lev. xix. 35, 36). (3) Love (Matt. v. 45). (4) Honour (1 Pet. ii. 17). (5) Prayers (1 Tim. ii. 1). III. HOW IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN? 1. So as to make open profession of our religion (Rom. i. 16). 2. To manifest our integrity in it unto all (2 Cor. viii. 21). IV. WHY IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN? 1. Negatively. Not to gain credit for them (Matt. vi. 1). 2. Positively. (1) To stop others false accusing us (1 Pet. iii. 16). (2) To be an example to others (1 Cor. xi. 1). (3) For the glory of God (Matt. v. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 12). V. USE. Provide things honest, &c. Hereby you will—1. Keep your conscience void of offence towards God and men (Acts xxiv. 16). 2. Excite others to virtue (James v. 20. 3. Be an honour to religion. 4. Be certain of God's blessing here (Psa. xxxix. 12). 5. Be entitled to heaven hereafter. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Providing things honest in the sight of all men*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THIS PRECEPT. 1. Not merely live honestly. 2. But pay attention to things approved and beautiful in the estimation of men. 3. This implies a regard not only for general consistency, but a respect for the amenities of life. II. ITS IMPORTANCE. 1. The Christian is the highest style of man. 2. Should be inferior to none in moral and social excellence. 3. Should recommend his profession. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Getting an honest living*:—I. PROVIDE. Such is the message of the whole Bible. Right through industry is commended, idleness anathematised. Need we remind you of Solomon? Paul is quite as good in his way. "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." Starve them out! Summary procedure, but salutary. Again, "if any *provide* not for his own, especially of his own house, he hath denied the faith," &c. Yes; for it is part of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" that we should "provide." 1. It is well that we have to do so. No man is to be pitied on account of it. A fine thing is work. It braces the soul like iron, quinine, or water, the body. An experienced African traveller says, "We sicken more from inactivity than from malaria." 2. Provide. What? "Things"—(1) Necessary. Our absolute wants are to be met. (2) But luxuries come under the phrase before us. Used in moderation they are not sinful. If they were, God would not set us so bad an example as to give them to us. What is the blush on the apple and the bloom on

the peach, the fragrance of the rose and the music of the falling wave? Luxury. The oak not only affords us wood, but adorns the landscape; nor does it yield an inch less wood because it is a thing of beauty. Even so, we shall not be worse, but better, if we have a few good pictures on our walls and ornaments on our tables, if we enjoy the last tale or the newest poem. The infinite Father gives His children toys as well as tools. 3. Don't expect others to provide for you; do it yourself. We should cultivate a manly spirit of independence and self-help. According to a certain sage, every man has three fortunes, a head and a pair of hands; would that all made a diligent use of these fortunes. "God helps those that help themselves," and we should refuse to aid any others. II. PROVIDE THINGS HONEST. How may we do that? Nobody will have much difficulty in finding out, if he wishes to make the discovery. There are sundry practices which may well be looked at in the light of the text. 1. It is not an uncommon thing for men to get into debt when they know they have small chance of paying. We are well aware of the mode in which this is palliated. When a mob of rioters were about to attack a flour-mill, Luther stood between it and them. "Master, we must live," they cried. "I don't see that: you 'must' be honest," answered the brave reformer. Existence, precious though it be, is not to be bought at any price. But men are seldom, indeed, called to make such a desperate sacrifice. "Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and, verily, thou shalt be fed." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," &c. Encouraged by these assurances, let none of us compromise his integrity. "Owe no man anything." Rather than involve himself in debt Lord Macaulay sold the gold medals which he had won at Cambridge. 2. Sometimes goods are sold for what they are not. We occasionally speak about "getting goods under false pretences," but are they never got rid of under false pretences? What is the meaning of the common caution, "Beware of spurious imitations"? Think, also, of adulteration. How shamefully is the public sometimes imposed on in what it eats and drinks. 3. It is possible for persons in situations to be lax in their notions of their duty to their employers. If I engage to serve another for a given amount of remuneration for a certain period, I thereby sell him my time, my energy, my talent, and if I withhold it I am not honest. III. PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN. Not only be honest, but let your honesty be seen. As Bengel remarks in connection with our text: "A gem should not merely be a gem; it should be properly set in a ring, that its splendour may meet the eye." "In the sight of all men." 1. For our own sakes. In the long run he is trusted who is trustworthy; integrity wins confidence. If I deal with a man and he deceives me, I mentally put a black mark against his name, and warn others of him. Thus his unrighteousness injures him, as, indeed, it ought to do. More money is to be made by going straight than by going crooked. 2. For the Church's sake. Nothing is so prejudicial to the interests of religion as lack of uprightness in men professing to be godly. Such monstrosities remind one of what a traveller saw in a Russian church—to wit, a fellow devoutly counting his rosary with one hand and picking a pocket with the other. Robert Burns wrote, "An honest man's the noblest work of God." He was right. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *Honourable dealing*:—A young man in a dry-goods store in Boston was endeavouring to sell a customer some goods. He had a quantity on hand which he much desired to dispose of, as they were not of the freshest style; and the man seemed inclined to take them. When the goods had been examined, and the bargain was about to be concluded, the customer inquired: "Are these goods the latest style?" The young man hesitated. He wanted to sell the goods, and it appeared evident that if he said they were the latest style, the man would take them. But he could not tell a lie, and he replied: "They are not the latest style of goods, but they are a very good style." The man looked at him, examined some other goods of later style, and said: "I will take those of the older style, and some of the new also. Your honesty in stating the facts will fasten me to this place." The man not only sold his goods, and kept a good conscience, but he also retained a customer, whom he might never have seen again if he had not spoken to him the exact truth. There is no permanent gain in falsehood and deception. Righteousness and truth are a sure foundation. ("*The Christian*," *Boston, U.S.A.*) *An honest man*:—Robert Burns wrote, "An honest man's the noblest work of God." He was right. A man who is honest all round, honest towards God, and honest towards his fellow-creatures, is the noblest work of God. When urged by his wife not to allow his conscience to stand in the way of fortunes Milton said, "I am resolved to live and die an honest man." Let us say the same.

"Come gain or loss, come evil report or good report, come weal or woe, I am resolved to live and die an honest man."

Vers. 18. **If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.** —*Live peaceably with all men:*—I. IF POSSIBLE. By maintaining a spirit—1. Upright. 2. Meek. 3. Peaceable. II. IF NOT POSSIBLE. 1. Leave your cause in God's hands. 2. Show kindness to your enemies. 3. So shall you secure a noble conquest. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *How to live at peace with all men:*—I. WATCH OVER YOURSELF. 1. Do not retaliate. 2. Be honest. 3. Cultivate a peaceable spirit. II. COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD. 1. Instead of avenging yourself let Him undertake your cause. 2. Retribution is His prerogative. 3. He will certainly defend the right. III. CONCILIATE YOUR ENEMIES. By kindness. You will thus achieve a noble conquest over evil in yourself, and subdue enmity by love. (*Ibid.*) *Peace with all men:*—I. IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE. 1. Some are unreasonable. 2. Others contentious. 3. With many it is impossible to be at peace without sacrificing conscience. II. SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE—by 1. Patience. 2. Prudence. 3. Conciliation. III. IF IMPOSSIBLE, CANNOT BE SOUGHT WITHOUT ADVANTAGE. The attempt secures—1. Peace of conscience. 2. The approbation of God. 3. And consequently Divine interposition in our favour. (*Ibid.*) *Peaceableness:*—I. THE GENERAL IMPORT OF THE EXHORTATION. 1. That we should have a hearty love and value for peace as far as it may be obtained. 2. That we studiously direct our conduct so as may be most likely to reach this end. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE QUALIFICATIONS ADDED. 1. It is evidently intimated that it is not always possible or in our power to reach the desirable end of peace. Those who "seek peace and pursue it," according to the exhortation (Psa. xxxvi. 14) yet sometimes find that it flies from them. (1) Sometimes this falls out in common life, through the perverse humours and unreasonable obstinacy of those with whom we have to do. There are people in this world so captious as to take offence without any foundation. (2) Sometimes it is not morally possible to be at peace with men, because they will not be at peace with us, unless we will violate a good conscience. Peace, though so desirable a blessing, is not to be purchased at any rate. For instance—(*a*) Neither truth nor holiness are to be sacrificed to peace. That would be to sacrifice our peace with God and with our own consciences for the sake of peace with men, which for certain would be much too dear a bargain. (*b*) Nor should we decline any service we are capable of, to the interest of Christ or of our country, for fear of some people's offence. Christian courage should extinguish such fears. 2. This addition greatly enforces the precept, when it may consist with higher obligations. We must not venture everything for peace, but we should esteem it worth a great deal of pains and self-denial. If we can compass it by any means that are fit for us to use, we should endeavour it. 3. It is implied, farther, that we shall have reason to be content, though we should miss our aim, if we have performed our part. Then the breach of peace may be your affliction, but it will not be your sin. III. THE EXTENT PRESCRIBED FOR OUR AIM IN THIS MATTER: "Live peaceably with all men." 1. We should endeavour to live peaceably with all men at large, as far as we have any concern with them. Setting aside the consideration of their religion or their virtuous character, we are obliged by the dictates of nature, and of Christianity too, to study peace with them as our fellow-creatures; and to this end—(1) We should be careful to behave inoffensively to all—to "give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God" (1 Cor. x. 32), that, if possible, we may prevent any difference from arising. (2) We are equally concerned, in order to peace, not to be quick in taking offence. Many people might soon have received proper satisfaction for an injury done them if they had not themselves overrated it and carried their resentment beyond all regular bounds, till they made a small breach wide and most difficult to be healed. (3) We should be desirous to regain peace as soon as possible whenever a difference actually arises. The implacable are reckoned among the greatest sinners (Rom. i. 31). 2. We should endeavour to cultivate a more peculiar peace and harmony with all our fellow Christians as such. IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF A PEACEABLE SPIRIT IN CHRISTIANITY. It is many ways recommended in the gospel; as—1. By showing us the great evil of an unpeaceable spirit. It is the fruit of carnality, or of an undue ascendant which some fleshly motive or other hath over us (1 Cor. iii. 3). 2. By representing a peaceable disposition in a very advantageous light. It is one of "the fruits of the blessed Spirit" (Gal. v. 22). It is mentioned as one principal thing wherein the spiritual kingdom of God, or true

religion in the hearts of men, consists (Rom. xiv. 17). Christ saw fit to make it the subject of one of His beatitudes (Matt. v. 9). 3. By the lively expressions of such a temper in the example of Christ. He was, on the one hand, a pattern for observing the proper limitations to be attended to in all pursuits after peace; He ever preferred truth and duty to it, an obedience to His Father to the pleasing of men; and so must we. But, on the other hand, as far as was consistent with His higher engagements He ever showed a strong disposition to peace. 4. By the account it gives us of the heavenly world, as a state of perfect love and harmony, where there are no jarring notes and affections. When a good man dies he "enters into peace" (Isa. lvii. 2). By way of reflection, then—1. This may be sufficient to vindicate Christianity from the reproaches which have been cast upon it for the animosities that have abounded among Christians. The precepts, the patterns, the principles of Christianity, all lead another way; they directly lead to peaceableness. 2. This may be a proper subject of trial and self-examination. If we make no conscience of this duty of peaceableness, we have not yet entered into the spirit of true Christianity. 3. Let us all, as we are exhorted in the text, cultivate and exercise a peaceable and healing disposition. This is the likeliest way to dispose others to be at peace with us. (*J. Evans, D.D.*) *The duty of living peaceably:*—I. LIVE PEACEABLY WHEN POSSIBLE. All that disturbance of man's peace which springs from our lower nature we are bound everywhere to restrain. Let me mention some provocatives from which we may and should abstain. 1. Offensive language. Many that have great power of speech do not feel that God's law is to regulate the use of their tongues. There are Christian heads of families who shoot across the table from day to day words which stir up the worst feelings which men can have. Many and many a household has no chimney which carries away the smoke of these conflicts, and the smoke falls down, leaving harm where it rests. As much as lieth in your tongue, then, live peaceably with your wife, your children, your servants, and your fellow-men. 2. Provoking carriage. A man can look as well as speak speech. A nod of the head, a lifting up of the eyes, a shrug of the shoulder, the whole manner, is as powerful as speech. We have no right to be provoking in our attitudes. 3. An unconscious, and still more, an intended, insolent conduct of pride toward men. Frequently the very presence of a man who is filled with a spirit of self-importance is an insult. The duty of humility is not simply a duty of the closet. 4. Selfishness. The ten thousand jealousies and envies which are current in business circles arise from inconsiderate selfishness. 5. The untrained disposition of jocosity. I mean all forms of teasing, jesting, irony, sarcasm, wit, which are indulged in at another's expense, and which are not "convenient." Ordinarily, this is practised where the victim has no power of resistance. You often see persons pulling little children's hair, saying things that stir up little children's feelings; exposing things that they do not want to have known, in order to see the flush on their cheeks; or creating a laugh at their expense. Saying disagreeable things in a calm and ironical way is inexcusable There is a teasing which is pleasant, and causes nobody suffering; but teasing for the sake of making other people uncomfortable is fiendish. 6. The habit of contradiction and argument. We know what it is to be a "bully." We see men boasting of their strength, and saying provoking things in the hope of getting into a quarrel with their fellow-men. There are men who may be called logical bullies. If you say anything, they dispute it. Argument leads to disputation speedily, and disputation to quarrelling, and quarrelling to ill-will. 7. Scandalmongering. There are men who have an intuition for discovering faults in others. They see them as quick as lightning; and they tell of them wherever they go. There are men who are vampires, feeding on their fellow-men in this way. And the amount of ill-will that is created in a neighbourhood by tale-bearers is astounding. The only excuse which men give for thus reporting things that are evil in regard to others is that they are true. But you have no right to report anything evil of a man, even if it is true, unless you have a benevolent purpose. Every man has his train of infelicities. But as they sprung from him they ought not to be carried far away from him. A scandal-monger is like one who carries contraband goods; and the partaker is as bad as the thief. 8. Indiscreet frankness. Telling men unpleasant truths about themselves, telling them what other people have said about them—this is generally unwise. Blurting out the truth about people into their faces is impolite. There is an impression that if a man has a truth he should let it fly, hit where it may. A doctor might as well scatter his drugs through the community, as a man tell all he knows about people indis-

criminately. Truth, being a medicine, instead of being thrown about heedlessly, and with brutal barbarity, is to be administered with care and discretion. 9. Indiscreet urgency in religious teaching. There are many religious persons who go about with an incisiveness and pertinacity which annoy and vex people, and introduce an element of disquiet by which more harm than good is done. II. THERE ARE TIMES IN WHICH YOU CANNOT LIVE PEACEABLY. 1. There are cases in which, when you are commanded by the law to do evil, you will be obliged to resist, and make great disturbance. And there are a great many other cases where, in your business relations and social connections, you will be placed in circumstances in which the interest of others pushes you toward the commission of evil, but in which you must not do it. A river complains to the rock on its bank of the noise which it is making. Why does the rock make the noise? Because it will not budge, and the water will. So that it is the water, and not the rock, that makes the noise. The rock stood there, and had a right to stand there; and if the water would beat against it and make a noise, it was not the rock's fault. The man who is free from wickedness is accused by wicked men of making all the turmoil and excitement, but he does not. You recollect that when the tyrant had vexed and annoyed Israel through years of misrule, and the prophet had attempted to see that the laws were obeyed, and that the welfare of the people was maintained, the king said to him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 2. Christian virtue sometimes stands in the way of men's pleasure. Sometimes it happens that an individual is solicited to taste wine which conscientiously he cannot touch, and he stirs up great resistance by refusing. 3. Those who are called to teach unwelcome truths must make up their minds not to live peaceably. No man can preach the truth faithfully without offending men. Our Master could not do it. The apostles could not. 4. You cannot attempt to oppose men's worldly interests for the sake of public morality, for the reformation of the community, for the purification of the ballot, without rousing up an immense amount of anger. But somebody must do these things. No Christian man has a right to see the city in which he lives go down like Sodom and Gomorrah and put out no hand or voice to save it. Christian men are bound to be "lights" and "salt." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christians exhorted to live peaceably:*—I. THE DUTY HERE ENJOINED. The expression may be taken—1. For the actual enjoyment of peace with all men: in which sense he only lives peaceably, whom no man molests. This cannot be here intended, because —(1) So to live peaceably is impossible in consequence of—(*a*) The contentious, unreasonable humour of many men. There are some that, like so many salamanders, cannot live but in the fire, and so long as there be such, how can there be undisturbed quietness? God must first weed the world of all ill dispositions before a universal peace can grow in it. (*b*) The contrary and inconsistent interests of many men. There is nothing which men prosecute with so much vigour as their interest, and the prosecution of contrary interests must needs be carried on by contrary ways, which will be sure to thwart one another. (2) What is the matter of duty ought to be in the power of him to whom it is enjoined. But it is not in my power to enjoy peace with all men, since this depends upon their behaviour towards me. If a man will be my enemy, I cannot prevent him. 2. Wherefore it is clear that the text is to be understood for a peaceable behaviour towards all men; in which case he lives peaceably by whom no man is molested. It consists therefore in—(1) A forbearance of hostile actions. In a way of—(*a*) Prevention, *i.e.*, abstinence from an injurious invasion upon the rights of another, whether as to his person or estate. (*b*) Non-retaliation (1 Cor. xiii. 7). Fire sometimes goes out as much for want of being stirred up as for want of fuel. He who affronts his brother breaks the peace; but he who repays the ill turn perpetuates the breach. And perhaps the greatest unquietness is not so much chargeable upon the injurious as the revengeful. A storm ruins nowhere but where it is withstood and repelled. (2) A forbearance of injurious, provoking words. Rabshakeh broke the peace with Hezekiah as much by his railing as by his army. Men resent ugly words with more acrimony than they would stabs. And the reason is, because a wound directs an evil only to a man's person, but an ill word renders him miserable as far as he is known. Besides, it hurts him so as to put the reparation absolutely out of his power; for it lodges his infamy in other men's thoughts, which he cannot come at so as to rectify them. II. WHAT ARE THE MEASURES AND PROPORTIONS BY WHICH IT IS TO BE DETERMINED. "If it be possible," *i.e.*, morally, lawfully possible (Gen. xxxix. 9; 2 Cor. xiii. 8). Where, then, the breaking of the peace is not unlawful, there the maintaining of it ceases

to be a necessary duty. Apply this to—1. War. (1) Is it lawful? Yes, if in a good cause, viz.—(*a*) Defensive; in order to repel an evil designed to the public; and therefore is an act of self-preservation. (*b*) Offensive; for revenging a public injury done to a community, and so is an act of justice. And further, the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles judged the employment of a soldier lawful. (2) When and where ought it to be judged so? When those with whom we are at peace—(*a*) Declare that they will annoy us unless we mangle our bodies (1 Sam. xi. 2). (*b*) Declare war with us, unless we renounce our religion, as in the case of the Armada. (*c*) Injure us as a nation so as to blast our honour, which honour is as necessary to the welfare and support of a nation as its commerce. (*d*) Declare war with us unless we will quit our civil rights. 2. Self-defence. (1) If a man has no other means of escape it is lawful from—(*a*) The great natural right of self-preservation, which is as full in individuals as in public bodies. (*b*) That place where Christ commands His disciples to provide themselves swords. To have allowed them the instruments of defence, and at the same time to have forbid the use of them as unlawful, had been irrational. (*c*) The suffrage of the civil law. (2) What are those things which may be thus defended. (*a*) Life. For where it is lawful to live, it is lawful to do all those things without which life cannot be preserved. (*b*) Limbs. For who knows but the loss of a part may bring the destruction of the whole? (*c*) Chastity. For this is as irreparable as life itself; and to lose one's life is indeed a misery, but it is no dishonour. (*d*) Estate or goods. Before I pass on I shall add that whatsoever is lawful for a man to do for himself, is lawful for him to do for his neighbour; for we are commanded to "love our neighbour as ourselves." (3) The conditions required to legalise such a defence of ourselves and fortunes. (*a*) That the violence offered be so apparent, so great and pressing, that there can be no other means of escape. (*b*) That all possibility of recourse to the magistrate for a legal protection be taken away. In which case the law leaves every man to his own natural defence. (*c*) That a man designs merely his own defence, without any revenge towards the person who thus invades him. 3. Litigation. This is allowable when it is to secure the execution of justice in the proper acts of it between man and man. If Christianity prohibits all pursuit of a man's right at law, then its observance unavoidably draws after it the utter dissolution of all government and society. He that has the strongest arm, the sharpest sword, the boldest front, and the falsest heart, must possess the world. Yet since men are too prone to stretch their just allowances beyond their bounds, note those conditions that are required to warrant men in their law contentions. (*a*) That a man takes not this course but upon a very great and urgent cause. Every little wrong and trespass is not a sufficient warrant for me to disturb my neighbour's peace. (*b*) That a man be willing, upon any tolerable and just terms, to agree with his adversary, rather than to proceed to a suit. (*c*) Supposing great cause and no satisfaction, that the injured person manage his suit by the rule of charity, and not with any purpose to revenge himself upon his adversary. III. THE MEANS CONDUCIBLE TO OUR PERFORMANCE OF THIS EXCELLENT DUTY. 1. A careful suppression of all distasteful, aggravating apprehensions of any ill turn or unkind behaviour from men. It is the morose dwelling of the thoughts upon an injury that incorporates and rivets it into the mind. 2. The forbearing of all pragmatical or malicious informations. "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." The reporting what such a one said or did is the way to kindle such heart-burnings between persons, as oftentimes break forth and flame to the consumption of families, courts, and perhaps at length of cities and kingdoms. 3. That men would be willing in some cases to waive the prosecution of their rights. As—(1) When the recovery of a right seems impossible: prudence and duty then call upon a man to surcease the prosecution of that, and rather to follow peace. (2) When that right is but trivial, but the recovery of it troublesome and contentious. That which being lost makes a man not much the poorer, nor recovered, much the richer, cannot authorise him to enter into the din of a long contest. (3) When a recompense is offered. (4) To reflect upon the great example of Christ, and the strict injunction lying upon us to follow it. We shall find that his whole life went in constant recession from his own rights, in order to the peace of the public. 5. Not to adhere too pertinaciously to our own judgments of things doubtful in themselves in opposition to the judgment of those who are more skilful in those things. IV. THE MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THIS DUTY MAY BE ENFORCED. 1. The excellency of the thing itself. "Peace" is a Divine title (chap. xv. 33; Isa. ix. 6). The first message that was sent from heaven upon Christ's nativity was a

message of peace (Luke ii. 14). His whole doctrine is called "the gospel of peace," and "the word of peace" (chap. x. 15). The last legacy that He bequeathed to His disciples was peace (John xiv. 27). Peace is the work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of believers (Gal. v. 22), and both the effect and reward of piety is peace (chap. xv. 13). 2. The excellency of the principle from which it proceeds. It is from a pious, generous, and great mind. Little things are querulous; and the wasp much more angry and troublesome than the eagle. 3. The blessing entailed upon it by a peculiar promise (Matt. v. 9). Note two instances of this blessing that attend the peaceable in this world. (1) An easy, undisturbed, and quiet enjoyment of themselves. (2) Honour and reputation. Their report survives them, and their memory is blessed. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Peaceable living not always possible*:—The wisest men, the best men, the most thoughtful men, the men who are most studious of peace, may have contention forced upon them. Lot could not live peaceably with the inhabitants of Sodom—to his great credit. Moses could not live at peace with Egypt, when he saw his people oppressed. It would have been a shame if he could. Samuel could not live at peace when the king, despotic, arrogant, fractious, was misleading the people. David could not live at peace with Saul—Saul would not let him. The prophets could not live at peace with the idolatrous people whom they were sent to instruct and rebuke, and who would not be corrected nor reformed. Jesus could not live at peace. The most genial, and gentle, and meek, and merciful, and loving of all beings was He; and yet it was impossible that He should live at peace with His own countrymen, in His own time. Therefore you find it said, "If it be possible." In this great quarrelsome world it is not made obligatory on a man to be at peace with his fellow-men anyhow. The command begins with the implication that it is not always possible. The qualification is, "as much as lieth in you." You may be at discords; but see to it that you do not produce them. Let them be the result of other men's misconduct, and not of yours. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Peaceableness*:—Here is—I. THE PREFACE—"If it be possible." Which words may be looked on—1. As limiting the command. (1) "If it be possible"; for it may be impossible (Matt. xviii. 7). Because of—(*a*) other's malice (James iv. 1). (*b*) Our own conscience (Acts xxiv. 16) in reproving others; in standing for the truth. (2) "As much as in you lies." (*a*) That we do not disturb the peace ourselves. (*b*) Nor give occasion to others to do it. 2. As strengthening the command, so that we are to perform it to the utmost of our power. II. THE COMMAND. "Live peaceably with all men." Here is—1. The command. What is it to live peaceably? (1) Give offence to none (Matt. xviii. 7). (2) Pass by others' offences to you (1 Cor. xiii. 7). (3) Construe things in their best sense (1 Cor. xiii. 5). (4) Part with something of your own right (Gen. xiii. 8, 9). (5) Have a care of those passions that cause strife (James iv. 1). (*a*) Anger (Eph. iv. 26, 31). (*b*) Envy (James iii. 14). (*c*) Pride (Prov. xiii. 10). (*d*) Hatred and malice (1 John iii. 15). (*e*) Implacableness (Rom. i. 31; Psa. cxxx. 5–7). 2. The extent—"To all men" (Heb. xii. 14). 1. To superiors (Rom. xiii. 1; Matt. xvii. 27). 2. Inferiors. 3. Equals. Conclusion: Consider—1. Ye know not where the least strife may end. 2. It disturbs you as much as others (Luke xxi. 19). 3. If you live in peace, God will be with you (1 Kings 11–13; 2 Cor. xiii. 11). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Irascible persons not to be provoked*:—In the Jardin des Plantes we saw a hooded snake in a most unamiable condition of temper. There was a thick glass and a stout wire between us, and we did nothing but look at him, yet he persisted in darting at us with the utmost vehemence of malice, until the keeper requested us to move away, with the advice that it was not well to irritate such creatures. When one meets with an irascible person, on the look out to pick a quarrel, ill-conditioned, and out of elbows with the whole world, it is best to move on, and let him alone. Even if he can do you no harm, and if his irritation be utterly unreasonable, it is best to remove all exciting causes of provocation, for it is never wise to irritate vipers. You do not on purpose walk heavily across the floor to teach a gouty man that you have no respect for his tender feelings since he ought not to be so susceptible; neither should you vex those afflicted with a bad temper, and then plead that they have no right to be so excitable. If our neighbours' tempers are gunpowder, let us not play with fire. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 19–21. **Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.**—*Avenge not yourselves*:—The prohibition urged by such considerations as—1. Our own peace and happiness. There is nothing so wretched as the harassing disquietudes of angry and revengeful passions. The spirit of revenge is like the shelving rocks in the

bottom of the deep, which cause the waters to boil in the foaming whirlpool—the spirit of forgiveness and love keeps the soul "Calm and unruffled as a summer sea." 2. Self-partiality unfits us for measuring correctly the amount of injuries done to ourselves, and consequently the amount of vengeance due. No man is a proper judge in his own cause. 3. We are very incompetent judges of the motives by which others are actuated. We may inflict "vengeance" where there ought to be approbation and grateful reward. 4. When we do exceed in our vengeance, what is the consequence? All such excess is injury. This injury calls for revenge in return. Thus there is no prospect but of perpetuated wrong, and interminable hostility. Thus there is wisdom in the interdiction—Divine wisdom in Deity retaining the right to recompense in His own hands. He, and He alone, can infallibly appreciate the amount of culpability; and can alone, therefore, apportion the punishments. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *The sinfulness of private revenge*:—I. WHAT THIS REVENGE IS THAT IS SO SINFUL AND DISHONOURING TO GOD, WHOSE PROVINCE ALONE VENGEANCE IS. 1. There is a public and authoritative revenge, belonging to such as are invested with a lawful authority. This is necessary, and is done by the authority of God. Thus the magistrate has power to revenge wrongs in the state (chap. xiii. 4), Church-rulers in the Church (2 Cor. x 6), and masters in families (Gen. xvi. 6). And persons wronged seeking redress from those to whom the public revenge belongs is a lawful thing (Luke xviii. 3). 2. There is a private and personal revenge which is sinful, viz., that—(1) Taken by those in authority, out of ill-will to the wrongdoer. They are revengers to execute (chap. xiii. 4) not their own wrath, but God's. (2) Sought from those in authority, which is neither necessary for the public good, nor the amendment of the offender, nor the safety of the party hurt. Let those take heed who fly to their law-pleading on every trifling occasion, just to gratify their own passion (Matt. v. 40). (3) Taken by those not in authority nor acting in a public capacity, but at the command of their passion. (*a*) By words. The tongue is as real an instrument of revenge, as the hands, swords, or spears. (*b*) By deeds (Prov. xxvi. 39). (*c*) By omission of duty owing to the offending party, contrary to ver. 20. Besiegers may revenge themselves as much by starvation as by storming. II. THE SINFULNESS AND DISHONOUR TO GOD IN THIS REVENGE. 1. It is directly opposite to the love of our neighbour, the fundamental law of the second table (Lev. xix. 18). 2. It is unjust violence, as assuming and exercising a power which God never gave us. And as unjust violence ever was so it will ever be highly dishonourable to God the Judge and Protector of all (Gen. vi. 11). Men are not left like beasts, among whom the stronger command the weaker; but God has set laws for both. 3. It cannot reach the true ends of revenge, which God hath settled, viz., the amendment of the party offending (chap. xiii. 14), the public good (Deut. xix. 20), and the safety of the wronged (1 Tim. ii. 2). Private revenge only irritates the party smarting by it, gives a scandalous example to others, and involves the revenger and others in much trouble. 4. It is void of all equity: for in it a man is accuser, judge, and executioner, all in his own cause. Who would reckon that fair in another's case? 5. It is an invading of authority, a taking out of their hand what God has put in it. Therefore the apostle immediately subjoins the duty of subjects and magistrates (chap xiii.). Family revengers invade the Master's authority; Church-revengers the authority of the Church-rulers; and civil revengers the office of the magistrate. 6. It is an invading of the authority of God (Psa. xciv. 1; Nah. i. 2). He only is fit to have it in His hand: for He is omniscient; we know little, and are liable to mistakes; He is without passions, we are ready to be blinded by them: He is the common Father and Judge of all, most just and impartial, we are prejudiced in our own favours. III. PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT. 1. We may hence take occasion to lament—(1) The state of human nature in general. (2) The state of our nature in particular so ready to revenge. 2. It serves to reprove—(1) Those who allow themselves in scolding those who they conceive have wronged them (2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8; Matt. iv. 31, v. 22). (2) Those who end their quarrels in blows and fightings (Matt. xxvi. 52; Gal. v. 19–21.) (3) Those who are sure to do an ill turn to those who have wronged them, if it lie in their power. (4) Those who make no conscience of doing their duty to those who have wronged them, but carry towards them as if their offence loosed them from all bonds of duty to them, and so satisfy their revenge (Matt. v. 44–46). 3. Revenge not yourselves, but rather give place to the wrath of your adversary. To press this, I offer the following motives. (1) This is true excellency and bravery of spirit. (*a*) In this ye will resemble the spirit Jesus was actuated by (1 Pet. ii. 23: Luke xxiii. 34). "Ye shall be as gods" was the height of ambition that men aspired to very

soon. Behold an allowable way how we may be like our Lord! (*b*) Ye will show a generous contempt of the impotent malice of an evil world (Luke xxi. 19). The moon retains her brightness though the cur barks at her. (*c*) Ye will show yourselves masters of your own spirit (Prov. xvi. 32). (*d*) Ye may overcome him that wrongs you (ver. 20). (2) Consider the wrong done to God by your revenging yourselves. Ye impeach—(*a*) His justice, as if He, like Gallio, cared for none of these things. (*b*) His wisdom, saying in effect that God's method of vengeance is not fitted to reach the end. (*c*) His veracity, and refuse to believe His word, that He will repay. (3) Revenge is a most ensnaring thing. It is a sacrifice to passion, and involves the soul in guilt sometimes past remedy. (4) It is inconsistent with peace with heaven and pardon (Matt. vi. 15). 4. Objections: (1) The Scripture saith "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." Answer: That was the law, the execution of which was committed to the magistrate, and does not belong to private persons. (2) If we put up with one injury, we will get more. Answer: Ver. 20 says not so. (3) It is not manly not to revenge affronts and wrongs. Answer: It is childishness. It is brutishness; anger a dog, and he will be ready to fly at your face. It is foolishness (Eccles. vii. 9). Was David not manly that revenged not himself on Saul? Saul says otherwise (1 Sam. xxiv. 18–21). (4) How then should we do in the case of affronts and wrongs? (*a*) Arm yourselves with meekness and patience. (*b*) Learn to bear with one another, and to be always ready to forgive (Col. iii. 13; Matt. xviii. 21, 22). (*c*) In matters of weight, where redress is necessary, apply to those for it who are vested with authority for that end (chap. xiii. 4). Only do it not from a spirit of revenge. (*d*) Where redress is not to be expected, put the matter in the Lord's hand, and wait for Him (Prov. xx. 22). (*e*) Live by faith, keeping your eye on Christ the fountain of strength, the pattern of meekness, and on the judgment to come, when justice shall be done to every one. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Revenge, a noble*:—A letter from Lady Frederick Cavendish, written in answer to a request of the Rev. S. Lloyd, who had asked permission to dedicate to her a sermon upon the assassination of the Chief Secretary, said: "The Dublin disclosures do indeed teach the awful lesson contained in the last verse of the third chapter of 2 Samuel. You will, I am sure, forgive me if I beg you, before sending the MS. to the printers, to look through it first, with the special view of seeing if there is any word that could be turned into a desire for vengeance. You will readily understand how I must shrink from any such feeling. I would rather, as far as I reverently may, adopt the Lord's prayer on the Cross—'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' The law, I know, must take its course, for the sake of the unhappy country itself. I pray that neither the unspeakable greatness of my sorrow nor the terrible wickedness of those men may ever blind either myself or any of the English people to the duty of patience, justice, and sympathy in our thoughts, words, and deeds with regard to Ireland and its people at large." *Revenge, meanness of*:—Revenge is a cruel word: manhood, some call it; but it is rather doghood. The manlier any man is, the milder and more merciful, as Julius Cæsar, who, when he had Pompey's head presented to him, wept, and said, "I seek not revenge, but victory." (*J. Trapp.*) *Revenge, punishment of*:—On him that takes revenge, revenge shall be taken; and by a real evil he shall dearly pay for the goods that are but airy and fantastical. It is like a rolling stone which, when a man hath forced up a hill, will return upon him with a greater violence, and break those bones whose sinews gave it motion. (*Bp. Taylor.*) *The Christian's conduct under injury*:—I. THE OCCASION IS COMMON—arising out of—1. Human depravity in general; or—2. The hatred of wicked men to that which is good. II. THE DUTY IS PLAIN—1. Bear with patience. 2. Yield to the wrong. 3. Leave it to the judgment of God. III. THE REASON IS COGENT. Vengeance—1. Is the prerogative of God. 2. Will certainly be executed. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) "*Avenge not yourselves*":—"What?" will be the reply, "when our memory is smarting with the sense of injury; when our neighbour has transgressed all the laws of God and man towards us, are we to show him that mercy which we do not receive? Are our hands to be tied by religion, while his are at full liberty? What security would there be then remaining for our property or our persons; and to what end are we to be mocked by these gifts of strength, or courage, which we are forbidden, even in self-defence, to employ?" 1. In answer to these objections, we may remark, first, that to repel or resist an injury is not forbidden. Self-defence is a very different thing from revenge. The latter cannot plead necessity. 2. But, secondly, it is not only our duty to do our enemies no harm, we must if they need our assistance be ready to do them good. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if

he thirst, give him drink." And, strange as it may seem, this is the wisest as well as the most Christian course we can pursue. In the first place, by these acts of kindness we make our own task easier of combating our resentment and extinguishing every spark of malice in our hearts. Again, in point of safety, this is the best and surest course. If we are apprehensive of future injuries from our enemy, what method so likely to indispose him to mischief? But lastly, if it fail to conciliate him, there is One, at least, a mighty friend, a powerful defender, whose assistance we gain. God is on the side of the merciful. It is true, besides, that there is nothing to a proud temper so painful as to owe an obligation to an enemy. (*Bp. Heber.*) *On conduct under wrongs*:—I. It is an important question, WHETHER THE OBJECT OF REVENGE BE REALLY AN ENEMY. Wrong may exist nowhere but in our own erring fancy, or diseased acuteness of feeling. II. But if the conduct of our neighbour have given us substantial hurt, another necessary question will next arise:—WAS THE INJURY WHICH HE INFLICTED INTENTIONAL? It is not impossible that we regard as a deliberate affront that which was intended as an act of the warmest kindness. How often are the affectionate warnings of a wise counsellor construed by a headstrong youth into an assumption of superiority? III. Suppose now that there exist both injury and malevolence; it yet remains for our attentive recollection, WHETHER WE WERE NOT, OURSELVES, THE FIRST AGGRESSORS? Did not our adversary inflict the wound in self-defence? in resistance of our improper deportment? IV. But indeed, in point of prudence, whether we ourselves were the original aggressors or not, A RETORTED OFFENCE IS NEW MATTER OF PROVOCATION, and almost infallibly ensures a reiterated blow. It may be that the wrath of the foe has spent itself in the first assault. He may have been satisfied; he may have forgotten you. What folly then will it now be to rekindle that flame which had died away of itself. V. In the next place it deserves continual remembrance, that REVENGE IS NOT BY ANY MEANS OUR PROVINCE. God alone is qualified to apportion the measure of retribution, because He alone has a full and exact view of the injury. Add to this, that there is something exceedingly preposterous and presumptuous in one sinful being's becoming the judge and executioner of another. VI. If, however, it should be pretended, that thus wholly to transfer the exercise of recompense to the Almighty, or to His established vicegerent, is an effort of principle too difficult to be at all times expected from frail humanity, VARIOUS AND WEIGHTY CONSIDERATIONS YET REMAIN FOR OVERCOMING AN INCLINATION TO REVENGE. Hardly the most violent would deem resentment equitable, if the aggression, after inflicting a momentary pain, shall in the course of events, or by a combination of circumstances, have in any degree conduced to the advantage of the sufferer. That calumny which has humbled us in the opinion we had falsely conceived of ourselves, and reduced our mental stature to its just dimensions; any substantial injustice which has furnished us with experience of the deceitfulness of the world and introduced us to an acquaintance with true religion, ought surely to soften, even to dispel our ill-will towards the individual who hath been the unconscious bestower of these spiritual benefits. VII. This view of the subject suggests another of similar nature; I mean THE PROPRIETY OF REGARDING THE WOUND WE HAVE SUSTAINED AS HAVING PROCEEDED ORIGINALLY FROM GOD; and him whom we call our enemy as no more than the weapon of Divine justice which chastises, or of Divine goodness which seeks our amendment. The injury, viewed in this light, is invested with an air of sacredness, and anger appears to border on rebellion and impiety. VIII. Reflection on THE PRESENT CONDITION OF OUR ENEMY will further be highly useful in appeasing a vindictive disposition. Without any retributive severity on our part, he may already be sufficiently punished. Malignity is unhappiness. IX. Or should our adversary be a stranger to these delicate sensations, it will be yet well to remember, that THE MORE DESTITUTE HE IS OF VIRTUE, SO MUCH THE MORE IS HE AN OBJECT OF DIVINE DISPLEASURE. Shall we seek to overwhelm misery by adding the venom and lash of our malevolence to the sting of conscience, or the blow of Heaven? And even if all things in the present world go on smoothly with him, ought we not next to reflect that this enjoyment is probably but temporary? It may only be a gleam of sunshine, preparatory to a terrible storm. X. Yet if, in open defiance of all these cogent arguments, we will surrender ourselves to the inward fiend, and proceed to retaliate; we must not forget, when contemplating the present, or the probable recompense of our adversary's injustice, that BY THIS MEASURE WE RENDER OURSELVES LIABLE TO ALL THE SAME EVILS. We contract the internal disquietude and self-torment belonging to a malignant temper; we involve ourselves in the hazard of receiving present correction from above. XI. This

leads us on to that great evangelical motive, which is more weighty and persuasive than all those that have preceded it: "IF YE FORGIVE NOT MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, NEITHER WILL YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FORGIVE YOU YOURS." Who is he that shall look this plain proposition in the face, and continue for another moment to foster rancour against an enemy? XII. For practising the sacred, we may say emphatically, the Christian duty, which the various reasons now collected recommend, a concluding motive presses itself upon our regard, in THE EXAMPLES HELD FORTH BY SCRIPTURE. Among these the leading one is that of God Himself; and it is brought forward by our Lord, indeed, when enjoining the love of enemies (Matt. v. 23, 24). Even under the Jewish dispensation instances of this virtue, as prompted by the native impulse of a pious or tender disposition, are not wanting. Joseph wept on the necks and amply provided for the wants of his unkind brethren. David forgave Saul for his inveterate and unprovoked hatred. (*J. Grant, M.A.*) **Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.**—I. VENGEANCE IS THE PREROGATIVE OF GOD. He claims it—1. As the Supreme Ruler. 2. As the fountain of law. 3. As the Judge of all. II. WILL INEVITABLY BE EXERCISED UPON EVIL DOERS. 1. This is essential to moral government. 2. Is affirmed by Scripture. 3. Abundantly sustained by example. 4. Will be terribly demonstrated in the last day. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Vengeance belongs to God*:—A person happened to complain in the hearing of a pious man of some conduct which had been manifested towards him by his neighbours, and concluded by saying that he had a large portion of vengeance in store for them. "You have stolen it, then," was the answer; "for I know it does not belong to you of right, because God says, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.'" (*Clerical Library.*) **Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him.**—*Kindness to an enemy* is—I. BEAUTIFUL IN ITS EXHIBITIONS. II. MAGNANIMOUS IN ITS SPIRIT. III. CHRISTIAN IN ITS SUGGESTION. IV. TRIUMPHANT IN ITS RESULTS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The triumph of Christian love*:—I. IS POSSIBLE OVER THE WORST ENEMY. II. IS SECURED BY KINDNESS. 1. Treat him gently. 2. Minister to his need. 3. Especially seek his salvation. III. IS COMPLETED BY PATIENCE. 1. These coals of fire may melt his heart. 2. Must awaken shame. 3. And if he repent not will attract the just vengeance of God. (*Ibid.*) **In so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.**—Does that mean that thou shalt be taking the most effectual means of melting him into a state of penitence—"As artists melt the sullen ore of lead, By heaping coals of fire upon its head"? or is there an allusion to the melting of wax; or to the hardening of clay; or to the practice of throwing firebrands upon the heads of besiegers of cities? Possibly there may have been no conscious reference to any one of these things. For, altogether apart from any such references, fire is frequently employed in Scripture as the symbol of any strong passion, or of the instrument by which it finds expression or works out its purposed result. "Our God is a consuming fire." "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares," &c. But the fire of God which descended to consume His people's offerings was a token, not of kindling wrath, but of gracious acceptance. By a coal of that, the trembling prophet was purged from sin, and stood in assured favour. Love also, as well as anger, is as fire: the coals thereof are coals of fire, the fire-flame of Jehovah (Cant. viii. 6). The Lord Jesus baptized His people with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And obviously these coals of fire, heaped upon the head of an adversary, are not coals of burning vengeance, but coals of fervent love, the fire-flame of Jehovah, adapted to melt down his hardness, and to win him for ever to virtue and to God. And if the result be really accomplished, you will have conquered an enemy, won an adoring friend, and saved a soul from death. (*W. Tyson.*) *How to overcome an enemy*:—I once took a nugget to a gold-melter to be assayed. A friend in the trade explained to me that it was not enough to subject the metal in the crucible to the greatest heat from under the pot: this would only heat the gold to the furnace-heat, but could not melt it into fluid, until the charcoal was put on the top of the crucible as well as under it; and then it would be molten. "Thus," said he, "the Christian is bidden to soften down and subdue his hardest adversary in the Scriptural metaphor taken from our trade—'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,' *i.e.*, effectually melt and overcome him." (*J. B. Owen.*) **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**—*Overcoming evil with good*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THE PRECEPT. 1. How evil may overcome us. 2. How we may overcome it. II. THE EXCELLENCE OF IT. 1. It counteracts our evil propensities. 2. Assimilates us to Christ. 3. Promotes on earth the happiness of heaven. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Overcoming evil with good*:—

In the year 1818, Tomatoe, the king of Huahine, one of the South Sea islands, embraced the gospel. Some of the heathen islanders resolved on the destruction of him, and of those who, with him, had become followers of Christ. The enemy laid their plan, and had purposed to burn to death those whom they seized. But the plot was discovered; the small band of Christians were on the shore in readiness to meet their foes as they leaped from their canoes, and soon gained a complete victory. And now these heathens looked for nothing but death, and that a cruel death. How great, then, was their surprise when the Christians assured them that they meant not to touch a hair of their head, because Jesus had taught them to treat kindly their bitterest foes! They went further—they prepared a sumptuous feast, and asked the captives to sit down and partake. Some of these were so amazed as to be unable to taste. At last one of them arose (one of the heathen leaders), declared himself no longer a follower of helpless idols, stated his cruel intentions had he been successful, but that this utterly unlooked-for kindness of the Christians had fairly overcome him, so that he could only admire their humanity and mercy. The result of all was that in a few days every idol in the island had been cast away; for the heathen, melted by all this kindness, joined the Christians. *Overcome evil with good:*—The text sets before us two things, and bids us choose the better. You must either be overcome of evil, or you must yourself overcome evil. The words remind me of the Scotch officer who said to his regiment, "Lads, there they are: if ye dinna kill them they'll kill you." Overcome, or be overcome. There is no avoiding the conflict; may we be as ignorant of what it is to be vanquished as the British drummer boy who did not know how to beat a retreat. With regard to the evil of personal injury—I. THE COMMON METHOD IS TO OVERCOME EVIL WITH EVIL. "Give him a Roland for his Oliver." "Give him as good as he sends." "Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." "Be six to his half dozen." I might go on with a score of proverbs all inculcating the sentiment of meeting evil with evil. 1. This is a most natural procedure. You need not train your children to it; they will of their own accord beat the post against which they stumble. But to which part of us is it natural? To the new nature or the animal in us? "Good for evil is Godlike; good for good is man-like: evil for good is devil-like; evil for evil,"—what is that? Beast-like. Surely we cannot allow the lower part of our triple nature to dictate to our heaven-born spirit. That returning evil for evil looks like rough and ready justice I admit, but is any man prepared to stand before God on the same terms? 2. It is very easy. If you make it a rule that nobody shall ever treat you with disrespect without meeting his match, you need not pray God to help you. The devil will help you, and between the two the thing may be very easily managed. But is that which is so easy to the very worst of men the right procedure for those who ought to be the best of men? 3. By many it has been judged the more manly course. Years ago a gentleman felt it necessary to wipe out an insult with blood. The spirit of Christianity has by degrees overcome this evil, but even now to be gentle is considered to be unworthy of a man of spirit. Now there is but one model of a Christian man, and that is the man Christ Jesus, and whatever is Christly is manly. Hear, then, how He rebukes John for calling for fire to consume the Samaritans, and Peter for assaulting Malchus, and His prayer for His murderers. 4. It does not succeed. Nobody ever overcame evil by confronting it with evil. Such a course increases the evil. When a great fire is blazing it is a strange way of putting it out to pump petroleum upon it. And what is worse, when we assail evil with evil it injures us most. Our enemies are not worth putting ourselves out about, and ten minutes of a palpitating heart, and of a disturbed circulation, causes us greater real damage in body than an enemy could inflict in seven years. Let us not so please our foes. Evil for evil is an edged tool which cuts the man who uses it: a kind of cannon which is most dangerous to those who fire it, both in its discharge and in its recoil. If you wished to destroy your enemy it would be wise to make him a present of it. 5. It does not bear inspection. If we cannot pray about it, or praise about it, or think about it on our death-bed, let us let it alone. II. THE DIVINE METHOD OF OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD. 1. This is a very elevated mode of procedure. "Ridiculous!" says one; "Utopian," cries another. Well, if it be difficult I commend it to you because it is so; what is there which is good which is not also difficult? Soldiers of Christ love those virtues most which cost them most. 2. It preserves the man from evil. If evil assails you, and you only fight it with good, it cannot hurt you, you are invulnerable. If a man has slandered you, but you never return him a reproachful word, he has not hurt your real character; the dirt which he has thrown has missed

you, for you have none to throw back upon him. The very thing your enemy wants is to make you descend to his level, but, as long as you remain unprovoked, you vanquish him. Believe me, you are provoking your adversary terribly if you are quite calm yourself, you are disappointing him, he cannot insert his poisoned darts, for you are clad in armour of proof. 3. It is the very best weapon of offence against the opposer. William Ladd had a farm in one of the states of America, and his neighbour Pulsifer's sheep were very fond of a fine field of grain belonging to Mr. Ladd, and were in it continually. Complaints were of no use, so one morning Ladd said to his men, "Set the dogs on those sheep, and if that won't keep them out, shoot them." After he had said that, he thought to himself, "This will not do. I had better try the peace principle." So he countermanded the order, and rode over to see his neighbour about those troublesome sheep. "Neighbour," said he, "I have come to see you about those sheep." "Yes," Pulsifer replied, "I know. You are a pretty neighbour, and a rich man, too, and going to shoot a poor man's sheep!" Then followed some strong language, but Ladd replied, "I am sorry for it; but, neighbour, we may as well agree. It seems I have got to keep your sheep, and it won't do to let them eat all that grain, so I came over to say that I will take them into my homestead pasture and I will keep them all the season." Pulsifer looked confounded, and, when he found that Ladd was in earnest, said, "The sheep sha'n't trouble you any more. When you talk about shooting, I can shoot as well as you; but when you speak in that kind way I can be kind too." The sheep never trespassed on Ladd's lot any more. That is the way to kill a bad spirit. It is much the same as when a certain duke proclaimed war against a peaceful neighbour, who was resolved not to fight. The troops came riding to the town, and found the gates open as on ordinary occasions. The children were playing in the streets, and the people were at work; and so, pulling up their horses, the soldiers inquired, "Where is the enemy?" "We don't know, we are friends." What was to be done under the circumstances but to ride home? So it is in life, if you only meet evil with good, the bad man's occupation is gone. 4. Sometimes it is the means of the conversion of evil men. Some years ago a wicked sailor was engaged in tarring a vessel, and there came along an old Christian man. One of the sailor's mates said, "Jack, you could not provoke that man." Jack was quite sure he could, and it became the subject of a wager. The wicked fellow took his bucket of tar, and threw it right over the good old man. The old man turned round and calmly said to him, "Christ has said that he who offends one of His little ones will find that it were better for him that a mill-stone had been tied about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea: now, if I am one of Christ's little ones, it will be very bad for you." Jack slunk back dreadfully ashamed of himself. What was more, the old man's quiet face haunted him; and those tremendous words broke him down before the mercy-seat. He asked and found pardon; he sought out the old man, confessed his fault, and received forgiveness. Now suppose the old man had turned round on him, who could have blamed him? But then there would have been no triumph of grace in the Christian, and no conversion in the sinner. 5. It reflects great honour upon Christ. When one of the martyrs was being tortured the tyrant said to him, "And what has your Christ ever done for you that you should bear this?" He replied, "He has done this for me, that in the midst of all my pain, I do nothing else but pray for you." Ah, Lord Jesus, Thou hast taught us how to conquer, for Thou hast conquered. Conclusion: Everything that is admirable may be said of this method of overcoming evil with good. 1. A Christian man is the noblest work of God, and one of his noblest features is readiness to forgive. The Emperor Adrian, before he reached the throne, had been grievously insulted. When he had attained the imperial purple he met the man who had used him ill. The guilty person was, of course, dreadfully afraid of his mighty foe. Adrian cried out, "Approach. You have nothing to fear; I am an Emperor!" Did this heathen feel that his dignity lifted him above the meanness of revenge? Then let those whom Christ has made kings unto God scorn to render evil for evil. 2. Good for evil is congruous with the spirit of the gospel. Were we not saved because the Lord rendered to us good for evil? 3. This spirit is the Spirit of God, and he that hath it becomes like to God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

On revenge:—I. THE REVENGEFUL MAN IS OVERCOME BY VARIOUS EVILS. 1. By his passions, which subdue his reason. He becomes the author of slavery to himself, and is his own tyrant. 2. An angry man is not only enslaved by his passions, but he is frequently overcome by his adversary. Fury and rage generally defeat their own designs, by taking men wholly off their guard, and leaving them open to the

attacks of their more wary opponents. 3. A revengeful passionate man is in danger of being overcome in a yet worse sense; he is in danger of being hurried into such crimes as will not only affect his peace and reputation at present, but will hazard his eternal happiness hereafter. II. SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO ENABLE MEN TO SUBDUE A REVENGEFUL TEMPER, AND TO PREVENT THE ILL EFFECTS OF IT. 1. He who finds himself naturally addicted to passion ought to guard perpetually against the first tendencies to resentment in his mind. 2. It will probably be of use to the persons for whose service this discourse is intended, to let them know the opinion of wise men concerning this spirit of revenge. And, in their sense, it is owing to a littleness of mind, while they who have studied human nature have observed that men of the weakest capacities are generally most liable to it. This is the concurring opinion both of ancient poets and philosophers; and hence it was, no doubt, that a great man observed, "that the vulgar wrote their injuries on marble, but their benefits on sand." It was also finely said by Cicero, that "Cæsar forgot nothing but injuries"; and a distinguished person among the moderns, when his memory was appealed to for the support of an invidious story, replied, "he remembered to forget it." III. LET ME ENDEAVOUR TO EXHORT YOU TO STUDY AND BE RECONCILED TO YOUR OWN TRUE INTEREST. 1. Whenever you meet with anything shocking in the common behaviour of life, whenever you are alarmed by unpremeditated offences, remember your own frailties, remember your God, infinitely indulging to these frailties; and from these motives be forbearing, forgiving to others. 2. Happy is the man who can attain to this mastery of morality, and gain that command of passion and superiority of judgment which is necessary to carry him on sweetly through all the ruffles of human life. The possessor of such a temper may be said to have in him the virtue of the load-stone, he wins the affections of others to himself, draws them insensibly to his own point, and leads them, by degrees, into the same good-natured disposition he enjoys. 3. This amiable temper does not only conciliate the goodwill and esteem of men towards us, but peculiarly entitles us to the praise of being formed after the image of God. (*J. Smedley, M.A.*) *Charity and kind offices, the best conquest over an enemy*:—The advice is short, comprised in a few words; but it is withal full and instructive, and carries a great deal of good matter in it. The apostle's manner of wording the thing is observable; for there is a particular force and beauty in the very expression. Being sensible that the forgiving an injury or the not revenging it is commonly looked upon as a kind of yielding to an adversary (which is what the pride of human nature is most averse to), he prudently anticipates the thought, and gives it quite another turn, insinuating that all desire of revenge is yielding and submitting to an enemy; is as much as confessing that he has disturbed us to that degree, that we are no longer able to command our temper and to be really masters of ourselves. Overflowing with rage and resentment upon such occasions is betraying a littleness of mind, and proclaiming our own defeat. I. BE NOT OVERCOME OF EVIL. Suffer not any affront to get the better of you. 1. Let not any affront or injury have the superiority over your reason, considering yourself now only as a man, without taking in the additional consideration of your being a Christian also. A passionate furious warrior neither sees an advantage nor knows how to use it; while he is all fire, and no conduct, he does but expose his forces, and at length becomes himself an easy prey to the enemy. But a man of cool and steady courage, who does nothing precipitately, he is the man that maintains his ground, and comes off victorious in the end. 2. But further, to advance to a yet higher consideration, put the case thus: Suffer not any affronts or injuries to get the better of your piety, or of your duty towards God. God permits us not to revenge, or resent our own wrongs. This is no more than every master of a family will demand; that any disputes in his family among his servants be decided by him, and left to his censure and correction. But a question here arises by the way, whether, after a man has referred his cause to God, laying aside all thoughts of revenging himself, he may then pray to God to avenge him, or may take pleasure in observing that the Divine vengeance has fallen down upon his adversary. Much may be pleaded on both sides. What seems to me to come nearest to the truth, is as follows: The peace of the world is much concerned in this—that we never avenge ourselves but refer all vengeance to God. This is the main thing; and if this be carefully observed, we may be the less solicitous about the rest. There is a just pleasure which a good man may take, in seeing the Divine vengeance fall upon very bad men, because such men are enemies to mankind; and so rejoicing in their fall is rejoicing in the public good. And for the same reason it may not be improper, in

some cases, to beg of God to curb or punish them, in such a way as His wisdom shall see proper. And it is of such cases as these that I understand some Scripture-imprecations, if they be really such; which, besides, were pronounced by persons extraordinarily commissioned to imprecate, as from God. As to private injuries, in which the public is very little or not at all concerned, there, as I conceive, is no room left for rejoicing in the Divine judgments upon the adversaries; first, because we are very uncertain whether those judgments are brought upon them on any such account as we might fondly suppose; and next, because, as we are all sinners, we know not whether we ourselves are not justly liable to the same or greater. 3. Having shown how we ought not to suffer any offence or injury to get the better of our piety towards God, I have but one step more to advance; namely, not to suffer it to prevail over our charity towards man. This article I make distinct from the former, inasmuch as not taking revenge upon an adversary is one thing, and doing him kind offices is another. I say then, let not any injurious usage of an enemy prevent our doing him good. II. OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD. This implies all the kind offices towards an enemy which we are capable of doing, consistent with our own safety, or with our obligations to others. Our blessed Lord's instructions upon this head may serve as a good comment upon this part of the text (Matt. 44, 45). 1. The overcoming evil with good, may be understood of conquering an enemy by kindness, so that he may cease to malign us; for then the evil is overcome, as it is put an end to. Such a conduct contributes much to the peace of society, and to the general good of mankind, which is alone sufficient to recommend it with every wise and considering man. And that it may not be suspected that there is anything of tameness or mean-spiritedness in this conduct, the advantage in point of dignity and esteem really lies on the side of the good-natured and peaceable man. There is a greatness of mind shown in being above little piques and childish altercations. There is triumph and conquest seen in the command a man has over his own temper and passions. 2. That there is yet another kind of conquest to be obtained, by persevering in doing good against evil. For though you do not thus conquer the man's pride or ill nature, yet you conquer your own passions. There is a kind of contest and emulation in such a case which shall be first weary and vanquished, the malice and iniquity of one, or the patience and goodness of the other. He who abides in doing good against evil may be said to be a person of invincible kindness and generosity, unconquerable love and charity. 3. I know but one objection of any moment against this conduct, which is this: that it may seem to give too much encouragement to malicious men to persist in their iniquity, and may also strengthen their hands against ourselves to do us the more mischief. To which I answer that, were it really true that it carried this single inconvenience with it; yet, so long as there are innumerable conveniences on the other side, more than sufficient to counterbalance it, this single difficulty ought to be no objection against it. But I have this thing to add further; that the principles which I have been maintaining do not oblige a man to lay himself open to his enemy, or to give himself up into his power. He may do him kind offices, without making a friend or a confidant of him; may oblige and serve him without running into his arms. The Scripture bids us be kind and generous; and yet bids us also beware of ill men, and not to deliver ourselves up thoughtlessly into their hands. Love and charity are one thing, easiness and folly another. (*D. Waterland, D.D.*) *Wrath conquered by love*:—A very good man once said, "If there is any one particular temper I desire more than another, it is the grace of meekness; quietly to bear ill-treatment, to forget and forgive; and at the same time that I am sensible I am injured, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." But this sentiment, be it remembered, could be learned only from heaven. It did not belong to the systems of heathen philosophy. At the dawn of the age of mercy, a Pliny said, but had learned the sentiment from that very religion he affected to despise, "I esteem him the best good man, who forgives others, as though he were every day faulty himself; and who at the same time abstains from faults, as if he pardoned no one." But it was One from heaven, who came down in all the amiableness of God, and taught the world principles of kindness; that to forgive is possible, and that the meek are blessed. I. WHEN MAY IT BE CONSIDERED THAT ONE IS OVERCOME OF EVIL? This is a calamity that may doubtless happen to the good man, but is a matter of every day's occurrence to the multitudes of the ungodly. I remark, then, that a man *is* overcome of evil—1. When ill-treatment excites the angry passions, and produces harsh and ill-natured language. This unhappy result was perhaps the very design of the onset. The foe has gained his whole object,

and his antagonist is vanquished. 2. One is still more completely overcome of evil, when he settles down into confirmed hatred of the offender. By suffering anger to rest in his bosom, he becomes in God's esteem a fool. 3. One is overcome of evil when he indulges designs of revenge. We suffer ourselves to be driven from the delightful duty of doing good to all men, the only post where we can be happy. 4. We are overcome of evil, when the ill-treatment of one leads us to suspect the friendship of others. Our apprehensions are the very demons that break the tie of friendship, and dissolve the bonds of brotherhood. They beget distance, caution, jealousy, and neglect, and the result is abandonment and hatred. 5. We are more yet completely overcome of evil, when abuse begets habitual sourness of temper. 6. One is overcome of evil, when he attempts unnecessarily a public vindication of his character. I say unnecessarily, for it cannot be denied that a good man, without his wish, may be forced into such a measure. Often is this the very object which some malicious foe would accomplish. II. How MAY WE SAVE OURSELVES FROM THE SHAME AND INJURY OF BEING THUS VANQUISHED? 1. He who would designedly injure us does himself a greater injury. There is in nature, or rather in the Divine purpose, a principle of prompt and powerful reaction. Let one attack your character, and sure as life he hurts his own. Let him spread an ill report, and that report will recoil upon his own reputation. Or would he merely disturb your peace, let him but alone, and his own peace is injured more than yours. God can give you a peace that nothing can disturb. If you must unjustly suffer, God can support you and comfort you, but this He will not do for the man who wrongs you. Now if the man who intended to injure us has wounded himself, then we should pity him, and pray for him, and not study a duplicate revenge. 2. If we resist evil we are invariably injured. The foe is the more courageous, the more fierce and prompt the repulse he meets with. He exhibits now a prowess that he could never have summoned, had he coped with mere non-resistance. A slanderous report is repeated and magnified, because it has been wrathfully contradicted. 3. It will calm us in an hour of onset to feel that wicked men are God's sword. 4. It will be a timely and sweet reflection, for a period of abuse, that ill-treatment is among the all things that shall work together for our good. 5. It should ever be our reflection in the hour of attack, that to be like Christ we must not resist evil. 6. Finally, there is the direct command of God. No precept can be more binding than the text. A Christian is but a pardoned rebel, and may not avenge himself. And all others may well fear to be vindictive, lest wrath come upon them to the uttermost. With the same measure that we mete, it shall be measured to us again. III. How MAY WE OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD? 1. To do this will require the sacrifice of bad passions. The unrenewed heart has a keen relish for revenge. 2. If one treats us unkindly we must treat him well. If he defame, let us say the kindest things possible of him. If he hurt our interest, let us advance his. If he will not oblige us, we must do kindnesses to him. If he deals reproach, we must practise no retort. (*D. A. Clark.*) *How to conquer evil* (children's sermon):—One of our most familiar proverbs tells us that "two blacks do not make a white," which means that whether other people do right or wrong, we must always try to do right. We must try to conquer badness by goodness. I. OVERCOME EVIL TEMPERS WITH GOOD TEMPER. Some one is very cross with you. Your natural impulse is to be just as cross in return. But to do that is to own yourself beaten, and no Englishman likes to be defeated. Besides, it will be like pouring oil upon the flame of the angry person. Then try the opposite plan. Return a smile for a frown; courtesy for rudeness. It will not be long before you win the day. There was once a quarrel between the wind and the sun. Each claimed to be the strongest, and one morning they agreed to put their powers to the proof. A traveller had just set out well wrapt up in a warm overcoat, and the wind challenged the sun to see which of them could make him take off his coat. So it swept down from the N.E., and howled past the poor traveller; but the harder it blew, the closer he buttoned his coat, and at last the wind gave up in despair. Then the sun began to peep out, and as the wind fell, and the sunshine became more powerful, the traveller loosed first one button, and then another, until his coat was quite unfastened. And the sun kept on shining until the traveller took his coat right off. Then the wind acknowledged that the sun was mightier. It is just so in our lives. If one meets you who wears a shabby coat of ill-temper, your frowning won't make him lay it aside. But, if you meet him with a smile, he will soon throw it away in disgust. II. OVERCOME EVIL WORDS WITH GOOD WORDS. In olden times the sword was the principal weapon in war, and soldiers used to learn to do very

wonderful feats. They would split a splinter as it stood erect upon the table, or divide an apple upon your hand without letting the edge of the sword touch your palm. But the hardest feat was to cut through a down pillow. In the sieges of those days soldiers used great battering rams to knock down the walls. But those who were inside used to let down bags of chaff and beds, and the strokes, which would have made a breach in the solid walls, fell quite harmlessly upon these soft cushions. Both the sword and the ram found soft things to be the hardest to penetrate. The best defence against the weapons of anger is not harshness, but gentleness. A little boy was one day playing where there was an echo. "Hallo!" he shouted. "Hallo!" said Echo. "Who are you?" he asked. "Who are you?" was the reply. And he fancied that some other boy was mocking him, and became very angry. "Why don't you come out?" he cried. "Come out!" answered Echo. Quite exasperated, he shouted, "I'll fight you!" and the voice replied, "Fight you!" Then the little fellow ran home and told his mother that there was a boy in the forest who mocked him and made fun of him and threatened to fight him. And his wise mother, who knew all about the echo, smiled, and said, "Run out again and shout, 'I love you,' and see what answer comes." So the child ran out and shouted "I love you," and Echo replied, "I love you." Is it not a beautiful lesson? If you make faces before the mirror, you see all the ugly looks reflected on its bright surface. And so the people around us often reflect our own temper and speech. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." III. OVERCOME EVIL DEEDS WITH GOOD DEEDS. This is what the apostle especially refers to in our text. There was a publichouse where many young men used to gather on the Lord's day, and an old man named William Haywood was grieved to see so many treading the path of the destroyer. So he used to take his stand outside the windows, sing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow"; and then, with earnest pleading, warn the revellers of their folly and sin, and point them to Christ. This made these wild young fellows very angry, and one day one of them, who had filled a pail with foul water, came behind him and emptied it on his head. They thought that would anger him beyond endurance, and that he would be ashamed to talk to them any more. But no. The old man exclaimed: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name!" And then, falling on his knees, he prayed for the reckless men. They were melted by his words, and slunk away; and the ringleaders became devoted Christians. Oh! if boys and girls would learn this lesson, what happy homes there would be! In most cases it seems to be quite otherwise. A brother and sister come to words about a mere trifle, and words lead to blows, and perhaps for many days these foolish children will spite one another, and make each other miserable. (*G. H. James.*) *Evil overcome*:—A delegate of the Christian Commission, passing among the wounded at Gettysburg, said to a wounded confederate officer, "Colonel, can I do anything for you?" "No!" was his defiant reply. The offer was repeated, after a time, with like result. The air became offensive from heat and wounds. The delegate offered to put cologne on his handkerchief. The officer, bursting into tears, said, "I have no handkerchief." "You shall have one," said the delegate, wetting his own, and giving it to him. The subdued rebel said, "I can't understand you Yankees: you fight us like devils, and then you treat us like angels. I am sorry I entered this war." *The power of good over evil*:—1. Christianity, it has been said, is deficient in the masculine virtues. Our answer is that in this chapter you have a catalogue of Christian virtues, and amongst them is one which does not always find a place even in the virtues of the world: the virtue of hatred. We are to abhor what is evil. Christianity is not deficient in contending power. She recognises that there is an enemy to be fought, and she is determined to contend against it. 2. But it may be said, "Hatred of evil is not victory over it; and it is an imbecile kind of virtue which contents itself with indignation and does not apply itself to some remedy." The apostle gives the remedy. Because we abhor evil we will not therefore be overcome by evil; we will not ally ourselves with any evil, even though we imagine that the alliance will give us a transient victory over it. The only weapon wherewith we will encounter it is good. 3. But is it possible to overcome evil with good? I. THE TEACHING OF ALL OUR EXPERIENCE IS THAT THIS IS THE BEST METHOD OF ENCOUNTERING EVIL. There are two methods by which we may oppose evil; the one is the method of impulse, the other of reflection. In the first heat of virtuous indignation, we are inclined to cry out, "Away with such a fellow from the world; it is not fit that he should live." But that is only making the alliance, for the moment, with the evil, to overcome it. Now the other method

is far better. It says, "I will not meet persecution with violence, falsehood with falsehood. Against falsehood I will present truth, against violence righteousness." Let me appeal to the simplest spheres within the experience of man. 1. Take the physical sphere. The ancient theory regarding disease was that the element of evil must be expelled at all costs, and the result of medical treatment was the utter weakening of the patient, his death often, in the endeavour to secure his cure. But a milder and a wiser spirit has gradually grown up, and men have come to see that they must support, by every means, the life within the man. Give the patient vigour, and the natural forces will cast off the evil. 2. How do you deal with your children? Are you trying to teach them to excel in any particular art by pointing out their faults and failures? You know that is not the way to success. You may criticise if you will; but the spirit of criticism has never educated any one. The spirit of appreciation, the spirit of imitation—these are the secrets of power. 3. It is true also in moral matters. There are three great enemies which assail us in the three different periods of our life. (1) The child has its enemy—the spirit of energetic force which is longing for some occupation. How long will you deal with the child whose mere animal restlessness has become troublesome to you? Do you believe in the virtue of teaching him to sit still? No; you give him something to do. You withhold him from the evil by giving him the good. (2) Later comes the other passion. The energy begins to show itself in attachments and enthusiasms to hero worship, or the worship of womanhood. Are you going to meet that with the everlasting "Nay"? If so, you create a miserable failure, because you give no fair opportunity for the sweet and ennobling attachments of life; you forget to overcome the evil by giving it the good. (3) Later on, life has lost the elasticity of youth, and you have reached the time when your great desire is quietude. There comes upon you sorrow and bereavement and loss, and your cry to kindly friends, who gather round you with their fussy sympathy, is, "Let me alone that I may bewail myself a little." The man of sorrow who has felt the vacant chaff well meant for grain that his fellows have flung as something to satisfy the hunger of his sorrow—do not tell him to forget, to cease to grieve; tell him that sorrow is the dowry of God upon the heart that can love, and that there is no experience of God that is not in itself the promise of some new power; and, therefore, the opportunity of some wider usefulness. Give him occupation; tell him of the activities of sympathy which are really the natural result and desires of the heart that sorrows truly, and his soul will wake up; he will see the life that he thought useless is useless no longer. You overcome, then, the evil by the good. 4. It is true also in the religious world. Israel's evil was idolatry. The prophets spoke and the prophets failed; and at last came the terrible penalty—the Exile, which purged out the old leaven. But there was no positive element in their religious life. When they returned they did not worship gods, but they idolised themselves, and Phariseeism grew upon the ruins of the overthrown idolatry of the past. Then came God manifest in the flesh, and men have since found in Him who is to be loved and reverenced, that there was the good that was to expel the evil. II. IT IS IRRATIONAL TO SUPPOSE THAT WE CAN OVERCOME IT IN ANY OTHER WAY, for this reason:—There are three elements in the consideration; and he who seeks for mere antagonism to kill the evil—1. Forgets the man. For what is your idea about evil? Is it a thing that is so part of man's manhood that his very individuality is concerned in it, or is it like a disease? The truth is that the evil is in the man; and hence your aim is not to kill the man, but rather to deliver him from the power of evil. To meet, therefore, evil by violence, by the spirit which makes an easy alliance with the very wrongs which are denounced of God, fails of its purpose, for it kills in its attempt to cure. 2. Forgets the law. If we have any faith in the moral order of the universe, our answer to every temptation to meet evil with evil is this, "I grant it might answer to-day; but am I sure it would answer in the long run?" Our Master was tempted for the great gain to do the little wrong. But His answer was No! and that must be ours. And why? Because the laws that govern the world are the laws of righteousness. It is never worth while to do evil that good may come. (1) This is written large upon the history of the world. You never can carry on the progress of the world if you, at every provocation and delay, impatiently grasp hold of the law, and subvert the very principles on which the world has been built. (2) It is written large in the story of the Church. Whenever she followed the arms of the enemy it turned against her; her right hand forgot her cunning; she became the travesty of her former self—no longer in gorgeous array, going forth conquering

and to conquer, but livid with the power of that evil with which she became incorporated. You cannot challenge the victorious and eternal laws of God, and you can only meet and overcome the evil by the good. 3. Forgets God; for suppose we are tempted to make use of some transient evil to achieve some great good. The little falsehood, the little elasticity of conscience, declares that you do not believe that God is eternally good, and that you believe in the energy of evil more than in the energy of good. But the Cross tells us that victory lies in the hands of him who will use the Divine weapons and eschew the carnal ones; by that Christ overcame evil with good. (*Bp. Boyd Carpenter.*) *The Christian and his adversaries:*—There are—I. ADVERSARIES OF THE GOSPEL. It is a mistake to say that these are now more numerous or formidable than they were. The "higher criticism," the antagonism of modern science to the Bible, &c., only present in a fresh form the difficulties that have always confronted the Christian. The enemies of truth may be more active, and we may be more thrown into contact with them, and so the evil may be more apparent, but there is no reason to believe that it is more widespread, or, save from the position of some of its advocates, more pernicious. The question is, How are we to deal with it so as to produce the best results? The true answer is that of the text. 1. We are overcome with evil if we indulge in a spirit of mere antagonism. Those against whom we have to contend need the gospel, and have the same right to a share in its provision as ourselves. A spirit of self-righteousness may dispose us to look down upon them, and a feeling of uncharitableness may lead us to provoke them with our denunciations. We may be more anxious to overwhelm an adversary than to win a soul. We forget that Christ bears with them, and so our zeal becomes unchrist-like. 2. But we are not less overcome with evil if we speak in a tone which betrays an indifference to the truth. Desire to win the champions of error, the effort to do them more than justice, must not degenerate into a latitudinarian charity. To shrink from the faithful exposure of error, lest the feelings of some should be wounded, to talk as though sincerity were everything, this is to abuse liberty, and thus to be overcome with evil. 3. There is a more excellent way, and that is to overcome error by confronting it with the truth. The effort of the Christian should not be always to meet objections, but rather to exhibit the gospel in its own simplicity. Many a heart, perplexed by the adversaries' subtleties, and bewildered by our best answers, would be won by a faithful proclamation of the truth. II. SECTARIAN ADVERSARIES. 1. There has been too much of a sectarian spirit in all ages. Not only have there been differences, but alienation of heart. There has been a disposition to disbelieve in the existence of goodness beyond our own pale. A spirit of rivalry has introduced itself, and men have done for the love of party what they would not do from pure Christian motive. And where a man's convictions are strong, it is very hard for him to appreciate the position of those who differ from him, and unless there be restraining influence, there will naturally be a strong display of feeling. But such restraining power there is, and its sway ought to be more widely felt. The children of one family, the redeemed of one Saviour, should never, amid their differences, forget their essential unity. 2. But there is more danger here than in the war against scepticism, lest we yield too much to the demands of that charity which exists only so long as an opponent is content to hold his own opinions in abeyance. Many virtually say to all who differ from them, "Be silent on every point of separation, never raise your voice against what you deem to be evils, lest you offend us, and then we will meet you." This is no charity at all. The true language of charity is, "Hold your own opinions firmly; I may not be able to accept them, but I will believe your sincerity. I claim only the like liberty as my right; I will wear no trammels, and I will impose none; so long as we rejoice in a common salvation, march under a common banner, whatever be our other differences we will love as brethren." Truth is not ours to trifle with; to keep it hidden lest some friend might be offended with something in its appearance. This indeed is to be overcome with evil. By faithfulness and all carefulness in relation to the scruples of our brethren; by firmness blended with gentleness, we shall best approve our own Christianity, and advance the interests of truth. III. PERSONAL ADVERSARIES. Let a man take an earnest, upright, straightforward course, and he may expect to have some foes. Envy will raise up some who grudge him every honour. Differences of opinion too often degenerate into personal antagonisms, and there are, besides, those offences which, in our imperfect state, always will arise. It is very important that in them all the Christian should indicate that the spirit dwelling in him is other than that which

has its place in the world. On the world's theory retaliation is justifiable. But to the Christian it stands condemned by the precepts and the example of his Lord. We who have had so much forgiven, must ourselves forgive. We must conquer hatred by a display of that charity that is not easily provoked, and which thinketh no evil. Be it ours then to overcome evil with good. There are two aspects in which we may ever regard human characters and deeds. The one is uncharitable; the other kind. The one presents every feature of another's character in the worst light; the other labours to discover the good. (*J. G. Rogers, B.A.*) *The great conflict*:—I. THE COMMAND TO HOLD OUT. "Be not overcome of evil." 1. The Christian ought to be unconquerable, for he has an inexhaustible power to resist all onsets. If he desert not his position, his supplies cannot be cut off. This injunction was peculiarly appropriate to the Church at Rome, where power was almost deified. The apostle, no doubt, had this in view when he declared that the gospel was the power of God. He now urges the exercise of this latent power. Numberless assaults have been made on the Church of Christ, but it still thrives. It has sustained what were, apparently, many defeats; but it soon rallied, and gave fresh proofs of its invincibility. 2. Taken in its connection, the text gives prominence to suffering. Christians are discomfited when they lose the power of suffering in a Christlike spirit. The moment they begin to fight evil on its own low level, their high position is already taken. Vengeance is a weapon too dangerous for them to handle. In God's hand it is the flashing sword of justice; the Christian, however, is more likely to hurt himself than to wound his adversary with it. A hasty temper is a vulnerable point in a good man's character. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." A graphic portraiture that—a city easily sacked; falling a prey to the firstcomer; so is he who has lost control over himself. On the other hand, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." He has subjugated his greatest enemy, and, as a consequence, is endowed with a vast power of resistance. II. PAUL ADVANCES BOLDLY FROM THE DEFENSIVE TO THE OFFENSIVE. A besieged city remains unconquered as long as the hostile forces are kept outside the walls; but the besieging army must be repelled before it can claim a victory. In virtue of the resources available to him, the Christian is able to endure a long siege; but it is his imperative duty to advance and put to flight the army of the alien, for it is with the conqueror that Christ promises to share His throne. And inasmuch as we have a Captain made perfect through suffering, we are urged to follow on bravely in His steps. The lines on which the great conflict should be waged are clearly indicated in His life and death. His command to fight evil after His own example may be taken as a certain guarantee of His presence and assistance. Let this inspire us with undaunted courage in our direst extremities. III. THE MEANS WHEREBY TO ACHIEVE THE VICTORY. Much liberty is afforded us in the choice of our weapons, for we are only confined to the world of good; and that is very large. But we are strictly forbidden to fetch any from the enemy's camp. Nor is there the slightest necessity for employing foreign arms, seeing that the most effective are manufactured in our own country. In the opinion of the world they are harmless; in moments of weakness we are tempted to distrust their efficacy; still the command holds good—"Overcome evil with good." Kindness is the only instrument we are permitted to use. This is the return fire, and it cannot but eventually silence the enemy's guns, and that without slaying the gunners. The artillery of evil is poor compared with that of good. Touching instances are afforded of the subduing efficacy of good in the history of Saul and David. The weapons here prescribed were the weapons which the Saviour Himself wielded in His terrific conflict against the kingdom of evil. He died for enemies, and slew the enmity of man through His Cross, thus converting an enemy into a friend—the highest and completest victory imaginable. (*W. Jenkins, M.A.*) *The rule of the Christian warfare*:—1. The world is a battle-field, and we are all not only under arms, but under fire. No man lives to himself; the whole fabric of society suffers for the misdeeds of one of its members. Every prodigal brings dishonour on the home, every deed of violence lessens our sense of personal security, every adulterer weakens the integrity of the marriage bond, every dishonesty hardens us against strangers, &c. Hence we are concerned not only in the evil done to ourselves, but in that done anywhere. 2. And we should be moved to protect the community as fellow-workers with Christ. Every true Christian has a touch of the knight errant in him. He is his brother's keeper, and this view of Divine chivalry is shared by many a one who has been blamed as a busybody. When Christians first appeared people called them "the men that

turned the world upside down." I. BE NOT OVERCOME OF EVIL. Don't yield to it. Don't turn your back upon it and say, "It is no business of mine." What should we think of the man who shrank away from some great famine or pestilence without a kind thought or deed for the sufferers? However safe, he would be overcome of the evil. When we shut our eyes from any general trouble we yield to it. And when the evil threatens ourselves the rule still holds good. II. OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD. We may not be content with a mere protest against evil. In the great battle we may not deliver our shot and then step back, saying, "I have done my part." We must hold on until we win or until the Captain calls us out of the ranks. 1. Suppose the evil we contend against is a personal one. A man has injured you. The world might say, "Get your revenge." The apostle says, "Conquer it by good." Never let the enemy say he has silenced you. Some day repay him with an unexpected thrust of goodness. And in order to do this you must fight against the evil in the man rather than against the man himself. Even when you are compelled to enforce the law against him, do not sting or degrade him. 2. Suppose the evil be general—the prevalence of immorality or infidelity. If you think you cannot do away with it altogether, do not yield to it yourself. If you live in a dirty street you can keep your own doorstep clean. If you can do no more you can be a Noah or an Elijah. You may have to fight single-handed, but with the power which backs you, you can do that. But you must strive lawfully—viz., by doing good. The best answer to deceit is fair dealing. Darkness flies before the light. Falsehood is built on sand, and will some day come down of itself. Don't, then, pull it down; but prove the strength of truth by building upon the rock. (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) *The best warfare* (children's sermon):—To "overcome evil with good" is—I. THE CHEAPEST WARFARE. War is one of the dearest things that men have to do with. The Napoleonic wars cost England £200,000 every day. It costs the nations of Europe, to keep up the preparations of war, £200,000,000 every year. What a frightful sum to pay, just for the sake of killing men. Why, with a very small part of that sum we could clothe and feed all the poor people in the world, and send missionaries wherever they were needed. But to "overcome evil with good" it is not necessary to buy guns, swords, &c. Kind words cost nothing; and kind actions cost next to nothing. II. THE PLEASANTEST. The other warfares in which men engage are very unpleasant from- 1. The labour involved. Soldiers often have to make long and fatiguing journeys, with heavy burdens on their backs. Think of what British soldiers during the Indian Mutiny had to suffer, and Napoleon's army in the Russian campaign. But there is no toil or labour like this connected with this warfare. Here, the enemy against whom we have to fight is "Evil," and we may find it in the ugly dispositions, either in ourselves or those around us. We have no toilsome journey to undertake to find it. 2. The danger. But those who are engaged in the best warfare are perfectly safe. God takes care of them. "Who is he that can harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" 3. The pain and suffering. But, in "the best warfare," no blood is shed; no bones are broken; no wives are made widows; no children made orphans. This warfare heals wounds, but never inflicts them. It saves life, but never destroys it. III. THE MOST EFFECTUAL. Kindness will conquer when nothing else can. There is the greatest difference in the world between conquering by power and conquering by kindness. The former is like building a dam across a stream of water; the latter is like drying up its springs. The one is like keeping a lion from doing harm by chaining him; the other changing his nature and turning him into a lamb. IV. THE MOST HONOURABLE. Beasts and men conquer by force, but God conquers by love. If we try to conquer by kindness or love, we are imitating God. Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon, tried to conquer the world by power, but they did not succeed. Jesus is trying to conquer the world by love. He *is* succeeding. He *will* succeed. V. ALL MAY ENGAGE IN IT. When they are enlisting soldiers for an army, they will only take men, and men not too old, or too young. But old and young, women and children, sick and lame, may take part here, as well as strong men. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *True moral conquests*:—These words imply—1. That good and evil are in this world. This fact distinguishes this from other worlds. In heaven there is good only; in hell evil only. On earth both co-exist, though both coalesce. 2. That evil must be overcome. Its victory is ruin. No man, however bad, wishes evil to triumph. 3. That the way to overcome evil is by the force of good. I. THIS IS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE METHOD. Can evil be overcome by evil, error by error, selfishness by selfishness, anger by anger, &c.? The idea is

a philosophical absurdity, and all history shows it to be an impossibility. Like begets like the whole universe through. This is the only effective method in overcoming evil. 1. Directed against ourselves from society. Are there those who seek our injury? Can we overcome them by resentment or violence? The constitution of the human mind must ever render such efforts futile. Here is the effective plan—"If thine enemy be hungry, feed him," &c. 2. As it is found existing everywhere in the world. Falsehood, profanity, dishonesty, &c., are to be put down only by good. Truth alone can conquer error, honesty, craft, &c. 3. As existing in our own hearts. Here it is to be overcome, not by tormenting ourselves by self-scrutiny, but by strengthening the good that is within us, and getting more. The traveller who would escape the mists that hang about mountain-sides must ascend the higher zones. So he who would escape the darkness of polluting thoughts and feelings, must struggle upwards into the purer atmosphere of good (Phil. iv. 8). Evil within will only yield to the expulsive power of the good. II. THIS IS THE DIVINELY PRACTISED METHOD. 1. The evil of intellectual error God overcomes by the good of intellectual truth. The world's errors in relation to being and well-being, to virtue, duty, happiness, God, man, destiny, lie as a dark, oppressive atmosphere upon its heart. God overcomes this by a revelation of truth—the Bible. 2. The evil of enmity towards Him He overcomes by the good of His love toward it. Men are enemies to God by wicked works. Their opposition to heaven is their greatest crime and curse. "God so loved the world," &c. 3. The evil of corrupt life He overcomes by the good of a perfect life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Value of indirect efforts:*—You see that this wrought-iron plate is not flat; it sticks up a little towards the lips—"cockles," as we say. How shall we flatten it? Obviously, you reply, by hitting down on the part that is prominent. Well, here is a hammer, and I give the plate a blow. Harder, you say. Still no effect. Another stroke, and another, and another. The prominence remains; you see the evil is as great as ever—greater indeed. But this is not all. Look at the warp which the plate has got near the opposite edge. Where it was flat before, now it is curved. A pretty bungle we have made of it. Instead of curing the original defect we have produced a second. Had we asked an artizan practised in "planishing," he would have told us that no good was to be done, but only mischief, by hitting on the projecting part. He would have taught us how to give variously directed and specially adjusted blows elsewhere, so attacking the evil not by direct but indirect action. (*Herbert Spencer.*)

CHAPTER XIII.

VERS. 1–7. **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God.**—*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers:*—I. EVERY SOUL, or man (Ex. xii. 4; Gen. xlvi. 27). 1. Secular person. 2. Ecclesiastical or religious. II. THE OBJECT. "The higher powers," or chief magistrates established in each nation. 1. To see that God be rightly worshipped (2 Chron. xiv. 2, 4; xvii. 6, 9). 2. To preserve peace (1 Tim. ii. 2; Psa. lxxii. 7). 3. To execute justice (Psa. lxxii. 2; Rom. xiii. 4). III. THE ACT. "Be subject." We owe them—1. Prayers (1 Tim. ii. 1). 2. Fear (Prov. xxiv. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 17). 3. Not to speak evil of him (Eccles. x. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 10; Jude 8). 4. Dues (ver. 7). 5. Subjection and obedience (Tit. iii. 1). (1) Otherwise the magistrates' power is in vain. (2) The public good depends upon our obedience. (3) We are bound to obey for fear (Rom. xiii. 2, 5). (4) For the Lord's sake (Rom. xiii. 5). (5) He that resisteth, resisteth the ordinance of God. IV. THE REASON OF THE COMMAND. "All power is of God." This appears —1. From Scripture. (1) Every power is ordained of God (vers. 1–2) (2) The magistrate is the minister of God, Λειτουργὸν (ver. 4). (3) By God kings reign (Prov. vii. 15, 16). (4) They judge under Him (2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, 7). (5) He sets up kings (Dan. ii. 21, 37; v. 21). (6) God first ordained the power of the sword in the hand of men (Gen. ix. 6). (7) God gave particular direction for choosing most of the kings of Israel; as Saul, David, Jehu: and so now. 2. From reason. (1) He is the first cause of all things (John xix. 11). (2) All power depends on Him (Acts xvii. 28). (3) As the stream from the fountain. 3. All power in men is God's power in their hands (2 Chron. xix. 6). 4. Power is good and necessary, therefore from

God (James i. 17). 5. It is part of the law of nature (Rom. ii. 14, 15). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Subjection to the higher powers*:—1. THE DUTY. 1. Respects all legitimately constituted authority. 2. Extends to all persons, without distinction. 3. Requires submission in all matters not affecting conscience. II. ITS FOUNDATION. Power is—1. Derived from God. 2. Is an ordinance of God. 3. Is established by the providence of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Obedience to law*:—I. SUBJECTION TO THE HIGHER POWERS. Not abject subjection to governments, whatever their character; but intelligent, manly subordination to a divinely ordered arrangement—the social framework and the national dominion. Many are the corruptions and oppressions of rulers and the imperfections and perversions of constitutions. Nevertheless there is a Divine ordination, as of marriage and home, so of nationality. *Per se*, government is essential to the perfection of human life, and so far as it does not hinder our obedience to God as the direct Sovereign of our souls, we are properly obligated to obey it. Divine Providence may have so ordered our lives that we may be overshadowed by pagan authorities. While we approve not the perversions of depraved legislators—their intemperance, Sabbath desecration, profanity, luxury and ambition—we can, notwithstanding, hold ourselves in dignified yielding to normal law. When the corruptions or misapplications of government become glaring and intolerable, the right of revolution is rightly appealed to, and then may "God speed the right." II. SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY. Aside from references to political governments, the whole paragraph may have a truer application to spiritual authority. Rank pharisaic ecclesiasticism and Papal domination are extremely abhorrent to every soul whom the truth and grace of God have made free. But Church officers and institutions founded on the gospel are the reflex of the Lord's own kingdom. These powers are "ordained of God"—apostles, deacons, elders; with regulations for Sabbath observance, public worship, evangelistic progress. That one or more persons should, therefore, in any community decry creeds, church association, ministerial functions and labours, &c., must be a grievous evil. Satan can quickly divide and scatter the fold by such disorganisers and malcontents if the least heed be paid them. At suitable public anniversaries we should look into the Magna Charta of our Christian rights and experiences. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The duty and obligations of civil obedience*:—I. THE DUTY WHICH WE OWE TO CIVIL GOVERNORS. 1. Submission. This injunction is given to "every soul." And with regard to its extent, Peter says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man." If anything, indeed, were enjoined on us inconsistent with God's will, "we are to obey God rather than man," as did the three Hebrew youths, Daniel, and Peter. For the commands of the greatest potentates in the world are of no weight against the paramount authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords. When, however, they are not at variance with the law of God, the Scriptures expressly enjoin an unreserved obedience. 2. Support (ver. 6, 7). Expenses must be incurred, both in carrying on affairs and in supporting the dignity and remunerating the labours of the officers of state. Hence there must be taxes, "tribute" and "custom." Hence all shrinking from bearing our proportional weight of the public burdens is not only against the law of the land, but the Word of God. Christ Himself paid taxes from which He was properly exempt. 3. Respect. "Fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour," *i.e.*, reverential homage due to kings and principal rulers, and the respect due to all who are in authority. Here, then, is forbidden everything that is disrespectful either in manner or language. The blazoning abroad the faults of our rulers, so as to degrade them in the eyes of others, is an offence against God. When Korah, &c., gathered themselves together against Moses, you know how God expressed His indignation against these contemners of constituted authority. The Scriptures regard it as a daring thing to "speak evil of dignities," to "despise dominion." II. THE GROUNDS ON WHICH OUR OBLIGATION RESTS. 1. The penalty which those incur who transgress. A law becomes a dead letter, unless its penalties are enforced: and it is the duty of such as are in authority to be "a terror to evil works," and not to "bear the sword in vain," for they are appointed "as the ministers of God, as revengers to execute wrath on him that doeth evil." Yea, it is said that they that resist, "shall receive to themselves damnation." We acknowledge this is a low motive. Still, low as it is, we fear, so great a lack of higher principle prevails amongst us, that, were it not employed, such a thing as obedience would hardly be known. Each would be an Ishmael. 2. The advantage we derive from civil government (vers. 3, 4). So appalling is the evil of the want of a regular government, that the very worst government is better than no government at all (see Judges xviii.). We have so long enjoyed the blessings of an equitable govern-

ment, in which even the king dare not, if he would, invade the rights of the beggar, and in which every crime is prosecuted, and, in consequence, we have been so long privileged to "sit each one under his vine and under his fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid," that we seem almost to forget that we owe this happy security, not to any improvement in man himself, but to a well-ordered government. It might help us to realise these advantages if we were to suppose for a time, a suspension of the laws throughout the land; and that every one was left to follow the full bent of his own will, without fear. 3. The consideration of the authority wherewith they are invested (ver. 1). This applies to all that hold legitimate authority. It is not necessary, in order to make any power the ordinance of God, that it should be nominated by God Himself: as Moses, and Saul, and David were, for instance. For the apostle is speaking of the Roman emperors, who were elected by the army. It is mutual consent and contract that makes two persons man and wife; and yet matrimony is God's ordinance; and the subjection under which the wife is required to be unto her own husband in everything arises not just from mutual contract, but from God's appointment. Again, one becomes master, and another servant, by consent and covenant: but the master's authority over the servant is derived, not simply from the covenant entered into, but from the ordinance of God. Hence, when Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, Moses says to them, "Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." And, moreover, when Israel rejected Samuel as their ruler God regarded it as a rejection of Himself. (*J. Sandys, A.M.*) *Christian duties towards civil rulers*:—These duties are enforced on two grounds—I. THAT THEY ARE ORDAINED OF GOD, and therefore ought to be obeyed as a matter of conscience. This implies—1. That it is according to God's purpose that society should be organised into self-governing communities for—(1) Protection against aggressions from without. (2) For the restraint of wrong-doing and the promotion of prosperity within. 2. That government must assume some form. The administration cannot be left to chance. There must be a constitution, clearly defined, and generally known and approved. The first form of government was that of the family. But, as families multiplied, each having a variety of rights, out of which would arise differences not to be easily settled, some more general form became necessary. Government by patriarchy having fallen through, many other forms are possible, and have become actual. Which then is the one ordained of God? This does not concern the apostle. The general rule assumed seems to have been that, as every community is likely to secure for itself that form of government which is best suited to it, at any period of its development, so that form of government actually existing is the one which is of God's ordination for that people at that time. For the apostle speaks not of what ought to be, but of "the powers that be." 3. That there must be powers, *i.e.*, living persons invested with both authority and power to administer government, and that to these the Christian must render conscientious obedience. But it does not follow that he is to take no part in insisting that the ruling powers exercise their proper functions legitimately. For the governors have no more right Divine to do wrong than have those who are governed. Only this was a matter in which Christians had at that time no special concern, and in respect to which it was no part of the apostle's purpose to give instructions. 4. That, whatever the form of government, the real Divine purpose is for the punishment of evildoers, and for the good of them that do well. The government is made for the people, and not the people for the government. To the masses it matters little what form of government obtains, but it matters much indeed whether the government rules according to wise or unwise principles. Yet, after all, any government at all is better than none, and none is possible if no obedience is to be secured. 5. That each ought to be subject and to render respectful obedience out of conscience towards God. Of course, there are limits to obedience (Acts iv. 17–9). When Rome required of the Christians to render homage to an idol, they were under imperative obligation not to obey. And so, while it is incumbent upon every one to render to all officials their due, we are not bound in conscience to render that which is not due. If any state functionary should oppressively demand illegal taxes or service for illegal purposes, the duty of obedience has no place. If, indeed, the service is not in itself immoral, it may be found to be a matter of prudence to submit; but a man is not morally bound thereto: his conscience leaves him free to refuse. But, with such obvious exceptions, the duty of submission is universal. II. THAT THEY HAVE THE RIGHT, POWER, AND WILL TO PUNISH THOSE WHO DISOBEY. Obedient subjects have nothing to fear. The magistrate is the minister of God to them for good; and those who do good

shall have protection and praise of the same. But he has been entrusted also with the sword, the right and power to punish, even unto death, those who disobey. That this motive of fear should be urged appears somewhat strange. Any who were disposed to refuse obedience must have known that they did it at the risk of punishment. But some may have been fanatic enough to persuade themselves that a heathen power could have no moral right to enforce obedience, and that God would hold them harmless for their disobedience. Such are reminded that God, under whom these very rulers were marshalled, was on their side, and would sustain them in the enforcement of subjection and obedience. Therefore, if you cannot be moved to obedience on any higher ground, yet do learn obedience through fear. Even of the wrath of God, who will sustain by His almighty arm the just authority of these powers which are of His own ordination and appointment. (*W. Tyson.*) *The Christian view of the State*:—What has our religion to say to our patriotism? What is the final meaning of our relation to the State under which we live? I. To begin with, THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO TAKE A FAR HIGHER VIEW OF THE NATION THAN ANY WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO HEAR. In God's Word, the State is not a mere machine for keeping order and peace. The nation is not profane, but sacred; not secular, but Divine. The government derives its sanctions not merely from expedience or convenience, but from the appointment of God. You know how elaborately this idea is wrought out in the Old Testament. Jehovah is the actual, almost visible King of the Hebrew commonwealth. He establishes His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He it is that leads the nation out of bondage into freedom. No matter who sits upon the throne, at Jerusalem, or in Samaria, whether it be David or Saul, an Ahab or a Hezekiah, still Jehovah is their true King. From Him cometh promotion; in His name prophets speak; by Him princes rule, and kings decree judgment. But some one says, all this may be true of Israel. It is easy enough to see God's hand there. But here is our new nineteenth century, where nothing is sacred, how shall we recognise the Divine? In authorities, chosen as ours are, out of the seething cauldron of our practical politics, how can we feel that the powers that be are ordained of God? The man who does not see God's hand in our nation's past history has read its records to very small purpose. Upon every shining page rests the finger of God as truly, if not as visibly, as in Judæa. You may see, if you will, nothing but a happy combination of chances—a happy chance that placed the fairest portion of the Western Continent in the hands of the progressive Anglo-Saxon race; a happy chance that wafted to our shores the Pilgrims and the Cavaliers, the high-spirited Huguenot, and the thrifty German. "In the providence of God," says Charles Sumner—and a truer student of history never lived—"there are no accidents." He who sees God's hand in history at all, must be blind indeed if he does not see His guiding in our nation's story. "If the Lord Himself had not been on our side, now may Israel say, if the Lord Himself had not been on our side, when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us. II. Nor is it only a question of the past: GOD IS NOW IN THE NATION'S MIDST. God's hand is still leading. Thus the state, in its own place, and for its own work, is as divine as the Church herself. Nor is this all. Just as individuals are sent into the world with a calling from God to do some great work, so nations may have a mission. Was not the Hebrew nation called of God to keep alive in the world the knowledge and the worship of the one true God? Was not the Greek nation sent by God to spread broadcast its golden wealth of culture and civilisation? Was not the Roman nation sent to impart its iron strength, its splendid instinct of law and order to the barbarian hordes of Central and Northern Europe? Was not the English people chosen to colonise and settle the new worlds, and to pave the way for this marvellous nineteenth century of ours? Such a mission, such a calling impose upon each of us a mighty responsibility—a responsibility which not a few of us are all too willing to shirk. These earthly "powers" speak to us of a higher sovereignty which we must acknowledge. They point us to a "King, eternal, immortal, invisible," to whom we all owe allegiance. There is one will that we wish to be done, on earth as in heaven, in the State as in the Church, in politics as in religion, and that is the will of Him who rules in righteousness. And now what is this again but to say that righteousness must rule? For the will of God is the supremely righteous will. Nor is this all. For our country's sake, for our King's sake, let us be good men and true. Thoreau well says, "It matters not half so much what kind of a vote you drop into the ballot-box once a year, as what kind of a man you

drop out of bed into the street every morning." (*L. R. Dalrymple.*) *Governors and subjects*:—I. WITH RESPECT TO GOVERNORS. The apostle declares—1. That they are ordained of God (ver. 1); that their authority is the ordinance of God (ver. 2); that they are the ministers of God (ver. 4, 6). Not that these expressions signify that God had appointed one particular form of government, all deviations from which are unlawful. There is not the least ground for such an opinion from history, or the reason of the thing. Can any one imagine that Paul intended to declare that the Roman emperors, who manifestly usurped and maintained their authority by force of arms, had their commission immediately from God? or that he would not have said the same things had the republic continued? 2. That the sole business of all governing power is to consult the good of society by maintaining peace and virtue in it (vers. 3, 4, 6). Governors are not persons exalted by Heaven to a height above their neighbours, to be arbitrators, at their own pleasures, of the lives and fortunes of their fellow-creatures, and to receive the servile homage of whole nations, but persons called by the providence of God to a laborious task; not to live in ease, but to watch day and night for the good of that society in which they preside. Their office, indeed, is a glorious office; but the glory of it doth not consist in the outward majesty of the governor, and the servility of the subject, but in the happiness derived from the labours of the supreme head to all the members of the body politic. And that governor who contradicts the character here laid down, who is not a terror to evil works but to good, is not the governor to whom Paul presses obedience. And much less if he manifestly act contrary to the only end of his institution. And this may serve to explain yet farther in what sense these higher powers are from God, viz., as they act agreeably to His will, which is, that they should promote the good of society, which St. Paul all along supposes them to do. And consequently, when they do the contrary they cannot be said to be from God, or to act by His authority. II. WITH RESPECT TO SUBJECTS. 1. The duty of submission and non-resistance is laid down in such absolute terms, that many have been induced from hence to think that the Christian religion denies the subject all liberty of redressing grievances. And yet methinks if the apostle had done nothing but enforced the duty of obedience it would be reasonable to judge from the nature of the thing and the absurdities of the contrary, that he meant this only as a general rule rather than to imagine that he should absolutely conclude whole nations under misery without hopes of redress. 2. But the apostle so explains his own doctrine by the reasons he gives for this obedience, and the account he gives of the duty of governors, as to leave subjects all the liberty they can reasonably desire. For though he doth at first press upon them, in unlimited words, an obedience and non-resistance to the higher powers, yet he manifestly limits this obedience to such rulers as truly answer the end of their institution (vers. 3–5). As far as they deflect from God's will, so far they lose their title to these declarations, so far are they excluded from Paul's argument. These persons are the ministers of God for the good of society; therefore they must be obeyed. But it will not follow from hence that obedience is due to them, if they ruin the happiness of society. And therefore to oppose them in such cases cannot be to oppose the authority of God. Nay, tamely to sit still and see the happiness of society entirely sacrificed to the irregular will of one man seems a greater contradiction to the will of God than any opposition can be. For it is a tacit consent to the misery of mankind. Whilst he commands submission, he puts no case of princes acting contrary to the purpose of their institution, much less of princes who make an express contract with their people and afterwards break it. Nor doth he mention anything of a passive submission in such cases, but plainly leaves nations to the dictates of common sense and the law of self-preservation. But some may say, Where, then, is the great virtue of submission to governors, if it is to be practised towards none but such as answer the ends of their institution? But it is easy to reply, That there is an indispensable duty upon all, subjects as well as others, to regard the public interest; and if their submission help to destroy and ruin that, their submission cannot be a virtue. The great objection against this is that it may give occasion to subjects to oppose their superiors. But a rule is not bad because men may mistake in the application of it to particular instances, or because evil men may satisfy their own passions under its supposed sanction. The contrary doctrine we know by an almost fatal experience may be very much abused. The truth ought not to be concealed, or to suffer in the opinions of men for the sake of accidental inconvenience. Conclusion: It is highly requisite that all in authority should—1. Be happy in a public spirit, and a true regard to the public

interest. 2. Have a deep sense of religion, of the great importance of virtue, and of the bad influence and malignity of vice and immorality. 3. Have a great love to justice, and regard to peace. 4. Show a blameless example. (*Bp. Hoadley.*)

Human magistracy:—Note—I. That human magistracy of some kind or other is of DIVINE APPOINTMENT. Taking the word "ordained" in the sense of permit, all the governments of the world, good or bad, aye, all things, even the most sinful, are ordained of God (Dan. iv. 32; Deut. ii. 21; John xix. 11). But taking the word in the sense of decreed it means that the principle of civil government is of Divine appointment. 1. Man's social tendencies indicate this. Some men are royal in their instincts and powers, and are evidently made to rule; others are servile, feeble in faculty, and made to obey. There is a vast gradation of instinct and power in human society, and it is an eternal principle in God's government that the lesser shall serve the greater. 2. Man's social exigencies indicate it. Every community, to be kept in order, must have a recognised head. Hence, man in his most savage state has a chief. II. That the human magistracy which is of Divine appointment IS THAT WHICH PROMOTES GOOD AND DISCOURAGES EVIL. The Divinely appointed rulers of whom the apostle speaks are not "a terror" to good works, but to "the evil." They are those who "praise" the "good"; those that are "ministers of God for good." To determine, therefore, what kind of civil government is really of Divine appointment, and that is to be obeyed, you must ascertain what is the "good" which it is to promote, and the "evil" which it is to discourage. What is "good"? Obedience to the Divine will. The standard of virtue is not the decree of an autocrat, nor public sentiment, even when organised into constitutional law; but the will of God. "Whether it be right in the sight of God," &c. The civil government, therefore, that does not harmonise with this is not the government of which the apostle is speaking. We may infer—1. That the infringement of human rights is not in accordance with the will of God, and therefore not "good." 2. The promotion of injustice, impurity, and error, is not according to the will of God, and therefore not "good." Opposition to governments is sometimes a duty. Daniel, &c. III. That the human magistracy which promotes the "good" and discourages the "evil" IS AUTHORISED TO ENFORCE OBEDIENCE AND SUPPORT (ver. 4). The magistrate is Divinely authorised to punish transgressors and rebels. But coercion has its rules and limitations. 1. The sword should never be used but from benevolent desires. "The new commandment" is the law of humanity; nothing can justify its violation. Punishment should not be inflicted for the sake of giving pain and gratifying revenge, but for the sake of doing good and serving the criminal. 2. The sword should not be used for the purpose of taking life. The advocates of capital punishment and war insist that the sword is used here as the emblem of destruction, whereas it is the emblem of righteous coercion. IV. That such obedience and support ARE BINDING UPON ALL CLASSES OF THE COMMUNITY. Disobedience to such a government is—1. Impious. To resist it is to resist "the ordinance of God." Rebellion against a righteous human government is rebellion against God. 2. Self-injurious. A righteous ruler is "the minister of God to thee for good." He aims at thy good. To resist him, therefore, is to wrong thyself. Conclusion: This passage does not teach that we are bound to obey laws that are not righteous, to honour persons that are not honour-worthy. If we are commanded to honour the king, the precept implies that the king's character is worthy of his office. Some kings it is religious to despise. The obligation of obedience is ever-dependent upon the righteousness of the command. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Earthly citizenship* (election sermon):—1. Government is a Divine institution for the preservation of society and the happiness of mankind. As to the substance, "the powers that be are ordained of God"; as to the form, they are left to the decision of each country and age, and are "ordinances of man"; but whether under the name of monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, governments equally claim reverence as the depositaries of authority and the conservators of order. 2. In the duties enumerated in the previous chapter there is this—"He that ruleth (let him do it) with diligence." By the British constitution the people are the ultimate despositaries of power. "Every ordinance of man" which is to be obeyed "for the Lord's sake" is such as the people, by their representatives, make it. Every elector is, therefore, in some measure responsible for the framing of those ordinances, and should therefore labour "with diligence" that they be in accordance with truth and justice, for the good of men and the glory of God. 3. There cannot be a greater mistake than that on becoming Christians we escape from our obligations as citizens. Religion was designed to

train us for heaven, not by unfitting us for the duties of earth, but by enabling us to perform them rightly. Religion would be an injury to the world if it withdrew the best men from it. True piety is nurtured and developed, not by avoiding any portion of our duties as men, but by diligently performing them. 4. Politics is the science and practice of legislation for the public good. Rightly to be political is the same thing as to promote the welfare of the people and the peace of the world. Christianity does indeed condemn the bitterness, the factious spirit, the selfish ambition which have too often disgraced political life; but Christianity, instead of, on this account, excusing its votaries from their duties as citizens, calls upon them all the more to sanctify politics by the nobler aspirations and purer motives of religious faith. What, then, is the duty of a Christian elector? I. TO ASCERTAIN WHO AMONGST THE CANDIDATES ARE, ON THE WHOLE, MOST SUITED FOR THE OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE. Not wealth, rank, personal friendship, nor any favour received or hoped for, should determine his choice, but fitness, both by character and opinions, to promote the public good. II. TO GIVE EFFECT TO HIS CONVICTION BY ENDEAVOURING TO BRING HIS FELLOW-ELECTORS TO THE SAME OPINION WITH HIMSELF. But in so doing he will avoid all unfairness in speech and conduct. As an employer, as a customer, it will never occur to him to urge his appeal. His only weapon will be rational persuasion. He will never become a mere partisan. Firmly holding his own opinions, he will do nothing opposed to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. III. So quietly and seriously, but promptly and resolutely, TENDER HIS VOTE. He will not allow personal convenience, indolence, or fear to prevent the discharge of his duty to his country, and the exercise of that solemn function as one of "God's ministers" to which he has been "ordained," but the opportunity for which so seldom occurs. Conclusion: Let all of us, then, do our duty to our God and our country. 1. Zealously. 2. Patriotically. 3. Charitably. 4. Prayerfully. (*Newman Hall, D.D.*) *Human authority*:—I. IS DERIVED. II. IS LIMITED. 1. To restrain evil. 2. To encourage good. III. IS VESTED WITH THE POWER OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT. IV. MINISTERS TO THE GENERAL WELFARE. V. DEMANDS RESPECT. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian's political relations*:—I. THE ORIGIN AND NEED OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. If "the powers that be" (civil government) "are ordained of God," we infer that civil society itself is ordained of God. This will be manifest when we consider—1. Man's natural impulses for society. The instincts of our nature dispose us to live in society, and to seek sympathy and assistance from others. "Solitary confinement" is one of the most terrible punishments which can be inflicted. 2. Man's natural position and circumstances. By means of society the race is preserved, and civilisation developed. If human beings were completely isolated, the race would degenerate and become extinct. Man needs the aid of civil authority to protect his life and property from the malice and power of the evilly-disposed. II. THE OBLIGATION OF OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITY. In civil society laws are enacted and governments appointed to enforce the right and put down the wrong. And all rightly disposed persons willingly subject themselves to this authority. This must needs be—1. As a matter of duty, not of fear only. The fear of punishment is a check upon evil-doers, and thus, in a measure, prevents lawlessness. With evildoers obedience is a matter of compulsion or of expediency. But there is another standard, that of duty, which some take who are not disposed to admit that "the powers that be are ordained of God." 2. As a matter of conscience towards God. No human government is infallible. But the Christian, from love and conscience towards God, yields a cheerful obedience to "the powers that be," so long as the civil laws do not conflict with the Divine. III. THE DUTY OF REVERENCE TO OFFICIAL DIGNITY. 1. As to our "dues" to the public revenue. The language implies that we are not to regard the levied rates as gifts to the government, but as debts. 2. As to our respect for official distinction. "Fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (2 Pet. ii. 10). In no society or government shall we find matters exactly agreeable. But we must remember that the basis of society is mutual forbearance and self-sacrifice for mutual benefit. Our dislikes, then, should not prevent us from rendering due reverence to official dignity, as well as to rank, talent, and all true worth. The whole of the apostle's teaching shows that we are bound to render obedience on the ground that government is an "ordinance of God." But this implies that the government shall not enact, nor its authorities seek to enforce anything that would require disobedience to the will of God. Hence we conclude—1. That this precludes all illegal action against government on the part of Christians. 2. That it permits all legal means for the redress of any real injustice.

3. That the obligation of obedience is ever dependent on the rightcousness of the command. (*J. W. Kaye, M.A.*) *The effect of religion on a nation's grandeur*:—1. Religion secures subordination. 2. Subordination law. 3. Law freedom. 4. Freedom fame. 5. Fame respect and power. (*G. Croby, LL.D.*) *St. Paul's respect for Roman law*:—The warmth with which the apostle speaks of the functions of civil governors may, at first sight, seem surprising, when we remember that a Hélius was in the Prefecture, a Tigellinus in the Prætorium, a Gessius Florus in the provinces, and a Nero on the throne. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the Neronian persecution had not yet broken out; and that the iniquity of individual emperors and governors, while it had free rein in every question which affected their greed, ambition, or lust, had not as yet by any means destroyed the magnificent ideal of Roman law. If there were bad rulers, there were also good ones. A Cicero as well as a Verres had once been provincial governors; a Barea Soranus as well as a Felix. The Roman government, corrupt as it often was in special instances, was yet the one grand power which held in check the anarchic forces which but for its control were "nursing the impatient earthquake." If now and then it broke down in minor matters, and more rarely on a large scale, yet the total area of legal prescriptions was kept unravaged by mischievous injustice. St. Paul had himself suffered from local tyranny at Philippi, but on the whole, up to this time, he had some reason to be grateful for the impartiality of Roman law. At Corinth he had been protected by the disdainful justice of Gallio, at Ephesus by the sensible appeal of the public secretary; and not long afterwards he owed his life to the soldier-like energy of Lysias, and the impartial protection of a Festus and even of a Felix. Nay, even at his first trial his undefended innocence prevailed not only over all the public authority that could be arrayed against him by Sadducean priests and a hostile Sanhedrin, but even over the secret influence of an Aliturus and a Poppæa. It is obvious, however, that St. Paul is here dealing with religious rather than political prejudices. The early Church was deeply affected by Essene and Ebinotic elements, and St. Paul's enforcement of the truth that the civil power derives its authority from God, points to the antithesis that it was not the mere vassallage of the devil. It was not likely that at Rome there should be any of that fanaticism which held it unlawful for a few to recognise any other earthly ruler besides God, and looked on the payment of tribute as a sort of apostasy. It is far more likely that the apostle is striving to counteract the restless insubordination which might spring from regarding the civil governor as a spiritual enemy rather than a minister of God for good. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Obedience to legal authority*:—Whilst commanding the allied army in Portugal, the conduct of the native population did not seem to Wellington to be either becoming or dutiful. "We have enthusiasm in plenty," he said, "and plenty of cries of 'Viva.' We have illuminations, patriotic songs, and fêtes everywhere. But what we want is, that each in his own station should do his duty faithfully, and pay implicit obedience to legal authority." *Law is the shadow of God's justice*:—Law is a great and sacred thing. It is nothing less than a shadow upon earth of the justice of God. The forms which surround it, the rules which govern it, the dignity and honour which belong to its representatives are all the outworks of a thing in itself entitled to our reverence. But when the machinery of law is tampered with, as was now the case by Jezebel, when a false witness or a biassed judge contributes to a result which, if legal, is not also moral, then law is like an engine off the rails, its remaining force is the exact measure of its capacity for mischief and for wrong. Then, indeed, if ever, *summum jus* is *summa injuria*. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Reverence for law*:—So it is with loyalty, the reverence for order and law incarnated in a man, reverence for the king, as God's vicegerent and visible symbol. With their politics I have no sympathy, but for the loyalty of the old Cavaliers to Charles I have intense admiration. He stood to them not merely as the man Charles Stuart, but as the embodiment of Law, Order, Divinity; hence they were willing to lay down all they had for his sake, to peril life and limb in defence of his rights. Who can read the tale of that heroic woman who, when the life of her beloved queen and mistress was sought, bravely made her own frail white arm a bolt across the door to guard her from danger, and held it there until the shattered bone refused longer to obey her will, without saying that she did this, not as friend for friend, but as subject for queen? If we are not loyal now, it is because loyalty lacks objects on which to bestow itself, not because the deep perennial feeling of the heart is less strong than it was of old. (*George Dawson.*) *Civil government an ordinance of God*:—It

seems very plainly and explicitly taught here, that civil government is an ordinance of God, and that obedience to our lawful rulers is a Christian duty. We say again, God does not ordain any particular form of government, but He does ordain government. He does not say you must be ruled by an emperor, a king, a generalissimo, or a president. But He does say you must have a ruler and administrators of law. They must exist and administer in the form best adapted to secure the highest good of the people. God does not say you must have a king, and "the king can do no wrong." But He says government must exist, and be respected and obeyed, so long as it subserves its true end—the general good. If it fails to do this, you must not run into anarchy and chaos, but wisely and firmly, in proper ways, reform or revolutionise, and establish a better system, or choose better men. The Protectorate under Cromwell was a revolutionary measure, but it was justifiable because the monarchy under Charles had failed to secure the true end of government—the good of the people. But it was only a temporary measure, and prepared the way for what came at last, an admirable system of constitutional government, under which England has steadily and increasingly prospered for two hundred years. (*E. P. Rogers, D.D.*)

Vers. 3–6. **For rulers are not a terror to good works.**—*The duties of rulers and subjects:*—I. OF RULERS. 1. To protect the good. 2. To restrain the evil. 3. To reward merit. II. OF SUBJECTS. 1. To respect authority. 2. To do good. 3. And thereby merit praise. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.**—*Conscientiousness:*—When the Emperor Nicholas was in England, in 1844, industry in Russia could hardly be said to exist, and the Czar was extremely anxious to introduce machinery of all sorts into his arsenals, so as to become independent of foreign makers. With this object he visited a number of large establishments in the Midland Counties and the North; and one Sunday morning Mr. James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam hammer, and proprietor of large works at Patricroft, was much surprised at the appearance in his garden of an officer in a carriage and a gorgeous uniform, whose *chasseur*, still more gorgeous than his master, was sent up to disturb the old gentleman's Sabbath rest by loudly announcing, "Prince K——." The prince himself walked in, smoking a cigarette, and informed Mr. Nasmyth in good English that the Czar intended to honour the Patricroft works with a visit on that afternoon. "Indeed!" replied their owner, "I regret that his majesty will not see much, as it is Sunday." "But it would be easy," rejoined the aide-de-camp, coolly helping himself to a bon-bon which his *chasseur* handed him out of a handsome box, "to start the works for a few hours. Mr. Nasmyth might be sure of his majesty's favour." "Sir," replied Mr. Nasmyth, "the favour of my God is more important to me than that of your master. And if I were inclined to break the Sabbath for him, my men would not." "Would you not start the works for Queen Victoria on Sunday?" asked the astonished aide-de-camp. "Her Gracious Majesty," replied the old Briton, "would never suggest such a thing." The Czar did not visit Patricroft. **For he is a minister of God to thee for good.**—*The ministry of civil rulers:*—The civil ruler is—I. A MINISTER OF GOD. 1. Paul does not say he ought to be so, or it would be well if he would consent to be so, but that "he is." It is not in his pleasure not to be so. He must be so, if he rebel against it ever so fiercely. Nero's will might be devilish; every power which he wielded was Divine. He had been appointed to rule the world which he tormented by Him who loved that world. 2. How would such a doctrine affect the Roman Christians? They could not confound vital power with those outside accidents of it which our vulgar nature prompts us to admire when they recollected from whom it came, and they must have hated every wanton exercise of it. The effect of regarding Nero as a minister of God was, no doubt, to make them patient under his government, and afraid to engage in any mad schemes for subverting it. But this faith gave strength to their cries that the earth might be delivered from all her oppressors, assured them that those cries would not be in vain, and made them welcome their own sufferings as steps towards the redemption. 3. Those who attempt to find apologies for tyranny in Scripture, sometimes ask, "If Nero's power was ordained by God, what subjects can pretend that the powers which are over them have some lower origin?" I answer, "Certainly none." And subjects would be most unwise if they wished otherwise. For it imports that every power is a trust, and implies responsibility to a judge whom the greatest criminal cannot escape. Read Roman history in the light of St. Paul's sentence. Every sting of conscience which visited Nero that

night when he knew himself to be his mother's murderer was a message to him, "Thou art God's minister, and thou hast used His sword against thy own flesh and blood." The assassin by whom he fell at last was saying, "Thou art God's minister; and so am I, guilty like thyself, but ordained to call thee to His judgment-seat." 4. Surely, if rulers and people believed this, it would be something more than the notion that they may be brought to the bar of "public opinion." But let those who confess the power of public opinion ask themselves whether it requires any more credulity to acknowledge the presence of a living, personal ruler? II. A minister of God TO THEE. 1. A strange assertion! A minister of God to the Roman world the emperor might be, however little he fulfilled his ministry. But a minister of God to some individual member of the Roman Church, who must have counted it the best privilege of his obscurity that the emperor would never hear of him, never inquire after him, how could he be such to that man? In this way: When a man was taken into the Christian Church, he contracted affinities and obligations to Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free. But he might easily forget these, and fancy that the Church was an isolated body. The fact of being under a common civil ruler deepened and expanded the doctrine. Nor was the benefit destroyed by the character of the ruler. If he was an oppressor, there was more necessity of falling back on the Source from which his authority proceeded, in prayer that His will might be done on earth as it is in heaven. 2. But I am far more desirous to assert the truth in reference to those rulers who confess their calling and try to fulfil it. So far as they contribute to the health and growth of the body politic, so far they must be ministers of God to each one of us personally. For are they not quickening our hearts and hopes, and enabling us to enter more truly the kingdom of God? It is impossible that all true human rule should not be like the Divine rule in this, that it is most minute when it is most comprehensive; that it calls for the most personal loyalty when it is most generally even and just. III. "A minister of God to thee FOR GOOD." 1. St. Paul writes this to men who might, in a short time, be lighting the city as torches to cover the guilt of him who set it on fire. Well! and was he not, and was not Charles IX. in France, and Philip II. in the Netherlands? Were they not ministers of God for good to those whom they sent beyond the reach of their crimes, to cry beneath the altar for the day when the earth should no more conceal her blood or cover her slain? And it will be known, some day, to how many men, governments the most accursed have been ministers of good, by leading them from trifling to earnestness, by changing them from reckless plotters into self-denying patriots, by turning their atheism or devil-worship into a grounded faith in the God of Truth. Many such, I fear, will rise up in judgment against those who live in happier circumstances. 2. But the apostle was enabled to proclaim this principle on other grounds. As he believed Christ to be the King of men, he could not help believing that all human society was organised according to the law which He embodied. "The Chief of all is the servant of all." He could not doubt that if the emperor believed this he would be a blessing to the world; that he was a curse to it because he thought the world was to minister to him, and not he to it. He could not doubt that every Christian ought to maintain the truth which Nero set at naught, and that if he did, it would prove itself in his case—Nero would be a minister of God for good to him. 3. How did the faith that there is a constitution for nations, which kings did not create, work itself into the heart of modern Europe? When a mediator between God and man is rejected, you must have an absolute caliph or sultan, and a government carried on by mere officials; you cannot have the confession of a relationship between the sovereign and his subjects, involving mutual obligation. This is involved in the faith of a Son of God and a Son of Man. Whatever has suffocated that faith—be it ecclesiastical pretension, or revolt against that pretension, be it the worship of money, or the worship of a tyrant instead of a father—undermines constitutional liberty. To bring forth that faith in its fulness before the nations which nominally confess it, is to help them to break their political fetters. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The functions of the ruler:*—I. TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER. 1. As the minister of God. 2. For the benefit of man. II. TO PUNISH CRIME. 1. For this purpose he is invested with the power of life and death. 2. Must use it righteously. 3. As responsible to God. 4. For the suppression of evil. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The relative duties of rulers and subjects:*—I. THE NATURE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. 1. The events of the seventeenth century, which changed the form of government and placed its institutions on a new footing, naturally gave rise to searching

inquiries into the origin of lawful authority. (1) Filmer maintained that kings had a Divine hereditary right to their thrones in virtue of Adam's absolute and arbitrary dominion over his offspring. But we read of no grant of any such dominion which, had it existed, would have rendered slavery coeval with the first human family, and would nullify the claims of all monarchs excepting the true heir of Adam, if he could be found. (2) Sidney and Locke endeavoured to base the relation between rulers and subjects on the supposition that an agreement was originally entered into by the first founders of a state, which involved a tacit compact between all succeeding members of it. But we have no evidence of any such social compact having ever been made. (3) It seems more satisfactory to regard government as arising from the nature of man, though still having its first elements in the relation between the head of a family and the children. The idea of authority on the one hand, and of submission on the other, thus gained, would easily prepare the way for the union of a number of families under one head. 2. Reason cannot fail to discern the importance of civil government to save society from a disorder which must soon have issued in its dissolution, if not in the destruction of the very race itself. Accordingly, in the Scriptures, we find civil government very clearly recognised as a Divine institution; and the general obligation to obedience is enforced under penalty of the consequences of resisting an ordinance of God. But though God has given His own sanction to the institution we have no evidence that any one particular form has been prescribed, or even that uniformity in this respect would be a good. When it is said, "the powers that be are ordained of God," the meaning is, that as government is designed for the security and happiness of society, every government, whatsoever its form, which in any particular country promotes this end, is agreeable to the will of God. Until Saul reigned, the human form of the theocratic government had been substantially a sort of republic. The monarchy, however, after it became established, received the Divine sanction. II. THE TIES WHICH SEVERALLY ATTACH TO THE GOVERNING POWER AND THE GOVERNED. 1. The duties of rulers. (1) To remember their responsibility to God. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." When it is considered that the happiness of millions is entrusted to them, how deeply should they feel that they have a "Master in heaven!" (2) To act exclusively for the public good. Not only does the text describe the civil ruler as a "minister of God for good," but pagan sages; Aristotle defines a king as "one who governs for the good and profit of his people, and not for his own ends." The doctrine that a ruler has a right to hold power merely for his own sake is a monstrous perversion of the useful principle of hereditary or vested right. Happily, this doctrine has been repudiated in our own country by the revolution of 1688. Memorable examples of the same principle have occurred in France and Belgium. (3) To exercise their high function so as to make the civil government a moral power and influence. A military despotism may be obeyed because it cannot be resisted; a government which seeks to gain its ends chiefly by a system of espionage; bribing may be equally dreaded, but such governments will never be respected. (4) To create the persuasion of general good and benevolent intention on their part. Rulers may often commit errors, but these will be viewed patiently if uprightness of intention is manifest; but not the most splendid talents nor even great services will compensate for the want of sincerity. Not, however, that a statesman may not modify his opinions from conviction; but how many pledges have been made on the hustings only to be broken when some prospect has dazzled the vision! Either let such pledges never be made, or let them be kept, or let those who cannot keep them retire from the scene. This uprightness of intention must be shown especially in appointments to places of trust and profit. (5) To be well informed on the main topics with which they are called to deal. Want of enlarged views and ignorance of men and things may lead to reckless and sudden changes for which the mind of a nation is not prepared, and indeed has often produced revolutions. (6) To see that the laws are impartial, and that they are impartially administered. It is the dictate, both of Scripture and of reason, that there should not be one law for the rich and another for the poor. The same principle of impartiality might be applied to the economy of trade, of education, and even of religion. (7) To set a good example. If rulers are profligate, what readier way to the demoralisation of a people! The morals of the higher classes tend to become more and more an index to those of the people. (8) To be patriotic. His country claims the statesman's highest aims and best services. He should be, then, a man of peace. Of all the calamities that can befal nations, war is by far the greatest.

Peace furnishes upright and wise rulers the opportunity of domestic improvement. 2. The duties of subjects. (1) To obey the laws, or else the very design of civil government and the plain injunctions of Scripture go for nothing. Of course we ought to "obey God rather than men," but we should remember that this was said by those who, as inspired men, could not mistake as to what is obedience to God. Before, therefore, we resist the ordinance of man, let us be sure that it really does clash with the plain ordinance of God. The supremacy of the law implies that the subject surrenders the right of redressing his private wrongs to the political society of which he is a member, otherwise offences would often not be punished at all, for the aggressor might be the stronger; or, if not, the aggressor might be punished from revenge. Besides, one retaliation would lead to another, and there would be no end to this reciprocal brute force, but in the destruction of one or both of the parties. Still it must be admitted that if a robber or a murderer were to attack us we should certainly be justified in repelling him, in self-defence, because we cannot at the moment command the protection of society. (2) To honour his rulers, but not by insincere flattery, and servile fawning for the sake of advantage. To reverence the Sovereign, in whom the dignity and power of the state is embodied, is a natural sentiment as well as a religious duty; while "despising government" is strongly condemned (2 Pet. ii. 10). Still as it would be irrational to suppose that rulers are infallible, it cannot be wrong, on certain occasions, to find fault with their public acts. Our Saviour and the apostles did so, but censures should be tempered with the recollection that nothing is more easy than to sit in judgment on men's motives only because we ourselves may be of a different opinion. Much more has been effected towards the removal of bad laws by sober and persevering remonstrance than by unmeasured abuse. The Christian law of courtesy has as much claim to operation here as in any of the other intercourses of life. (3) To pray for them. In thus doing we are praying for the community at large, and for the whole world, the interests of which are affected by the international measures of rulers, and especially of our own, whose policy is felt over the globe. (4) To pay the taxes. The machine of government must always, in a state of society like our own, be expensive; but the complaint respecting taxation has too often been well-grounded in consequence of the self-interest and extravagance of rulers themselves. Again; a tax may have a wrong object, or it may be so levied as to bear disproportionably on the relative means of those who have to pay it. But still, when it is imposed constitutionally, it must be submitted to. (5) To do all in their power to exert a salutary influence over their rulers, so as to render the machine of government as perfect an instrument as possible for promoting the freedom and happiness of the governed. If rulers ever forget this high and religious destination and enact tyrannical laws, and if no milder measures avail to remedy intolerable oppressions, subjects are justified in resisting these encroachments. But usually the best and most direct means of exercising a salutary influence on public affairs is the election of such men for members of parliament as are likely, from their character and principles, to seek the general good. Hence it is one of the most incumbent duties of subjects to use uprightly and with an enlightened mind the elective franchise. Few notions have less foundation in reason, or in Scripture, than that "religion has nothing to do with politics." That a passion for party politics may injure the spirit of religion is not to be doubted; but this only proves that what is even obligatory may be engaged in with a wrong state of mind, and thus become evil. (*J. Hoppus, LL.D.*) **But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain.**—*Duty of the magistrate*:—I. WE MUST PLACE THE SWORD AND FASTEN IT, TOO, IN ITS PROPER PLACE, THE HAND OF THE MAGISTRATE. 1. God giveth the power, the magistrate hath it: God lendeth the sword, the magistrate bears it. And though ambition hath presented this power under divers forms of popularity, aristocracy, and monarchy, yet the commission and seal is still the same. The king's broad seal, what is it? The matter is wax; a small piece of money will buy a greater quantity: but having the image and superscription of my prince, it is either my pardon, or my liberty, or my charter, or my possessions. So the magistrate, what is he? My fellow, dust and ashes, nay, a sinful man. And yet, as "the minister of God," he is sealed, and hath the image and superscription of the Deity. 2. But though God hath conveyed His power, yet He hath not done it to every man upon the same terms; not to Joab the captain as to David the king; not to Shaphan the chancellor as to Josiah on the throne; not to Gallio the deputy as to Cæsar the emperor; not to the under-officers as to the judge; not to the judge as to the king. No private man may be a swordsman. If Peter will be drawing to

lop off an ear he must hear, "They that use the sword," &c. (Matt. xxvi. 52). 3. As God hath given the sword to the magistrate, so hath He fastened it to his hand. No discontent shall move it, no argument stir it, no murmuring sheath it; no time, no calling, no liberty free or privilege from the power of it. Behold St. Paul here, upholding that sword which he was to feel, adoring that power he sunk under, and bowing to majesty when the throne was Nero's. II. WE MUST NOW PLACE THE "NON FRUSTRA" UPON THE SWORD. "Wherefore the sword? wherefore authority?" "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. ii. 2); that every man may sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree; that the poor man may keep his lamb, and the jawbone of the oppressor be broken; that peace may shadow the commonwealth and plenty crown it. Authority is not only "not in vain," but "profitable" and necessary. God could have governed us without a sword, but it was not good for men to be so governed. We love and fear at a distance. And as the object is either nigh or remote, so it either affects or frights us. "We fear man more than God," and the shaking of his whip than the scorpions of a Deity. 1. The magistrate, like God Himself, "governs us by that which is adverse to us," curbeth the transgressor by the execution of penal laws. 2. No magistrate doth simply will the affliction of the offender, or punish only to show his authority, but for the amendment of the offender and the peace of the commonwealth. You who are invested with this power remember the end. Remember you were placed with a sword to pursue the wicked, to run after the oppressor, and take the prey out of his mouth. And in doing this you defend and safeguard the innocent. The death of one murderer may save a thousand lives. The neglect hereof heaps injury upon injury. (1) The first lights upon God Himself, of whose Divine power this power is a very beam. By injustice men undervalue Him, and put Him below His vassal, as if His omnipotency were weaker than man, His honour cheaper than a fee, heaven at a lower price than a bribe, and Christ Himself not worth forty pieces of silver. (2) From God the injury descends to the commonwealth. It brings in that which it should cast out. Sin unpunished makes a greater breach than sin committed. For adultery, murder, drunkenness, deceit, may give the blow, but injustice wounds. (3) Many times the injury falls upon the offender, whose greatest punishment it is that he is so much wronged as to be befriended, and so much favoured as to be unpunished. (4) But the wrong rests and dwells in the magistrate, who in a manner abjures his office, degrades himself by his connivance, and makes the sword less terrible by not using it; the not executing the law upon the greatest working a secret and reserved contempt thereof in the meanest. (*A. Farindon, D.D.*) *Mistaken clemency in courts of justice*:—Mirabeau once said, "We live in an age where wrong constantly triumphs over right, and where justice itself is a lie." There can be no greater curse to a nation than a corrupt judge and a perjured juror, and the Bible distinctly declares that God will call all such to a terrible account. It has ever been the case that where wholesome and just laws have failed to be strictly administered lawlessness and crime have abounded. Mercy to a great criminal often means cruelty and injustice to the people. This mistaken clemency leads to serious evils. 1. It confuses the public conscience as to the distinction between right and wrong. 2. It undermines respect for law and rulers. 3. It tends to anarchy, mob, and lynch law. 4. It jeopardises the securities and rights of society, and is subversive of morality and order. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The sword the symbol of righteous authority*:—The sword is not only the breaker, it is more constantly the preserver of national peace. Physical force in quiescence is like a sentinel, guarding our liberties and our laws. The magistrate, as well as the soldier, bears not the sword in vain. Though it be seldom drawn from its sheath, it is the commanding symbol of righteous authority. (*E. Johnson, M.A.*) **Wherefore ye must needs be subject . . . for conscience' sake.**—*The Christian's subjection to the civil authority* is—I. NECESSARY. Because—1. It is a Divine ordinance. 2. Essential to the general good. II. OBLIGING. 1. Not only for wrath, 2. But conscience' sake. III. COMPLETE. Because it is—1. Willing. 2. Sincere. 3. Conscientious. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Subjection for conscience' sake*:—Our notions about public duty are low altogether, because we often look upon civil society either as a matter of mutual convenience only between man and man, or else as an injustice and encroachment made by the rich and powerful on the rights and welfare of others. But as Christ has ennobled and sanctified the dearest of our domestic relations, that of marriage, by comparing it to the tender and affectionate care with which He watches over those who are united in one body to Him as the Head, so are our public relations raised by being equally connected with the service of our

Lord. Laws and governments are His ordinance, just as marriage is His ordinance, or the relations between parents and their children. They are His ordinance, because He knew that without them we should be in a state hardly better than that of beasts; because He willed that some image of His own just government, however faint, should exist in the world; some power that should put down the most violent forms of evil, even though it could not touch those which lurk within the heart, nor reward the virtue of the good. And hence "laws are entitled to our obedience, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake; that is, not only because we may incur a penalty if we disobey them, but because, whether we do or no, we are certainly, by disobeying them, doing that which is displeasing in the sight of God." (*T. Arnold, D.D.*) **For this cause pay ye tribute also.**—*Why shall we pay taxes?*—Because—1. Government must be supported. 2. The governor as well as the labourer is worthy of his hire. 3. The governor is God's minister. 4. It is a conscientious duty. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Render therefore to all their dues.**—We owe—I. To GOD—1. Fear (Matt. x. 28). By reason of—(1) His sovereignty (Mal. i. 6). (2) His justice. (3) His power (Jer. v. 22). 2. Love (Deut. vi. 5); for—(1) His excellency in Himself (Cant. v. 16). (2) His love to us (1 John iv. 10, 11). 3. Desires (Psa. lxxiii. 25). Because He is—(1) The ocean of happiness in Himself (Matt. xix. 17). (2) The fountain of it to us (Psa. xxxvi. 9). 4. Faith in what He saith (1 John v. 10). (1) Because of His own veracity (Heb. vi. 18). (2) The certainty of the revelations confirmed by miracles (2 Pet. i. 16, 19). 5. Trust on what He promises (Prov. iii. 5; Rom. iv. 20). Because of—(1) His freedom in making them. (2) His faithfulness in keeping them (Deut. vii. 9). 6. Thankfulness (1 Thess. v. 18). Because—(1) We are unworthy of any mercy (Gen. xxxii. 10). (2) It is all we can return (Micah vi. 8). 7. Obedience (1 Sam. xv. 22). (1) Which should be—(*a*) Sincere (Rom. vi. 17). (*b*) Universal (Luke i. 6; Psa. cxix. 6). (*c*) Constant (Luke i. 75). (2) This we owe, by reason of our—(*a*) Creation. (*b*) Preservation (Acts xvii. 28). (*c*) Redemption (1 Cor. vi. 20). (*d*) Vow in baptism. (*e*) Our profession of the Christian religion (2 Tim. ii. 19). 8. Honour and adoration (Mal. i. 6). (1) Of His wisdom (Rom. xi. 33). (2) Omniscience (Psa. cxlvii. 5). (3). Omnipresence (Psa. cxxxix. 5, 7). (4) Omnipotence (Matt. xix. 26). (5) Mercy (Exod. xxxiv. 6). (6) Justice. (7) Eternity (Exod. iii. 14). 9. Then render unto God His dues. Consider—(1) Otherwise you rob God (Mal. iii. 8). (2) You rob yourselves, your happiness consisting in obeying God. You rob yourselves—(*a*) Of the comforts of a good conscience (2 Cor. i. 12). (*b*) Of joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. xiv. 17). (*c*) Of the favour of God (Isa. lix. 2). (*d*) Of a blessing here (Deut. xxviii. 1). (*e*) Of happiness hereafter (Heb. vii. 14). (3) By paying Him His due you secure yourselves—(*a*) From present curses (Mal. ii. 2; chap. viii. 28). (*b*) Future torments (2 Thess. i. 8, 9). (4) He will call you to account (2 Cor. v. 10). (5) Render His due, and He will render to you His promise in heaven (Matt. xxv. 46). II. To MEN. 1. Superiors, civil, ecclesiastical, economical. (1) Subjection (chap. v. 1; Tit. iii. 1). (2) Tribute (Matt. xvii. 24-27). (3) Custom. (*a*) We ought to have a care of the public good. (*b*) It is a debt of gratitude for the benefits we receive from the magistrate. (*c*) A debt of justice for his trouble in the management of public affairs (Rom. xiii. 6). (4) Fear (Prov. xxiv. 21). (5) Honour (1 Pet. ii. 17). (*a*) So as to acknowledge them to be ordained of God. (*b*) Love them for their office sake. (*c*) Be thankful for the benefits we receive from them. (*d*) Fidelity and allegiance (2 Sam. xx. 2). (*e*) Entertain no ill thoughts of his person or actions (Eccles. x. 20). 2. Inferiors (Job xxxi. 13–15). (1) Humility and respect (Phil. ii. 3). (2) Charity and relief (1 Tim. vi. 17; Job xxxi. 16–21). Consider—(*a*) He that pities the poor, lends to God (Prov. xix. 17). (*b*) This is the only way to lay up our treasures in heaven (Matt. vi. 19, 20). III. To ALL. 1. Love (ver. 8). (1) This is Christ's special command (John xiii. 34). (2) Without this we have no love for God (1 John iv. 20, 21). 2. Honour (1 Pet. ii. 17). Because—(1) None but excel us in some things (Phil. ii. 3). (2) All are made in the image of God (Gen. i. 26). (3) We are all professors of the Christian religion (Mark ix. 41; 1 Pet. iii. 7). 3. Charitable thoughts (1 Cor. xiii. 5). (1) We know not others' hearts (1 Cor. ii. 11). (2) Nor God's intentions towards them (James iv. 12). 4. Do good to all (Gal. vi. 10). (1) Hereby we imitate God (Matt. v. 44, 45). (2) Give glory to God (Matt. v. 16). 5. Speak well of all (James iv. 11). 6. Pray for all (1 Tim. ii. 1; Matt. v. 44), for their—(1) Temporal good. (2) Spiritual (1 Tim. ii. 4). 7. Be just and honest to all (Matt. vii. 12; 1 Thess. iv. 6); otherwise, if we defraud others, we can get no good by it (Prov. x. 22), but much hurt (Hag. i. 6). 8. Render to all their dues,

Consider—(1) Unless we render them to men we cannot to God. (2) Unless we do this we sin against the very light of nature. (3) God will bring us into judgment for all unjust dealings. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Our debts*:—It is one degree of thrift to bring our debts into as few hands as we can. Our debt here we cannot bring into fewer than these three: I. OUR DEBTS TO GOD. Consider them to be our sins, and we dare not come into reckoning with Him, but we discharge ourselves entirely on our Surety, Christ; but yet of that debt we must pay an acknowledgment, an interest, as it were, of praise for all we would have and prayer for all we would have. II. OUR DEBTS TO MAN. Our creditors are—1. Persons above us. To these we owe in matter of substance, tribute, and custom; and in matter of ceremony, fear, and honour. 2. Persons below us to whom we owe counsel to direct them and relief in compassion of their sufferings. III. OUR DEBTS TO OURSELVES. 1. Some of these are to be tendered at noon, *i.e.*, to be paid in our best strength and prosperity in the course of our lives. 2. Others are to be tendered at night at our deaths. Conclusion: Render therefore to all their dues. 1. For your debt to God we bring you to Church. This is no place to arrest in, but yet the Spirit of God calls upon you for these debts. Praise Him in His holy place, and pray to Him in His house, which is the house of prayer. 2. For your debts to man we send you to court to pay those owing to superiors; to hospitals and prisons to pay those owing to inferiors. And though courts and prisons be ill-paying places, yet pay your debts of substance and ceremony, of tribute and honour, at court; and your debts of counsel and relief to those who need them in the darkest corners. 3. For your debts to yourselves, make even with yourselves all the way in your lives, lest your payment prove too heavy, and you break, and your hearts break when you come to see that you cannot do that upon your death bed. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *The rights of the ruler* are here—I. DEFINED. 1. Support. 2. Submission. 3. Respect. II. ENFORCED. 1. As due. 2. As recognised by God. 3. As imperative on all Christians. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom.**—*Tribute and custom*:—There is some difficulty about the distinctive signification of φόρος (tribute), and τέλος (custom). By some the former is regarded as a tax upon land; by others, as upon property generally, whether movable or immovable. Those critics who give to φόρος the wider signification, limit τέλος to a capitation tax; and those who confine φόρος to a tax upon land give τέλος a larger meaning, as signifying a tax upon merchandise as well as upon persons. Judging from the apostle's use of the word, φόρος was the general term for all contributions, and was used in the same way that the word "taxes" is sometimes largely used; and in its limited sense it applies to all burdens upon landed or personal property; while τέλος was a capitation tax which Christ told Peter to pay for himself and his Lord. (*J. Knight.*) **Honour to whom honour.**—*Honour to whom honour is due*:—Lord Dartmouth is the person to whom Newton's Letters "in the Cardiphonia" to a Nobleman, are addressed, and to whom Cowper alludes, "And one that wears a coronet and prays." It is said that after the prince came to the throne, on a public day Lord Dartmouth appeared at the levee, when one of the attendant noblemen said, "I'll bet Dartmouth has been at prayer to-day." "Yes, and please your majesty," said Lord Dartmouth, "I thought it right first to pay my duty to my God and then to my king." "Well said, Dartmouth," replied his majesty, "and like yourself." (*Scottish Christian Herald.*)

Ver. 8. **Owe no man anything.**—*Owe no man anything*:—This precept may signify either to leave not our debts unpaid, or never get into debt. It may be looked to as a repetition of "Render unto all their dues" (*debitum*, debt). Be in no man's books. If he be an individual with whom you are dealing, pay when you buy. Or if it be the government, pay the tax when it becomes due. The injunction in this latter or more rigorous meaning of it is far from being generally adhered to. Perhaps it may not at all times suit the conveniences or even the possibilities of business, that each single transaction should be a ready-money transaction. Perhaps even in the matters of family expenditure it might save trouble to pay at certain terms. There can be no doubt, however, that in the first interpretation of it, it is a matter of absolute and universal obligation. Though we cannot just say that a man should never get into debt, we can feel no hesitation in saying that, once in, he should labour most strenuously to get out of it. For—1. In the world of trade one cannot be insensible to the dire mischief that ensues from the spirit of unwarrantable speculation. The adventurer who trades beyond his means is often actuated by a passion as intense and as criminal as the gamester. But it is not the injury alone which is done to his own character that is to be

deprecated, nor the ruin that bankruptcy brings upon his own family. Over and above these evils there is a far heavier disaster to the working classes, gathered in hundreds around the mushroom establishment, and then thrown adrift in utter destitution on society. This frenzy of men hasting to be rich, like fever in the body natural, is a truly sore distemper in the body politic. 2. If they who trade beyond their means thus fall to be denounced, they who spend beyond their means, and so run themselves into debt, merit the same condemnation. We can imagine nothing more glaringly unprincipled and selfish than the conduct of those who, to uphold their place in the fashionable world, build or adorn or entertain at the expense of tradesmen, whom they hurry on to beggary with themselves. 3. But there is another and more interesting application of this precept, one which, if fully carried out, would tell more beneficially than any other on the greatest happiness of the greatest number, viz., that men in humble life should learn to find their way from the pawn office to the savings bank—so that, instead of debtors to the one, they should become depositors in the other. That it is not so is far more due to the want of management than to the want of means; and it needs but the kindness and trouble of a few benevolent attentions to put many on the way of it. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Debt*:—I. IS A COMMON AND SERIOUS EVIL. 1. It robs the creditor of his right, and often involves him in serious perplexity and trouble. 2. It robs the debtor of his independence, and not unfrequently of his moral principle. II. Is, WHEN VOLUNTARILY INCURRED, A BREACH OF CHRISTIAN CONSISTENCY. It implies—1. A defective morality. 2. A want of love to our neighbour. 3. A blinded conscience. III. SHOULD BE CAREFULLY AVOIDED. 1. By living within our income. 2. By cutting off all unnecessary expenses. 3. By incurring no liabilities which we have not a reasonable prospect of meeting. 4. By the utmost economy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The guilt and folly of being in debt*:—I. THE PROPRIETY OF THE DIRECTION IN THE TEXT. To be in debt will expose us to defraud others of their just due. 2. Is injurious to the general interests of society. 3. Involves whole families in suffering. 4. Subjects us to great sacrifices. 5. Is prejudicial to our improvement in useful knowledge. 6. Is unfavourable to religion. 7. Is in direct opposition to God's command. II. SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO AID A STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH IT. 1. Debt, however long foreborne, will one day be required. 2. Remember the worth of time. 3. Avoid luxury. 4. Never exceed your income. 5. Never despise honest labour. 6. Avoid depending on speculation and artifice. 7. Never neglect the duties of religion. (*J. W. Cannon, M.A.*) *Owe no man anything*:—I. THE MOST LIKELY MEANS OF PAYING WHAT WE OWE. 1. The first mean is diligence in business. Make no unnecessary delay, nor set about it with a slack or unskilful hand. 2. The second mean is frugality, or the avoiding of expense whenever it can properly be avoided. 3. A third mean is exactness. "Put all in writing," says the son of Sirac, "that thou givest out or receivest in." Punctual payment is material. The last effect of exactness is to ensure the payment of what we owe at death. It is the concluding evidence of an honest man to leave his affairs in order. II. THE SACRIFICES WHICH MUST SOMETIMES BE MADE TO JUSTICE. 1. One must sometimes bear the reproach of selfishness in order to pay debt or keep out of it. 2. Fashion must often be quitted for the sake of justice. In order to perceive and obey this call, consult your own understanding. What is the consequence of being unfashionable? I am censured, and ridiculed, and despised. But what is the consequence of being unjust? My own heart condemns me. 3. Vainglory must be checked for the sake of justice. The pleasure in sumptuous possessions is slight, "beholding them with the eye." If they be unpaid, looking at them calls up the painful remembrance. 4. Generosity must be checked when it would encroach on justice. The parting with money inconsiderately, so far from being approved, is become a proverbial folly. Some make a flash of affected generosity who are not very scrupulous in paying what they owe, nor about fraudulent courses provided they be gainful. 5. Compassion must be bounded by justice. We are required to do justly and to love mercy. Let the love of mercy be cherished, and, when justice permits, let its dictates be obeyed. Still it is the part of a wise man to examine the claims that are made on his compassion. By rejecting false ones he can indulge compassion with more effect, and it partakes more of the nature of virtue. 6. Friendship may prompt a man to involve himself by loan or suretyship. 7. The dictates of natural affection must be checked when they encroach on justice. Let a man reveal to his family his real circumstances, and establish an order conformed to them. 8. Pleasures innocent in themselves may prove too costly. From that moment they cease to be

innocent. 9. An immoderate desire of wealth leads to injustice. What is the consequence, for example, of adventuring in trade beyond what your capital admits of and justifies? 10. Sloth must be conquered. It is fatal to justice as well as to every other virtue. "The slothful is brother to him that is a great waster." He is equally exposed to poverty, and to all the temptations the poor are under, to be unjust. 11. False shame must be combated. 12. Restitution is the last sacrifice to be made to justice. There are two cases, the case of things found, and of things acquired unjustly. III. Such are the sacrifices to be made to justice. They are costly; but THE BLESSINGS ARE IN PROPORTION GREAT. 1. To be out of debt is accounted a part of happiness. 2. Peace at the latter end is the portion of the upright. The pleasures of iniquity are but for a moment. The splendour of extravagance fades. To live and die an honest man is a worthy object of ambition. (*S. Charters.*) *Avoidance of debt*:—Owe no man anything. Keep out of debt. Avoid it as you would avoid war, pestilence, and famine. Hate it with a perfect hatred. Dig potatoes, break stones, peddle in tinwares, do anything that is honest and useful, rather than run into debt. As you value comfort, quiet, and independence, keep out of debt. As you value good digestion, a healthy appetite, a placid temper, a smooth pillow, pleasant dreams, and happy wakings, keep out of debt. Debt is the hardest of all taskmasters; the most cruel of all oppressors. It is as a millstone about the neck. It is an incumbus on the heart. It spreads a cloud over the whole firmament of man's being. It eclipses the sun; it blots out the stars; it dims and defaces the beautiful blue sky. It breaks the harmony of nature, and turns to dissonance all the voices of its melody. It furrows the forehead with premature wrinkles; it plucks the eye of its light. It drags the nobleness and kindness out of the port and bearing of a man; it takes the soul out of his laugh, and all stateliness and freedom from his walk. Come not, then, under its crushing dominion. **But to love one another.**—*Honesty and love*:—I. HONESTY gives every one his due. II. LOVE does more, it gives itself, and thus fulfils the whole law. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Honest dealing and mutual love*:—These two things are closer together than we are wont to imagine. Said a foremost physician not long ago, when asked how far the facility with which American constitutions break down was occasioned by overwork, "It is not overwork either on the part of the people who work with their brains, or with their hands. The most fruitful source of physical derangement and mental and nervous disorders are pecuniary embarrassments and family dissensions." The two things lie close together. The father, crowded beyond endurance by the strain to maintain a scale of living long ago pitched too high, the mother consciously degraded by the domestic dishonesty that draws money for marketing and spends it for dress; the sons and daughters taught prodigality by example, and upbraided for it in speech—what can come to such a home but embittered feeling? How can love reign in a household where mutual confidence and sacrifices, where the traits that inspire respect and kindle affection are wanting? Not to pay one's debts is as sure and as short a road as can be found to the extinction of confidence, the destruction of respect, and the death of love. Where now shall we look for a corrective? I answer, in a higher ideal of the true wealth and welfare of the nation, and so of the individuals who severally compose it. It was Epictetus who said, long ago, "You will confer the greatest benefit upon your city, not by raising the roofs, but by exalting the souls of your fellow-citizens, for it is better that great souls should live in small habitations than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses." Let us then pay every debt but the debt which we can never wholly pay, whether to God or our neighbour, which is the debt of love. But let us gladly own that debt, and be busy every day of our lives in making at least some small payment in account. As we gather about the family board let us remember the homeless and unbefriended, and be sure that we have done something to make sunshine in their hearts, no matter what gloom may reign without. (*Bp. H. C. Potter.*) *The debt of Christian love*:—I. THE AFFECTIONATE EXHORTATION. This calls upon us to endeavour to be always out of debt, while always in debt. Some, indeed, read the text as a doctrinal statement. "Ye owe no man anything but to love one another"; all that I would inculcate is reducible to this: obey the law of love to others, in all its branches, and then you will "render to all their dues." But there is sufficient reason to interpret our text according to our present translation. Thus interpreted—1. It does not mean—Ye sin if ye ever contract a debt, or do not discharge it the moment it is contracted. On this principle, commerce would be almost annihilated; many a conscience would be continually fettered; and

the precept itself would be found impracticable. But it insists on the punctual and conscientious payment of all lawful debts, which indeed is required by common honesty. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again." "Woe unto him, . . . that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." 2. But it means more. Ye owe duties to every one, and these you are to fulfil. In every relationship of life you have dues to render, and all your various duties to man result from your supreme duty to God. You are a debtor first and above all to God Himself, owing Him ten thousand talents and more, and having nothing wherewith to pay. That debt Christ has paid for you. Believe ye this? Then God, for Christ's sake, has freely forgiven you. From being His debtors as to guilt, ye become His debtors as to gratitude, and this debt He would have you pay in charity to all mankind. Would ye, then, be honest in the full Christian sense? "Owe no man anything." Be ever discharging the obligations under which God has graciously laid you, to love Him, and to love your brother also. 3. And yet ye must ever be in debt. We can never do enough in serving God and benefiting man. When all pecuniary debts are paid, this debt of love to one another remains, and is still binding. 4. But whence our means of paying this great debt of love? By having the love of God continually shed abroad in the heart. The more we receive, the more we are in debt to God; and hence the more we do, the more we may do in carrying out love to God and man, in all the relationships of life. II. THE COMPREHENSIVE MOTIVE. "For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." "But we are not under the law, but under grace." True, but for what object? "That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Thus is the believer not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. All whom the Spirit leads to Christ for pardon, He forgives freely, and then consigns them back to the training of the Holy Spirit, who writes the law of God upon the heart, and enables them to write it out in the life. And that law is love; "love is the fulfilling of the law." None obey the law of God as those who look to Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (*J. Hambleton, M.A.*)

The debt of love to our neighbour:—I. THIS IS A DEBT WHICH EVERY MAN OWES. There are relations in which men seem slow to recognise dues and obligations. They recognise the relation between the ordinary creditor and debtor, master and servant, as well as the obligations founded upon it. They forget that the very existence of certain relations involves a corresponding obligation, whether we have voluntarily assumed them or not. The child enters into relations with its parents without any act of its own; and yet the child is bound to render filial honour, obedience, and love. The highest relation man can have is to God. This exists before the act of any recognition on the part of the creature; but it imposes certain obligations which the creature is bound to meet. In the preceding verses Paul speaks of the relation of the subject to the ruler; the citizen to the state. Our birth introduces us to the rights of citizenship, but we are born to duties just as much as to rights; and as long as we remain under the protection of the State, we are bound to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, just as we are bound to render unto God the things that are God's; and that, as Paul informs us, "for conscience' sake." The debts we owe the State are just as binding as any debts we voluntarily contract. And these dues (ver. 7) lead Paul to speak of that greatest debt, loving one another. Although you may say with a feeling of independence and superiority, "I do not owe a dollar to any man," here is a debt you owe to every man. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God"; and the same spirit spoke through Cain—"Am I my brother's keeper?" The atheist denies his relation to God and the obligation which it involves; the spirit of selfishness refuses to recognise its relation to its neighbour; but the Spirit of Christ teaches a different lesson. It is not left to my choice or caprices—it is a debt. I owe it not to a select number of men, but to every man, for every man is my neighbour. According to Paul this debt is love (Matt. xxii. 36–38). II. WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THIS DEBT? 1. We must pay this debt as every other. The Lord is not satisfied with our recognition of the duty, for He says, "Thou shalt love." We must pay it—(1) By scrupulously abstaining from doing any evil to our neighbour, for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour." (2) By doing all the positive good to him we can. 2. And yet this is the one great debt which we are always to owe. Love is the inexhaustible fountain out of which all words and deeds of kindness flow. That fountain must ever remain open and full. Without such a fountain all the streamlets would fail. Let a man love, and he will strive to render unto all their dues, and to owe no man anything. The absence of love makes cruel creditors and

unprincipled debtors. Love is indeed "the fulfilment of the law," and the unfulfilled law everywhere reveals the absence of love. By the law is the knowledge of sin, and of this great sin, too, that we owe this great debt of love, and have become great debtors by not paying it. But the law is also "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." We shall never be able to pay this greatest of all debts until we have become the pardoned debtors of our Heavenly Father. The love of God begets our love. He alone can enable us to be diligent in paying a debt that can never be entirely paid off. (*G. F. Krotel, D.D.*) *The debt of love*:—1. As private persons, in your mutual traffic with one another, it will necessarily happen that, whatever your stations in life are, you must incur debts, and stand accountable to one another for certain goods and commodities received, for labour done, or for money borrowed. When St. Paul therefore directs you to owe no man anything, he only means that you are not to incur debts wantonly, nor keep in debt needlessly. But there is one debt which, he says, you can never discharge. This debt is the debt of Christian love. 2. Examine into the reasons on which it is founded, and why this exertion of Christian love is a debt of that kind, which can never be paid so fully as to absolve us from any further payment of it. (1) The first reason is founded on the relation in which we stand to Almighty God. The innumerable benefits which we daily and hourly receive at His hands demand the constant tribute of love and gratitude; but we have no way of expressing this affection so effectually as by acts of kindness to our fellow-creatures. (2) The force of the next reason depends on the frame and constitution of human nature, which is so replete with wants and weaknesses, consisting indeed of various kinds, yet distributed in pretty equal proportion among the species, that it is, morally speaking, impossible for us to be independent one of another. (3) The last reason consists in the very nature of the principle itself, and of those intrinsic properties, without which it ceases to be the thing which we mean by the terms we use to define it. Now, were benevolence a passive principle that contented itself with being, what the word imports, only a well-wishing, not a well-doing quality, it might not be required to be in constant use and exertion. But when used to denote Christian love and charity, and to have the same meaning with these terms, it implies a strenuous and unwearied exercise of one of the most active faculties of the human soul, which is better, perhaps, expressed by the term beneficence. Our charity must therefore be commensurate with our life; it must act so long as we act, for if it ever faileth it ceaseth to be charity, because we see that the apostle tells us it is one of its essential properties never to fail or cease from acting. 3. On these three reasons we build this conclusion that the debt of charity or benevolence to our neighbour is a debt which we must take all opportunities of paying him, and of which we must only close the payment when death closes our eyes. May we not assure ourselves that a soul actuated by so Divine a principle here on earth, must, of all other things, be best prepared to participate the joys of heaven? (*W. Mason, M.A.*) *Heaven's cure for the plagues of sin*:—I. THE NATURE OF LOVE. There are two kinds of affection that have this title. One is an approbation and affection for a character that pleases us; the other is an ardent good-will towards beings capable of happiness. Both of these affections are exercises of the Divine mind. And both of them are enjoined upon man. God and angels and all holy beings we are obligated to look upon with complacency, and towards all men we are bound to exercise good-will. We may wish well to all men, and still be willing to see the convict imprisoned and executed. This the good of the civil community demands, and this benevolence assents to, nay, even requires. II. HOW THIS AFFECTION WILL OPERATE. Here the path of our thoughts is plain. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. It will neither kill, nor steal, nor covet, nor defraud, nor witness falsely. It will lead to the discharge of every debt but one, and that one the debt of love; it will delight to owe and pay, and still owe for ever. Those whom we love we wish happy; and in proportion to the strength of that affection will be the energy exerted to accomplish that object. If to be calm and content will render them happy, we shall be reluctant to ruffle their temper or move their envy. If to be rich, and respected, and wise will make them happy, we shall wish their success in business, their increased respectability, and their advance in knowledge. If health, and ease, and long life, and domestic friendship will add to their enjoyments, we shall wish them all these; and what we wish for them we shall be willing, if in our power, to do for them. But if only the grace of God can make them blessed, it will be our strongest wish and our most ardent prayer that God would sanctify them. III. THE DUTY OF BENEVOLENCE. And here I would premise that

the good-will which I urge is to be exercised toward friend and foe. It is a pure and disinterested affection, hence is the offspring of a heavenly temper. I would urge it upon myself and my fellow-men—1. By the example of God. How constant and how varied are the operations of the Divine benevolence! Life and health, and food and raiment are His gifts, and are bestowed on His friends and His foes. Now the whole Bible just urges upon every man this same expanded benevolence. You are required to be a worker together with God. 2. We are urged to the same duty by the command of God. God does not exhibit His example before us, and leave it to our option whether we will do like Him. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And the Scriptures teach us what the effect of this love will be. It will lead to an affectionate deportment and a readiness to serve each other. It begets a spirit of forbearance, of truth, of unanimity, of self-denial, of meekness, and forgiveness. 3. Benevolence affords its possessor a permanent and high enjoyment. It is, in its nature, a sweet and calm affection, has its origin in heaven, and exerts a sanctifying influence upon every other exercise of the soul. If I know that I love my fellow-men, I am conscious that I feel as God does, and as He commands me to feel. I see, in that case, the image of my Creator in my heart. Hence it begets joy and hope. But this is not all; a benevolent heart makes all the happiness it sees its own, and thus widens, indefinitely, the sphere of its enjoyment. It has a real pleasure in another's joy, and still does not diminish the good on which it feeds and thrives. IV. THE HAPPINESS IT COMMUNICATES TO OTHERS. I would then urge all the believers and the unbelievers to love their fellow-men, from the fact that by putting forth this affection you can create a world of happiness. In the first place, look about you and see what need there is of more happiness than at present exists, what abundant opportunity there is for your exertion. You cannot be ignorant that you live in a ruined world, where, if you are disposed to be kind, you can find abundant employment. You can find misery in almost every shape and shade. Would it not be desirable to apply a remedy if you might to this complicated malady? Be willing, then, to practise the benevolence required, and the remedy is applied and the cure effected. Can you quit the world peaceably till what you can do has been done, to fertilise the moral waste over which you expect so soon to cast a lingering, dying look? V. THE DYING LOVE OF CHRIST. It was in the cure of this very same distress that He came in the flesh and died on the tree. Enter, then, upon the work of making your fellow-men happy, and you are in the very vineyard where the Lord Jesus laboured. He has already rescued from the ruins of the apostasy a great multitude that no man can number. The work is going on, and He invites your co-operation. Remarks: 1. In the want of this benevolence, how strong is the proof we have that men are wholly depraved! 2. We see the necessity that men should be renewed. Place selfish hearts in heaven and they would there be as fruitful as elsewhere in misery. 3. How pleasant is the prospect of a millennium! Then the benevolence we contemplate will become general. Men will be employed in rendering each other happy. (*D. A. Clark.*) *Love a debt to our neighbour:*—I. EXCEEDINGLY GREAT. Because—1. The creditors are so many. 2. Its liabilities are so numerous. 3. It can never be fully discharged. II. UNSPEAKABLY SWEET. Because—1. Not lightly incurred. 2. It helps us to discharge all others. 3. It harmonises with God's love. 4. Every attempt to discharge it is a source of pleasure. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Love a debt due to all men:*—I. A GREAT DEBT. 1. As due to so many—all men. 2. Requiring so much to pay it—sometimes our life (1 John iii. 16). II. A LASTING DEBT. Though always being paid, yet never discharged. The more that is paid the more is felt to be due. The principle is deepened and made more active by the practice. III. A PLEASANT DEBT (Phil. ii. 1). Every payment of it gladdens and enlarges the heart. IV. AN HONOURABLE DEBT. 1. Necessary to our moral nature. 2. It makes us Godlike and Christlike (Eph. iv. 32, v. 1, 2; 1 John iv. 8). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 9, 10. **Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**—*The comprehensiveness of love:*—It comprehends—I. THE WHOLE LAW. II. THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT. III. OUR NEIGHBOUR AS OURSELVES. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The love of our neighbour:*—I. THE OBJECT OF THE AFFECTION. Love of our neighbour, or benevolence, seeks the good of others, and in its noblest form is the perfection of God. II. ITS PROPER EXTENT. "As ourselves." This implies—1. That it is to be of the same kind. We have a common interest in

others and in ourselves. 2. That it is to bear a certain proportion to our love for ourselves. What this proportion is to be is not easily decided, for affection is not easily measured; but as to actions, the expression of affection, the more others occupy our thoughts the better, provided we neglect not ourselves. 3. That it is to equal our love for ourselves, No ill consequences can ensue from this, for—(1) Men have other affections for themselves not felt for others. (2) They are specially interested in themselves. (3) They have a particular perception of their own interest, so that there is no fear of self neglect. III. ITS INFLUENCE ON OUR GENERAL TEMPER. 1. To produce all charitableness. 2. To fit men for every relation and duty. 3. To moderate party feeling. 4. To prevent or heal all strife. IV. WHAT IT INCLUDES—all virtue. It prompts men—1. To seek the greatest happiness of all, which is itself a discharge of all our obligations. 2. To the practice of all personal virtues—temperance, &c., and certainly a neglect of these virtues implies a deficiency of love to others. (*Bp. Butler.*) **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.**—*The working of love:*—I. LOVE IS ESSENTIALLY AN ACTIVE PRINCIPLE. II. WORKS NO ILL. 1. In deed. 2. In word. 3. In thought. III. MUST WORK GOOD. 1. Wherever it has opportunity. 2. To the extent of its ability. IV. IS THEREFORE THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW. 1. Negatively. 2. Positively. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The work of love:*—The Arabian commentators of Mahomet attempted to make a law applicable to every relation in life. They published, it is said, a code containing seventy-five thousand rules; but cases soon arose to which none of these rules would apply. The New Testament adopts another method. It deals in broad and fundamental principles capable of universal application. It gives us in plain words a law of love. This suggests principles which are universal and eternal. It gives a life rather than a rule. I. "LOVE WORKETH NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOUR." This is a broad truth. One's neighbour is primarily the one near—the near dweller, any one with whom we have to do. Christ has for ever answered the question, "Who is my neighbour?" 1. The spirit of this statement strikes a blow at all kinds of business which injure one's neighbour. It meets the servant and the master, the maid and her mistress; it enters the counting-house and the workshop; it confronts the lawyer and his client, the physician and his patient, the pastor and his people. It enters the social circle and hushes the voice of the slanderer. It stands like an incarnate conscience across the track of the vile wretch who would rob youth of purity and glory. It lifts a voice against the man who destroys his neighbour with strong drink. It thunders its condemnation in the ear of the gambler. It lifts before us the great white throne, and enables us to anticipate its final decisions. 2. This law of love also opposes all forms of bad example. The man who desecrates God's day, disbelieves God's book, and disobeys God's Son, is an enemy to his neighbour. No man has a right to set a bad example before men. The man who misleads the young may blight the lives of coming generations. 3. This law reaches those who are only negatively good. No man has a right to remain in that position. Your good name, while you remain in that attitude to God, makes your influence the greater and your condemnation the heavier. Have you accepted Christ as your personal Saviour? Then come to the Church. For the sake of your neighbour come into the ranks. Confess Christ; march in line with His people. Thus will you work no ill to your neighbour. II. But it is clearly implied that LOVE WORKS WELL TO ONE'S NEIGHBOUR. This is a step in advance. It cannot rest in the mere negative condition. Love does not simply do no ill; it does well. It understands that to withhold good when it might be done, is as truly sin as to devise evil. Paul (1 Cor. xiii.) shows that it is the principle without which all other gifts are worthless. The Corinthian chapter is the inspired commentary on the Roman text. What a world this would be if this love dominated all the actions of men! Social life would be regenerated; commercial life be consecrated; heaven would be begun on earth. (*R. S. Macarthur, D.D.*) **Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**—*Love the fulfilling of the law:*—*Love* is—I. THE BEST EXPOSITOR OF THE LAW. It teaches us to keep it—1. Conscientiously as in the sight of God. 2. Sincerely with the whole heart. 3. Fully in every point. 4. Perfectly, not merely negatively. II. THE BEST KEEPER OF THE LAW. It fulfils it with—1. Delight. 2. All its strength. 3. Constancy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Love*:—I. REACHES THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW. 1. It keeps the whole law; not only its prohibitions, but also its precepts. 2. Keeps it perfectly, not only with the hands, but with the heart. 3. Is never weary. II. MAKES ITS PERFORMANCE EASY. 1. It draws help from a Divine source. 2. Supplies Divine strength. 3. Guarantees the Divinest reward. (*Ibid.*) *Love is the fulfilling of the law* because it—I. TEACHES

EVERYTHING. 1. It unfolds the spirit of the law. 2. Strengthens the voice of conscience. 3. Resolves all difficult questions. II. DOES EVERYTHING. 1. Is not contented with the appearance. 2. Does not stop short half-way. 3. Seeks not for reward. III. REWARDS EVERYTHING. 1. The good intention. 2. The secret act. 3. The greatest sacrifice. (*Ibid.*) *Love* is *the fulfilling of the law* because the love of God and man is the *soul* of every outward duty, and a *cause* that will produce these as effects. (*R. Baxter.*) *Love fulfils law*:—A religion which can announce this as its distinctive principle needs bring no further credentials of its heavenly origin. Michael Angelo need not carve his name on his own statuary, nor Raphael write his on his pictures. The song tells you what is the bird which sings. And so our text is unlike the trees that spring out of merely human soil. Its fragrance and its fruit announce it to be a slip from the tree that grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. I. LOVE IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW; it is their very essence and quintessence. 1. A tree may have a thousand branches, and ten thousand leaves, all of them having a different direction and shape; but they all arise out of life. So all the commandments are but the outward forms of an inward spirit, and that spirit is love. 2. Law does not fall so pleasantly on the ear as love. It is like a spiked wall between us and tempting fruit; or like the warning guide-post, "No road this way," precisely at the spot where the path seems to lose itself in the most enchanting scenery. But this is a false view of law. Love could not be the fulfilling of it if it were of this nature, but the abolishing of it. For what is law? A wanton restraint, a needless burden, the arbitrary exaction of a superior authority, and thus superfluous circumscription of our liberty, and wilful limitation of our pleasures? No! It is but such a limitation and restraint as secures for each man the largest sweep of liberty. It is true that if there were no human laws, certain individuals would be able to indulge their wills and passions over a much wider field; but what of the people generally? The man who can go beyond his just bounds of right, can only do so by invading the bounds of another. This is the essence of tyranny. Liberty can only live where law is the supremest thing. No man resents a just law, but he who is at heart an enemy to the righteous claims of his fellow-men. Law is a hedge; but no hedge is thorny and repulsive to a man who does not wish to break through and trample upon the sacred privileges of his neighbour. 3. Can you find a law of God which is in itself, and on all sides of it, a dark and repulsive thing? I know of no law of His which has not in its very heart this command, "Be happy." This has ever been the view of good men. "Oh! how love I Thy law! it is daily my delight." "Great peace have they that love Thy law." "Of law," Hooker has said, "there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in differing sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy." II. OBEDIENCE IS TO ARISE FROM LOVE. 1. There may be what men esteem the fulfilling of a law for which they have no respect. There is the fulfilling—(1) Which arises from fear, and despots may feel flattered and feel safer as they see a population pale with terror at their power. But that power is always the safest which inspires love. The law of God can never be obeyed through terror. Only think of a man obeying God because he dreads Him. Think of him saying, "If God were not as powerful as He is, I would set my heel upon His laws; but I am no match for Him, and therefore I submit and obey." Nay, you neither submit nor obey. You might do this in the case of an earthly king, whose laws are satisfied if they receive an external obedience. But God is a King and a Father, who says, "Thou shalt love"; not, "Thou shalt dread the Lord thy God." He is a Monarch whose laws you cannot obey except by loving Him. He clearly discriminates between what seems obedience and what *is*. "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." You fathers know that it is not worth the name of obedience if your child serve you from dread of consequences. (2) Which is prompted by a mere sense of interest. This is little better than that we have just considered. Of course obedience brings sooner or later its own reward. But there is a great difference between pursuing a course which is profitable, and pursuing it because it is profitable. A faithful servant of a monarch may be paid for his service; but if he serves only for his pay, he is not a faithful servant. Will it be said that this seems to strike against the promises of the joys and glories of Heaven? No, they are far more gracious gifts

than wages. When Christ says, "I will make thee ruler over many things," it is not because we have deserved it. And hence the saints in heaven cast their crowns at the feet of Him that sits upon the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord," &c. And the crowns are not given to those who have served for gain; they are given to those who have served from love. The fulfilling of the law from love creates now its own heaven within the man. 2. The law of service is the law of love. This was so with Christ. "I delight to do Thy will, O God." And the service we render to Christ must be like that. "Lovest thou Me?" &c. And this truth applies equally to our relations to our fellow-men. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." There is far too much of the spirit, in these times, which regards men as so many competitors on the great arena of life, each one feeling that he loses what another gains, and that he must do the best for himself, leaving the weaker to go unpitied to the wall. But Christ came to teach us a holier and more blessed law, viz., that we are all brethren, brethren in nature, brethren in Him, because He partook our nature, and "is not ashamed to call us brethren." (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *Love the essence of obedience*:—I. THE NATURE OF TRUE LOVE. It is—1. Universal, extending to being in general, or to God and all His creatures. 2. Impartial. It regards every proper object of benevolence according to its apparent worth and importance in the scale of being. 3. Disinterested. Mercenary love can never form a virtuous character. II. TRUE LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW. 1. It conforms the heart to God. God is love. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." If the moral perfection of man consists in conformity to the moral perfection of God, and the moral perfection of God consists in love, then love must be the fulfilling of the law. 2. It answers the full demand of the law. When a certain man asked our Saviour, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" He replied, "Thou shalt love," &c. So Paul says, "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart." By this he declares that charity or true love fully answers the spirit and design of the law. 3. It makes us feel and act in every respect just as God requires. So far as we possess it, we shall both internally and externally obey every Divine command. 4. It restrains men from everything which God forbids. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*)

Vers. 11–14. **And, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.**—*A call*:—I. To AWAKE. Because—1. It is high time. 2. The night of unbelief is past. 3. The day of salvation is at hand. II. To DUTY. 1. To repentance—"Put off the works of darkness." 2. To faith—"Put on the armour of light." 3. To action—"Walk honestly," &c. 4. To holiness—"Put on Christ"—the Source of new life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Time closing in upon us*:—"The time is short," or, as we might perhaps render it so as to give the full force of the metaphor, the time is pressed together. It is being squeezed into narrower compass, like a sponge in a strong hand. There is an old story of a prisoner in a cell with contractile walls. Day by day his space lessens—he saw the whole of that window yesterday, he sees only half of it to-day. Nearer and nearer the walls are drawn together, till they meet and crush him between them. So the walls of our home (which we have made our prison) are closing in upon us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Knowledge of time*:—I. THAT KNOWLEDGE OF TIME WHICH WE SHOULD SECURE. We should know time in its—1. Nature. 2. Use. 3. Value. 4. Management. 5. Termination. II. THE EFFECTS WHICH IT IS CALCULATED TO PROMOTE. 1. Unfeigned gratitude to God. 2. Deep contrition of soul. 3. Fervent application to the throne of grace. 4. Sincere desires to live more fully unto the Lord. (*Biblical Museum.*) *Knowledge of time*:—We should know time in its—I. WORTH. Estimated at the value of—1. Life. Time the measure of life of a being capable of thought, endowed with conscience, gifted with immortality. 2. What able to be done during its progress. Speaking of W. Wilberforce, Sir Jas. Mackintosh said, "I am full of admiration that the short period of the life of one man, well and wisely directed, can do so much and exert such influence. How precious is time! How valuable and dignified human life, which in general appears so base and miserable!" Illustrate with Howard, Raikes, &c. II. RESPONSIBILITIES. Our relation to God. Knowledge of salvation. Duties in our sphere of life. Influence we exert. Ignatius when he heard the clock strike said, "Now I have one hour more to account for." III. UNCERTAINTY. Commercial institutions and projects abundantly prove this, but he who counts on time presumes on probability that has even more impressively proved its questionableness (James iv. 13, 14). IV. BREVITY. The years of Jacob were an hundred and thirty, yet he says, "Few and

evil," &c. Moses again, "Like the grass," &c. When we look over the first chapters of Chronicles, to read which is like entering a great world-cemetery, how we are struck with the shortness of life at the best! V. POWERLESSNESS. It cannot destroy sin, or take away its guilt. It cannot act for us. It cannot destroy the soul, though it ends the life. VI. IRREVOCABLENESS. The wave that washes at your feet may return. The waters of the river as they roll to the sea, caught up in mist, may again flow down the mountains into its channel, but an hour once gone in the roll of milleniums shall never return. We can recall a messenger, but not the last moment. One life here, only one, is given, how precious should it be! (*G. McMichael, B.A.*) *Time to awake*:—I. THE EXHORTATION. These words are appropriate to the first Sunday in the year. When the bells ring out the old year and ring in the new, they seem to chime, "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep." 1. St. Paul is speaking not to those who were asleep in sin, but to active Christians. And there are few things in Scripture more striking than the remonstrances addressed to such. Ordinarily little or no account seems taken of their progress, but they are dealt with as having yet much to do. The nominal Christian ought to be much struck with this. If he who has been long labouring is thus admonished, what must be the state of those who have not yet taken the first steps in Christianity? 2. But the real Christian may also find cause for alarm, notwithstanding the promises in his favour. And when we call to mind that in the parable all the virgins, the wise as well as the foolish, slumbered, we cannot but conclude that there is no privilege to godly men of dispensing with watchfulness. It is vigilance, not indolence, to which believers are elected. The best proof that a man is not elect, is his making election his pillow, and going to sleep upon his own predestination. 3. Our text, however, may be taken in a comparative sense. The righteous may "not sleep as do others." Yet you may find so vast a disproportion between the energy exerted and the energy demanded, that the actual wakefulness is practical listlessness. Spiritual slumber is not necessarily the folding up of every power and faculty, but the not developing them in the necessary degree. Some energy is still torpid, some affection is still spellbound, and thus the whole man is not spiritually roused. And over and above the slumber of certain faculties, those which are awake are but half awake. Where is that struggling which would result from the combination of an eye all faith and a heart all love? II. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH ST. PAUL STRIVES TO STIR CHRISTIANS FROM COMPARATIVE INDOLENCE—"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." 1. This argument which is drawn from the greater nearness of death is not of equal urgency when applied to believer and unbeliever. In applying it to the latter, I just tell him that he has less time in which to escape, and therefore less likelihood of obtaining deliverance. He must do it before daybreak, and "the night is far spent." But when I turn to the believer, there is by no means the same appearance of force in the motive. If a man be secure of salvation, to tell him that the end is at hand does not look like urging him to exertion. But here comes in that balancing of statements which is discernible through the whole of the Bible. The only Scriptural certainty that a man will be saved is the certainty that he will struggle. Struggling is incipient salvation. It is an intenser struggle which marks a fuller possession. If, then, a man would show that his salvation is nearer, he must also show that he is more wakeful, more in earnest. 2. There are two reasons why the consciousness of having less time to live should urge Christians to be increasingly earnest. (1) There is much to strive for even if a man be secure of salvation. The degree of our happiness in the next life will be mainly determined by our attainments in holiness in this. We are here on a stage of probation, so that, having been once recovered from apostasy, we are candidates for a prize and wrestlers for a crown. Christianity does not allow the believer to imagine that everything is done when a title to the kingdom is obtained. And if one man become a ruler over ten cities, and another over five, and another over two, each receiving in exact proportion to his improvement of talents, then it is clear that our strivings will have a vast influence on our recompense. To tell the Christian, therefore, that his salvation is nearer than when he believed, is telling the wrestler that his glass is running out, and there is the garland not won; it is telling the warrior that the shadows are thickening and the victory is not complete. Is it a time to sleep when each moment's slumber may take a pearl from the crown, a city from the sceptre? (2) There remains less time in which to glorify God. If there were no connection between what we do in this life, and what we shall receive in the next, it would still be impossible for true Christians to be indolent. Forasmuch as

faith makes us one with Christ, there must be community of interest. And it is a spectacle which should stir all the anxieties and sympathies of the believer—that the world which has been ransomed by Christ's blood is nevertheless overspread with impiety. And over and above this dishonour to his Lord, there is the wretchedness which an ungodly race is weaving for its portion; and he cannot fail to long and to strive that he may be, in some degree, instrumental in the salvation of his fellow-men. Where, then, can you find a stronger motive to energy than is furnished by the shortness of the period during which we may resist the progress of iniquity and win souls for Christ? And what, then, is the text but an admonition that nerve and sinew, time and talent—all must be centred more fixedly than ever in the service of Christ, lest we are summoned to depart ere we have done the little which with all our strenuousness we might possibly effect for the Lord and His kingdom? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Time to awake*:—I. THE CONDITION SUPPOSED. One of—1. Insensibility. 2. Inactivity. 3. Peril. II. THE ADMONITION GIVEN. Awake to—1. Consideration. 2. Action. 3. Diligent effort. III. THE MOTIVES SUGGESTED. 1. It is high time. 2. The crisis draws on. 3. You know it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *High time to awake out of sleep*:—I. THE STATE FROM WHICH A CHANGE IS DESIRED. Sleep describes—1. The state of unconverted men (1 Thess. v. 4–8; 1 Cor. xv. 34). Sleep is a season of—(1) Forgetfulness, and men by nature are forgetful of the ends of their being, of their true character—of the awful attributes of eternity, &c. (2) Ignorance, and the unconverted man has no discernment as to spiritual things. (3) Insensibility, and the natural man is unalarmed and secure amidst all the danger by which he is surrounded. A man may be awake as to all the things of time, and asleep as to all the concerns of eternity. 2. Of many who have made a profession of the gospel and felt its power. Once they were roused from the slumbers of spiritual death, but they are gone back. Their strong impressions have subsided, their souls have left their first love; they did run well, but they have been hindered. In the world there is a constant influence to produce this stupor. Worldly business, pleasure, honour and applause, become the means of bringing us into a state of declension. How dreadful when the child of the day thus goes back into darkness, and stretches out his form, asking for a little more sleep and a little more slumber! II. THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE BY WHICH THIS STATE IS TO BE REVERSED. 1. It is a change which produces a complete reverse. It is awaking out of sleep. This change is called a being turned from darkness to light—a being quickened—becoming children of the light and of the day, &c. The expression signifies that the understanding receives a full impression of the reality of the world to come. The man acts as though he believed that the true end of life is to glorify God; and hence he seeks to obtain a change of heart and life—cultivates holy principles, practises holy actions, and has respect in all things to the recompense of the reward. 2. The only way by which this change can be effected is by the powerful operation of the Spirit on the mind. The slumber is so potent that none but He can awake from it. The anodyne is so powerful that none but the great Physician can apply a suitable remedy. Where He is not, there is dark midnight, or the light only of a phantom, or the pale beams of the moon shining upon snow, displaying the very dreariness and barrenness of nature! 3. Yet human instruments are employed. Those who are awakened to the sense of the danger of their fellow-men are sent out by God to awaken others. III. THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD INDUCE YOU TO AWAKE. 1. Enough of your time has passed in an unaroused, unawakened state already. 2. The difficulty of awakening grows with the progress of delay. The sleep of the body, indeed, becomes lighter as we approach the morning season. But this slumber becomes deeper and heavier, till the individual sleeps the sleep of death. Every time you hear in vain, you grow more sleepy, and the preacher's voice becomes only as so much music to lull you. You have so long listened to the rolling of the thunder that your ears are now deaf to its sound. The Cross has so frequently been presented to you that its brightness has no longer any attraction. 3. The uncertainty and speedy termination of life. Who is there that knows how long he has to live? Can any of you say, "Go thy way for this time; when it is more convenient, I will attend to these things"? You know not that you will live till to-morrow. (*J. Parsons.*) *High time to awake*:—I. THERE IS SOMETIMES A TENDENCY IN CHRISTIANS TO SLEEP. How many settle down into dreamy stationariness. This state—1. Follows upon the religious life losing its first freshness and novelty. 2. Is induced by a false conception of the atonement and the nature of salvation. Men have been taught to consider salvation bestowed in its completeness

upon believing that Christ is the sacrifice for the world's sin, and all that thereafter remains is heaven; whereas salvation simply begins then—nothing more. 3. Is encouraged by the worldly maxims and excitements, the spirit of mammonism, amidst which so many live. God and duty, and all spiritual realities seem often to fade away into mere phantoms in the clash and hurry of commerce. That only seems real which is visible and present. And the result is that the soul passes by almost imperceptible degrees into a state of moral slumber. 4. Comes through the growth of some moral weakness or sinful habit—covetousness, love of pleasure, passionateness—that has not been controlled or weeded out of the character at the beginning of the new life; or through the influence of companions of a worldly type; or from the mind becoming unsettled on some of the questions of theology and Biblical criticism. Many a man, tossed on a sea of doubt and uncertainty concerning creeds and theological systems, gradually loses his former spiritual intensity, and languidly suffers the work of salvation to remain stationary. II. As A CORRECTIVE OF INACTION AND TORPOR, AND TO INSPIRE ONCE MORE WITH HOLY ENTERPRISE ANY WHO SLEEP, THERE IS A TWOFOLD INCENTIVE. 1. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." This points to—(1) The fact of the Christian life having been begun. It is a great point gained to have made a definite beginning in a good work. After the first few stages there begins to be accumulated a fund of experience; the sense of strangeness goes, and the faculties begin to adapt themselves to the new mode of life, and the man soon begins to have a foretaste of some of the fruits of his labour. Past conquests lend a power for future triumphs. Attainment facilitates yet further attainment. (2) The grand revelations of the other life, which are fast approaching. But the measure of every one's heaven hereafter depends upon the spiritual meetness which has been developed in him here. And the time that remains to any of us for casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light is ceaselessly gliding away, whether we use it or no. The opportunities with which each year comes laden go into the grave of the past with it. The portals of the future are coming fast into sight, and soon they will open for you to pass through. There is no time to waste in dreamy indolence. 2. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The present life is a time of shadow and obscurity. Purposes, duties, attainments, are often misinterpreted, and mis-valued. Now, in passing into the future we pass into the day. That is a world of light in which we shall both know ourselves and be known as we really are. Therefore, be ready for the time of revelation. Awake! put off the works of darkness; put on the armour of light. Each fresh day should see us awake and diligent. For the most Christ-like is never enough like Christ. (*T. Hammond.*) *Wake up! Wake up!*—I. SOME PROFESSING CHRISTIANS SEEM TO BE ASLEEP WITH REGARD TO OTHERS. Paul has been bidding us to pay attention to relative duties, and exhorting us to keep the law of love, which is the essence of law; and now he interjects this sentence. So he means that many Christians are in a sleepy state with reference to their obligations to others. True godliness makes a man look to himself, and feel his personal obligations and responsibilities. But there is a danger lest a man should say, "Other people must see to themselves, and I must see to myself." The principle of individuality might be thus pushed to an unwarrantable extreme. No man can compass the ends of life by drawing a little line around himself upon the ground. There are outgoing lines of life that bind us not only with some men, but, in fact, with all humanity. We are placed, therefore, in a most solemn position; and it is with regard to this that it is high time that we should awake out of sleep. 1. Into what a deep slumber some professing Christians have fallen! How utterly insensible they are to the sins and sorrows of those around them. They say, "What is to be will be, and the Lord's purpose will be fulfilled; there will be some saved and others lost," as coolly as if they were talking of a wasp's nest. As for those that are lost! They dare not injure their logic by indulging a little mournful emotion. 2. Others are prone to be overtaken with an oft-recurring sleep. I know a brother who often takes forty winks in the day-time: you may nudge him, and he will wake and listen to you, but he goes to sleep again in a few minutes if you let him alone. Who can blame the sleeper when it is a question of infirmity or sheer exhaustion? Well, without blaming any for the weakness of the flesh, I take this sleepy habit to be a fit illustration of the state of some Christians. They have fits and starts of wakefulness, and then off to sleep again. At that missionary meeting you woke up when you heard the cry of the perishing heathen; but have you cared much about China or India since then? You do at times get on fire with love for souls, but then after

the sermon, or the week of special services has ended, you go to sleep again. Many Sunday-school teachers there are of that kind. 3. Others fall into a kind of somnambulistic state. If we judged them by their outward actions we should think they were wide awake, and they do what they do very well. Persons walk along giddy heights safely enough when fast asleep, where they would not venture when wide awake. And we have known professors going on very carefully, exactly where others have fallen, and have attributed it to the grace of God, whereas in part it has been attributable to the fact that they were spiritually asleep. It is possible to appear very devout, to sing hymns, to hear sermons, to teach in the Sunday School, to pay your religious contributions punctually, maintain the habit of prayer, and yet you may be a somnambulist. 4. A very large number of us are half asleep. II. IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THEY SHOULD AWAKE. And why? Because —1. What right have believers to be asleep at all? The Lord has saved us from the sleep which is the first cousin to death—from indifference, unbelief, hard-heartedness. 2. A great many opportunities have already slipped away. You who have been converted, say these ten years, what have you done for Christ? You have been eating the fat and drinking the sweet, but have you fed the hungry? If you have been saved a week, and you have done nothing for Christ during that week, you have already wasted more than enough. 3. There were so many people that had a claim upon us, who are beyond our power now, even if we do wake! Have you ever felt the sadness of neglecting to visit a person who was ill until you heard that he was dead? Many are passing away from us and from the sphere of our influence. Your children, for instance. Parents, avail yourselves of your opportunities. 4. We have plenty of enemies that are awake if we are not. Protestantism may slumber, but Jesuitism never does. The prince of the power of the air keeps his servants well up to their work. 5. It is daylight. The sun has risen. We are getting far into the gospel dispensation. Can you sleep still? 6. Our Lord was awake. How did His eyes stream with tears over perishing Jerusalem! The zeal of God's house consumed Him. Ought it not to consume us? 7. Our own day may be over within an hour or two. The preacher may be delivering his last sermon. You may go home to-night to offer the last prayer at the family altar which you will ever utter on earth. You may open shop to-morrow morning for the last time. III. THERE IS SOMETHING WORTH WAKING FOR. Paul does not say, "If you do not wake you will be lost." He speaks in a gospel tone, "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed." 1. It is nearer in order of time. How long is it since you believed? Ten years? You are ten years nearer heaven, then. Ought we not to be more awake? The farther we are off from heaven, the less we may feel its influence. Some of you are sixty years nearer to heaven than you were. Would you like to live those sixty years over again? Would you like to go back and clamber again the Hill Difficulty, and slide down again into the Valley of Humiliation, &c.? Rejoice that you are so much nearer heaven. Therefore, keep wide awake, and looking out for it. 2. In point of preparation. If we are getting more ready for heaven, we ought to be more awake, for sleepiness is not the state of heavenly spirits. If thou art more fit for heaven thou hast more love, more pity; then reach out both hands to bring another poor soul to Christ. 3. In point of clearness of realisation. If I can realise that in so short a time my eternal salvation shall be consummated, I cannot any longer neglect a single opportunity of serving my Master. Conclusion: Oh, ye unconverted men, must I read the text as it would have to run if it were written to you? "It is high time that you should awake out of sleep, for now is your damnation nearer than when you first heard the gospel and rejected it." God grant you grace to take heed and to believe in Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The wakeful Christian*:—I. THE SLEEP. Sleep is a state which can only be declared of Christians. The unconverted are dead, and require not an awakening, but a resurrection. What does this injunction betoken? A state of—1. Spiritual apathy. Sleep implies unconsciousness. There may be sublimities around the sleeper, but he sees them not; harmonies, but he hears them not; dangers, but he feels them not. So when Christians are asleep they are reduced to a state in which the religious senses are untouched. 2. Religious inactivity. There is a spot in the Atlantic called the Saragossa Sea, which is subject to long calms, and is covered with a thick, entangling seaweed; and nothing of all he has to encounter on the wide ocean fills the experienced mariner with more genuine dread than to be caught in the meshes of this region of dead calm and entangling weeds. The religious life has its Saragossa Sea, in which individuals and Churches too often lie becalmed and entangled in the weeds of conventional habits and formalism.

3. Dalliance with sin. The context shows a sad state of things, the reason for which was the recent conversion of the Roman Christians from heathenism, or the prevalence of Antinomianism. And while there is not now "the same excess of riot," still there is considerable proneness to conform to the customs of irreligious people in pleasure. II. THE CALL TO AWAKE. This state of wakefulness is a condition the very opposite of the sleep referred to. It means, therefore—1. Deep, intense religious consciousness. 2. Active, self-denying labour. 3. The mortifying of the flesh, and a clear, unmistakable protest against the evil ways of the world. III. THE REASONS FOR WAKEFULNESS. 1. The nature of the Christian profession. "Let us put on the armour of light." Here the Christian is presented to us as a soldier. One of the duties of his life, therefore, is to fight. A work demanding real, earnest care and watchfulness, and calculated to draw forth our utmost energies. A drowsy soldier is a contradiction. It follows, then, from this symbol, that the Christian should not be asleep. We are now in the midst of the fray; let us, then, be awake, "putting on the armour of light," which alone will secure us the victory in the conflict with darkness. 2. The closeness of the end. "For now is our salvation nearer," &c. As the days slip from our grasp, each remaining moment should become more intensely precious to us. 3. The character of the times. "Knowing the time." Never did any age since the establishment of Christianity possess such claims upon the earnest, sober attention of the Church as the present. Our age is one eminent for—(1) Its secular activities in the direction of commerce, science, and education. Shall the Church alone remain quiescent in the midst of this torrent of activity? It is here, as it often is with travellers by train, which, by its very swiftness, lulls to sleep, but as it slackens speed the sleeper wakens up and looks around. So the rate at which the train of secular pursuits hurries Christians along and lulls them into a state of obliviousness of spiritual things. Let us be as intrepid in the things of God as we are in those of our own. (2) Its activity in the dissemination of error. The two grand errors of the age are priestism and scepticism—twin sisters, though not on very amicable terms with each other. (3) Its abounding wickedness. Here, then, is a powerful reason for wakefulness. A living Church is the grand antidote to all the evils incidental to our civilisation. It is its duty pre-eminently to seek to leaven this civilisation. (*A. J. Parry.*) *The sleeper aroused*:—I. THE SINNER'S SLEEP. A state of—1. Forgetfulness. 2. Misapprehension. 3. Fancied security. 4. Fleshly delight. II. THE EXHORTATION. It implies—1. An altered view of things. 2. Voluntary effort. 3. Energy. 4. Compliance with terms. III. THE REASON. 1. Life is fleeting. 2. Judgment is near. 3. God is calling. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *Sleep*:—And as it was with Jonah, so it is now with many a soul. In the midst of the waves and storms of life, with only a short step between them and the world to come, they are sleeping. They are wide awake as far as their temporal needs and pleasures are concerned, but they are asleep to all spiritual interests. When we are asleep we are—1. IN DARKNESS. The fairest sights may be around us, but, so long as we are asleep, for us they do not exist. And so it is, sometimes, in spiritual sleep. This world in which we live is instinct with the life of God. There is not a hill or valley, a wind or storm, a bird or beast, a leaf or flower, but has something to say to us of God. And yet there are some who say, "There is no God": they are sleeping the death of infidelity. Now, though it is not probable that any of you are sleeping this sleep of darkness, yet drowsiness generally comes before sleep. Take care, then, you do not give way to the drowsiness that precedes the slumber of infidelity. Do not encourage infidel thoughts. Beware of the beginnings of doubts. As often as doubt assails you, fly in prayer to God for the strengthening of your faith. II. DOING NOTHING. A sleeping man is no better than a dead man, so far as present action is concerned. And if the soul's activity is intercourse with God, and work for God, is not that soul asleep that does not care to speak to God, to work for God? Is it not wonderful that God bears with our indifference? He is not indifferent towards us. Shall we, then, dare any longer to sleep away our lives in inactivity? III. SOMETIMES DREAM, and then we live amidst fancy forms. And it is possible to sleep spiritually the sleep of delusion. 1. Formalism is the sleep of delusion. If we fancy that by the punctual performance of the outward duties of religion we can save our souls, one day we shall wake up to find ourselves the victims of a delusion. There is only One who can save us—Christ; and unless we take Him to be our Saviour, Church ordinances avail us nothing. 2. Self-righteousness is the sleep of delusion. How many fancy that it must be well with them, because once they were "converted." To rely on anything short of present

perseverance along the road which God has pointed out to us, is to trust to a delusion. IV. SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE PUT TO SLEEP, by means of some drug. This sleep, however, has not the restfulness of natural sleep. And it is possible to drug the soul to seeming sleep by deliberate perseverance in any known sin. The conscience becomes hardened, and all for a time seems peace. But it is not true peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (*J. Beeby.*) *The peril of sleep*:—A short time ago a locomotive engine was speeding along the North-West line, whilst the two men who were in it lay fast asleep. A sharp-eyed signalman, from his look-out, was alert enough to see how matters stood, and without a moment's delay telegraphed in advance to lay a fog-signal on the line, that the detonation might rouse the sleepers. Happily, it was done in time; and startled from what might have been a fatal slumber, the men shut off steam, reversed the engine, and averted a terrible calamity. It is no breach of charity to suspect that some of you are hasting on to destruction, but know it not, for your conscience is asleep; and I would lay a fog-signal on the line that, ere you pass another mile, the crashing sound may rouse you to your danger, as you hear the voice of eternal truth declaring, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die!" (*T. Davidson.*) *Beware of sleeping*:—John Bunyan tells us "that when Hopeful came to a certain country, he began to be very dull and heavy of sleep. Wherefore he said, 'Let us lie down here and take one nap.' 'By no means,' said the other, 'lest sleeping, we wake no more.' 'Why, my brother? Sleep is sweet to the labouring man; we may be refreshed if we take a nap.' 'Do you not remember,' said the other, 'that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping.'" "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." Slumbering and backsliding are closely allied. *The breaking day* admonishes us—1. To awake from sleep. 2. To contemplate the Sun of salvation. 3. To cleanse ourselves from the works of darkness. 4. To put on the clothing of light. 5. To betake ourselves to diligence and duty. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The dawn of the great day*:—St. Paul is here the watchman of the Church. Standing between night and day, he proclaims "the time," and announces the end of darkness and the approach of light. His appeal regards the Church as being in a midway state between perfect night and perfect day. The words "pilgrims" of "the dawn" borrowed from St. Peter help us to understand Paul. Let us trace the effect of this keynote in the interpretation of the passage. The dawn proclaims the end of night; it is only the mingling of darkness and light; but it is the sure promise of a day that must reach its perfection, and upon which the shadows of evening shall never fall. I. KNOWING THE TIME. 1. The word carries us back to our Lord's proclamation of the hour when the night of death that had rested on mankind had ended, and the light of eternal life began (John v. 25). Doubtless the darkness that preceded Christ's advent was not perfect night. In the deepest midnight of heathenism some rays of truth and virtue struggled with the darkness, and over one favoured land the moon and the stars shone brightly. The earlier revelation was "a light shining in a dark place until the day should dawn." But Christ was Himself the dawn and the morning star of His own coming day. And this day—the new era—is the time Christians know. 2. Knowing the time means experimental acquaintance with its privileges and responsibilities. This knowledge is attained (Eph. v. 14) when the Great Awakener pours the light of conviction into the chambers where sinners sleep the sleep of death, and gives them the light of life. (1) They sleep no more. They have been plunged into the waters of a spiritual baptism which has awakened and invigorated them to the utmost, and there is an expectation in the morning air that keeps every thought alert, and inspires activity—viz., of Him who shall come in the broadening day. (2) The guilty wakefulness of the night is also past. The morning reveals the hidden things of night and makes them hateful. They have "cast off the works of darkness," detesting the habiliments of night in which they slept and sinned. 3. So far we have caught the appeal as expressing complete severance between night and day. The light is divided from the darkness absolutely. In the New Testament two states, and only two, are distinguished: there are "children of night" and "children of the day." But the peculiarity of this passage is that it gives prominence to a certain interval of transition, which reality requires and the Scripture never denies. The Christian state is at the best, in many respects, no better than the dawn. II. THE NIGHT IS ONLY "FAR SPENT" AND THE DAY ONLY "AT HAND." 1. It might be supposed from the watchman's cry that the whole band were slumbering, or at least only half awake. But the language is only general to find

out the individual. There is from age to age a faithful succession of watchers and holy ones, and when the Bridegroom shall approach all will be wakeful enough; but till then the pilgrim company shall never lack those who move "like men that dream." And it is the duty of all who know the time to echo the apostle's cry. And here is the everlasting argument, "It is high time . . . walk honestly as in the day." 2. There is danger inseparable from the dawn. And when the apostle says, "Put on the armour of light," he suggests the whole mystery of evil that wars against the pilgrims of the dawn. The powers of darkness are awakened into more malignant activity by the morning light. Never did they so furiously rage as they did around Him who ended their reign. But He did not banish them, and so they haunt the travellers. They cannot retard the day, but they make its progress a perpetual contest, so unlike the progress of the natural day in which dawn glows into morning, and morning melts into midday, &c. Here the victory is the result of a desperate and unremitting warfare. That victory will be the perfect light of holiness; the "armour" that insures the victory is "light." 3. It is characteristic of this midway state that the salvation of the Christian company is regarded as incomplete. The perfect day will bring a full salvation, but that is only "nearer than when we believed." The Church is only in the dawn of the day of redemption. That day will be perfect when Christ shall come "without sin unto salvation." III. THE DAWN IS THE PROMISE OF THE COMING DAY. 1. Knowing the time. The Church is appealed to as exercising a firm faith in the gradual consummation of the dawn into day. The words remind these early travellers of the great secret that the Lord is at hand, bringing with Him all that their hope can conceive. But His coming will be to His Church the regular and peaceful consummation of a day already begun. To the ungodly a catastrophe, to slumbering Christians a sore amazement, it will be to those who "wait for His appearing" what day is to the traveller who waits for the morning. 2. But knowing the time does not signify any precise knowledge of its future limits. We are shut up to faith, which must in all things rule until the vision of Christ shall begin the reign of sight. "All things continue as they were" is the cry of unbelief. "Lo here is the promise of His coming, or lo there" is the cry of impatient credulity. But simple faith waits on in hope that makes no calculation. Our Lord may brighten any hour—from cock-crowing to the third hour and the sixth—into perfect day. 3. This being the common prospect it is not wonderful that the Christian state is that of joyful hope. Nothing is more beautiful and more symbolical of eager expectation than the dawn. True the individual Christian has cares, conflicts, fears to moderate his joy. But he is to look over all these lower glooms to the brighter horizon into which these things merge. He must lose his particular sorrow in the general joy. He is one of the company that shall receive the Lord. 4. But the apostle reserves for the last his solemn exhortation to prepare. "The day is at hand," and the pilgrims are bidden to anticipate it in the holy decorum of their lives, and to be clothed with the only garment worthy of the day, Christ Himself. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Desidia and Alacritas*:—It is a merciful arrangement that we live by days, and are able to begin afresh every twenty-four hours. The Christian life is an awaking—a dressing; and each morning's waking and dressing may recall to us its nature. Look at these verses carefully and you will see the writer's meaning, though, with a true delicacy, he only hints at it. When we rise from our beds we are dishevelled, unpresentable: we cannot get about the duties of the day until we have put off the dress of the night, until we have washed and combed ourselves, and put on a more suitable attire. Thus there is a surprising difference, in any nice and well-regulated person, between the night and the day appearance. The word "honestly" should rather be "decently," for it just expresses this difference. Here are certain specimen-words which describe that nocturnal condition of the soul. The question hits us hard when we attempt to interpret them fairly. First, revellings and drunkenness. This is not the boozing of the poor, who drink to forget their poverty and benumb their pain. It is the self-indulgence of the well-to-do, of good food, the hours spent over the pot or the decanter. It is the unhealthy occupation with gaieties which prevent us from putting on Christ Jesus. Then chamberings and wantonness. These are the thoughts of our chambers, the wanton imagination on our beds, the loose fancies, the rein flung on the neck of passion. They are more important to mention than the overt acts of vice, for they are the letting-out of waters. Given these, the rest will follow. These are "the provision of the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof"; they are the steps down to the gates of death. The last pair, strife and jealousy, are as fatal to the reclothing in the Divine garment, Christ

Jesus—as truly the unseemly dress of the night—as those more scandalous faults which are called vices. These are poisons at the springs of life. They prohibit the indwelling of the Spirit. These three couplets of evil are but specimen-words—evil is manifold, ubiquitous—but they help us to answer the question, Have we put off this "garment spotted by the flesh"? It was this searching passage that proved the turning-point in the life of Augustine. By the grace of God it may fetch any of us off our unhallowed couch and clothe us in the raiment of the day. It was at Milan where the troubled spirit had come to seek help of the saintly Ambrose. He was with the brother Alypius in the garden. They had been reading the Epistles of Paul. Augustine rose in agitation and paced up and down, when he heard a clear child's voice singing from a house in the vicinity, "Take and read, take and read." As if commanded from heaven he hastened back to the seat, and took up the book which they had been reading together. There was this verse staring him in the face. The Latin is "Not in feasts and tipplings, not in chambers and immodesties, not in contention and emulation; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not make provision for the flesh in concupiscence." The entrance of the Word gave light. Presently, Alypius brought Augustine to Monica to tell her that the mother's prayer was answered. But assuming that we are in the great cardinal sense awakened and reclothed, still there remains the daily renewal of it, the parable of our diurnal round. Christ is a perfect garment, but it is necessary to put Him on afresh, readjust, and with loving care fit Him on, as the mornings come round. But I can tell you better about this if I draw the portraits of two friends of mine. Their names are Desidia and Alacritas. The one dreams she is awake; the other is awake. Desidia is not at all uncomely, but for a certain lethargic look in her eye and a drag in her gait. She begins the day with a very ample attention to her person. The time she spends on her hair-dressing and her toilet would make three of her devotions, Sundays included. And her heart is in it, which I can hardly say about her devotions. Desidia has nothing particular to do, which is fortunate, for she never has time to do anything. I asked her once to undertake some work for her Saviour, which she refused so flatly that I ventured to inquire if He were her Saviour. Alacritas, on the other hand, always fills me with admiration; and I would gladly change my sex to be like her. She is never in a hurry, and yet is always moving. She has so much merriment and gaiety of heart, that grave, religious folk at first take exception to her, and question whether a true Christian could ever have so exchanged the spirit of heaviness for the garment of praise. But I chance to know that this sunshine comes from prayer, and it is like a good medicine in the house. I should have thought it would take twice as long to get oneself up so charmingly as Alacritas does, I mean as compared with the artificial fripperies of Desidia. Yet Alacritas gets a good hour for prayer before breakfast; she does a great deal of household work, she visits the poor, and her needle is busy for them; she never seems to miss a service at the church. And yet she reads more good literature in a month than Desidia does in a year. Desidia and others of her family pity Alacritas because she has little or nothing to do with plays and dances. How dull it must be for her, they say! (*R. F. Horton, D.D.*) *Dressing in the morning*:—It is a great mistake for a man not to know the times in which he lives, and how to act in them; and when he does not know the time as to the day of his own life, so as to apply his heart unto wisdom. What is the time of day with the Christian? It is no longer the dead of the night, "the day is at hand." A little while ago the dense darkness of ignorance was about us; but the gospel has made us light in the Lord. The day-star is shining upon us, and we look for a perfect day. It is not as yet full day with us. The sun has risen, but it is not yet noon. Note—I. THE MORNING CALL. 1. Awake—"It is high time to awake out of sleep." (1) Arise from the sleep of inaction. Do not let your religion consist in receiving all and doing nothing. (2) Leave also all lethargy behind you. At night a man may yawn and stretch himself; but when the morning comes he should be brisk, for the day will be none too long. (3) Have done with dreaming. You who are not of the night must not dote on the world's shadows, but look for eternal realities. 2. Cast off your night clothes. "Cast off the works of darkness." The man who is just awakened shakes off his bed clothes and leaves them. The coverlet of night is not our covering by day. Sins and follies are to be cast off when we put on the garments of light. I have known a man profess to be converted, but he has merely put religion over his old character. This will never do: Christ has not come to save you *in* but *from* your sins. 3. Put on your morning dress. "Let us put on the armour of light." Does not this warn us that a day of battle is coming?

Be wise, then, and dress according to what you will meet with during the day. Young converts think that they have got to heaven, or very near it; but the time is not yet. You are in an enemy's country: put on the armour of light. Perhaps before you get down to breakfast an arrow will be shot at you by the great enemy. Your foes may be found in your own household, and they may wound you at your own table. The Greek word, however, may be understood to signify not only armour, but such garments as are fitted and suitable for the day's work. These should be put on at once, and our soul should be dressed for service. Some people are too fine to do real service for the Lord. When the Duke of Wellington asked one of our soldiers how he would like to be dressed if he had to fight the battle of Waterloo again, he answered that he should like to be in his shirt sleeves. 4. Walk forth and behave as in the light. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day," let our demeanour be such as becomes daylight. How should a child of light conduct himself? "Honestly" may mean decently, with decorum and dignity. In the middle of the night, if you have to go about the house, you are not particular as to how you are dressed; but you do not go out to your business slip-shod, but arrayed according to your station. Let it be so with you spiritually: holiness is the highest decency, the most becoming apparel. 5. Renounce the deeds of darkness. If we have put on the garments of light, it behoves us to have done with the things that belong to the night. (1) Sensuality, "rioting and drunkenness." If a drinking bout is held it is usually at night. (2) Impurity, "not in chambering and wantonness." It is an awful thing when a man calls himself by the name of Christian, and yet can be unchaste in conversation, lascivious in spirit, wicked in life. (3) Passion, "strife and envying." Brawls are for the night. II. THE MORNING GOSPEL. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." In Christ there is—1. Covering for nakedness. There is in Him a complete and suitable apparel for thy soul, by which every blemish and defilement shall be put out of sight. 2. A garment suitable for every-day work. All the power to be holy, forgiving, heroic, enthusiastic in the service of God, comes through Christ when we are in Him. 3. Apparel for dignity. God Himself asks no purer or more acceptable array. A seraph wears nothing but created brightness, but a child of God clothed in Christ wears uncreated splendour. 4. Armour for defence. The man that lives as Christ would live, is thereby made impervious to the shafts of the enemy. 5. Raiment for all emergencies. This garment will never wax old; it will last you all the desert through, and what is more, it is suitable for Canaan, and you shall keep it on for ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Present and future*:—I. PRESENT STATE. Let us think how matters stand, and mend our ways. 1. We have time, *i.e.*, season; a particular opportunity for preparation. Time is a wonderful idea. Compared with eternity it is but a speck in the heavens, a grain of sand on the shore, and yet it has given birth to creation, and its cycles have brought wondrous revelations. The battlefield of good and evil is here. Time reached its majority when the "fulness of time" came. "Millions of money for an inch of time," cried Queen Elizabeth on her death-bed. The bid was too low. Like Cassandra, there was a warning in the voice. The woman in despair of her soul said, "Call back time again, then there may be a hope for me: but time is gone for ever!" "Take time by the forelock." 2. We are too indifferent to the value of time. We turn the day into night by our inactivity, and we sleep when we ought to work. The night means our indifference to the illumination of the Word and Spirit. We see darkly through a glass. When the final day breaks, we shall wonder at the beauties we might have seen before. The boy who was born blind was cured. Some time after the operation he was led out of the dark room, and the shade lifted. He exclaimed, "Why didn't you tell me that the earth was so beautiful?" When we see Jesus as He is, we shall put some such question. Sleep indicates inactivity to make our election sure. We are like somnambulists, walking among great realities without knowing it. 3. Nevertheless there are hopeful signs. Two words are used in contrast to the above—believed and nearer. There is faith, we have believed in Jesus. By prayer we have advanced some steps. Columbus and his men smelled the breeze before they saw the land. We have a good hope through grace. II. FUTURE EXPECTATION. That is "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." 1. Freedom from sin. 2. Beyond care and anxiety. Providence to-day has its dark days, but there perpetual light. No tears shall be shed, for no sorrow shall be felt. 3. In possession of immortality. Away with carelessness, and let us be earnest—"Work, for the night is coming," &c. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *Preparation for Christ's coming*:—I. A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY. "Knowing the time." Ignorance is a cause of sin, and is sometimes a just excuse

for it. A blind man may fall into a pit; a sleeper cannot be blamed for his sleep. But it is different with these spiritual slumberers. The watchman's cry resounds (1 Thess. v. 1-6). Taught from earliest infancy, instructed in schools, with God's Word open and preached, what can we urge as an excuse for indifference? II. A CONDITION OF DANGER. "It is high time to awake out of sleep." This sleep—1. Is an infatuation of Satan. He lulls the soul into false security. 2. Comes from the weakness of our nature. Persons in bad health often sleep much. 3. Arises from our own sloth. Like a person sleeping in a house on fire, unless the deadly charm is broken, we must be consumed. III. AN URGENT DUTY. "To awake out of sleep." The cry of the gospel trumpet is "Awake!" As the captain said to Jonah, "What meanest thou, O sleeper?" so the Holy Spirit says to the sinner. We have here—1. Life depending on exertion. How many a man has saved his life, home, reputation, by energy! It is so with eternal life. 2. Exertion depending on self-determination. It is for us to wake, and to do so demands an effort. IV. A SOLEMN MOTIVE. "Now is our salvation nearer." This may mean—1. The advance toward final consummation. Every moment brings us closer to the approach of judgment—that day which to the believer is the day of salvation. Each throb of the heart and each beat of the pulse is the requiem of a departed moment. 2. The accumulation of privileges. When the apostle wrote, the good news had advanced. It was easier to awake and believe. And if religion had advanced in those early days, what is it now? Surely, salvation is nearer now; it is about us, in our midst. Will you not awake and enter into the glorious rest of the Son of God? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The earthly and the heavenly state of the good:*—I. THERE IS A VAST CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO. 1. Here salvation is in process, there in perfection. "Now is salvation nearer." 2. Here existence is night, there day. Life before death is night, suggestive of imperceptibility. The Christian sees "through a glass darkly" now. His life after death is "day." Death opens the eyes on a bright universe. II. THE EARTHLY STATE IS RAPIDLY EXPIRING, THE HEAVENLY IS ABOUT TO DAWN. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Whilst this is true, even of the youngest Christian, it is pre-eminently true of those who are far advanced in life. III. THE EXPIRING OF THE EARTHLY, AND THE APPROACH OF THE HEAVENLY, ARE A POWERFUL ARGUMENT FOR SPIRITUAL EARNESTNESS. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep." 1. The work we have to do is most urgent. (1) The renunciation of all evil. "Cast off the works of darkness." Ignorance, crime, &c. (2) The adoption of all good. "Put on the armour of light" (Eph. vi. 2-17). 2. The time for accomplishing it is rapidly contracting. Let us awake therefore. The lost years of your existence, the interests of truth, the value of souls calls on you to awake. Sleep not on the shore while the mighty billows of eternity are approaching. (*Ibid.*) *The need of special exertion:*—Consider—1. The time. 2. Its claims. 3. Its duties. 4. Its incitements. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Sleeping Christians:*—I have lately read in the newspaper—I am sure I do not know whether to believe that it is true—an account of a youth in France, twenty years of age, who has been lying sleeping for a fortnight, nourished only upon a little gruel given with a spoon, and that he was in the same state a year ago for nearly a month. Whether this has actually occurred to anybody or not, I have known many cases of Christians who have laid like that spiritually. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.**—*The nearness of salvation a motive to vigilance:*—It is a charge which has been sometimes brought against religion that it cherishes an indolent spirit, and that the assurance of salvation which it gives tends to make men careless about further attainments in excellence. Accusations of this nature are easily repelled by exhibiting the spirit of the gospel, which is a spirit of active goodness, by a reference to many of its precepts, and by detailing the strenuous efforts of its genuine disciples to go on to perfection. I. Let us attend to the view here given of THE PRIVILEGE OF GOOD MEN—"Now is their salvation nearer than when they believed." 1. This expression intimates that, in the day of believing, the soul's connection with salvation commences. It is at that happy season that a man is brought from a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance, and that a principle of holiness is implanted in the soul. Then the man begins that course which terminates in everlasting life. The distance between faith and complete salvation has been in some instances short. Quickly has the perfection of glory followed the formation of grace, but in other cases there are many years betwixt them. It belongs to Him to regulate this who is the Author and the Finisher of faith. 2. It is intimated that at death the believer's salvation is completed. 3. Chris-

tians advanced in life are warranted to conclude that their salvation is very near. How happily is this consideration adapted to lighten the infirmities of old age! "Lift up your heads with joy, for your redemption draweth nigh." II. Let us attend to the view which is here given of THE DUTY REQUIRED OF THEM. 1. It intimates that saints sometimes fall into a state of indolence and carelessness. How cold and stupid are the hearts of saints in such circumstances when they engage in prayer! 2. The text intimates that Christians ought to rouse themselves up to vigilance and activity. Meditation, casual and unsettled, must give place to eager and fixed contemplation; and with the feelings of a heart which regards Jesus Christ as all, we must follow hard after Him. 3. It intimates that the consideration of our present circumstances will show us the necessity of exciting ourselves to this vigilance and activity. It was peculiarly unsuitable in the Romans to slumber, since the gospel of salvation had so lately arisen on them with healing in its wings. Let it be considered, too, that the present is a time marked by the peculiar activity of some in the cause of Christ. Can you slumber while they thus hold forth the Word of life? III. Let us now consider how you should be excited to this vigilance and activity by THE NEARNESS OF YOUR SALVATION. 1. Here the appeal may be made to your gratitude. Think what God hath done and what He still intends to do for you. 2. Consider how unsuitable sloth is to the prospects before you. You are soon to associate with those who serve God day and night in His temple; and shall you now slumber? 3. Consider how injurious to others your carelessness and sloth may be. If you, whose age and attainments show that your salvation is so near, slumber, it must damp the ardour of the young disciple. 4. Consider how detrimental indolence will be to your own interest and happiness. If you slumber with salvation so near, you will provoke God to awaken you by a shock dreadful and trying. There is another view which may be taken of this argument which may add to its influence. As the ship which is within a few hours' sail of the haven has sometimes been driven out to sea to struggle for weeks with winds and waves, till the crew are exhausted with hunger, fear, and toil, so has the indolence of saints been punished by a prolonged stay in this scene of trouble, instead of having an entrance ministered to them abundantly into the kingdom of the Saviour. Conclusion: 1. How happy are they who have obtained precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ! 2. Let saints be exhorted to use every means of excitement to this holy activity. 3. Let the consideration of the nearness of salvation reconcile you to affliction and to death. 4. Let the young be exhorted to activity in goodness and piety. 5. Finally, how solemn are the lessons suggested by this subject to unconverted men! Salvation is far from the wicked; and what is most horrible, ye have put it from you, and judged everlasting life unworthy of your acceptance. (*H. Belfrage, D.D.*) *Approaching salvation:*—It is the characteristic and the privilege of man that he lives not only in the present, but is able to review the past, and anticipate the future. This faculty is connected with his moral responsibility, and is a sign of his immortal existence. That he very imperfectly employs it is a painful but unquestionable truth. Our contemplation is directed to—I. AN INTERESTING PERIOD IN THE PAST—"when we believed." There are few persons who must not cherish some interesting remembrances. Some, of course, derive more excitement from the past than others, but no remembrances can ever possess a charm to be named with this. He who can look back to when he believed, looks back upon a period of unparalleled moment and eternal influence. "When you believed." Think of that event. 1. In the agency by which it was accomplished. Faith did not arise from the spontaneous influence of your own mind, or from the influence of others. It was the work of God wrought upon you by the ministry of His gospel, the private admonition of a friend, the perusal of His Word, or by affliction. But, whatever the instrumentality, faith is the gift of God. 2. In the influences by which it was attended. Then began feelings to which you were before strangers: then arose penitence, impelling you to mourn over your vileness: love, binding you in firm attachment to Him who died for you: hope, irradiating the otherwise darkened future: holiness, beginning the grand process by which it would refine every faculty by assimilating them to the Divine likeness. "When you believed," old things passing away and all things becoming new. 3. In the privileges to which it introduced you—pardon and reconciliation with God; righteousness and full acceptance in the Beloved; liberty from the tyranny of sin and of Satan, adoption into the Divine family, &c. II. AN INFINITE BLESSING WHICH IS FUTURE. "Our salvation" of final reward and happiness. The apostle here —1. Assumes that faith has an established connection with salvation. Revelation

unites in one solemn and most conclusive pledge, that having through grace believed, and being by that grace in that faith preserved, we shall enjoy the delights which are treasured up in the everlasting kingdom. Faith is the first step in the pilgrimage which leads to the celestial rest; the first launch in the voyage which wafts to the celestial haven; the first stroke in the conflict which issues in celestial triumphs. 2. Summons Christians to meditate upon their salvation. As they have been directed to an exercise of memory, so they are directed to an exercise of anticipation. The more you commune with the time when you believed, the more also you will commune with the time when you shall be saved. Turn, then, as from the bud to the flower, from the root to the tree, from the babe to the man, from the faint outlines to the finished picture, from the first tremulous notes of the music to the sounding of the full harmony of the spheres, from the streaks of the early dawn to the splendour of the meridian day. Think of your coming victory over the last enemy, of the flight of your spirit to paradise, of the resurrection of the body, of your public recognition and welcome in your perfected nature by the Judge before the assembled universe, of your enjoyment in that perfected nature of heaven. This is your salvation, and will you not gladly retire from the vulgar objects of this perishing world, and ascending to the summit of the Delectable Mountains, look through the clear azure upon the fair and sublime inheritance which is reserved for you? 3. Urges Christians to recognise their own personal advance towards salvation. Some amongst you are very near to salvation indeed. Your conversion is far back in the distance. And as to those to whom the probabilities of prolonged life may seem strong, how can they tell but that at this very moment they may be on the verge? With every morning dawn, and evening shadow, there ought to be the renewed reflection, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." III. THE PRACTICAL RESULTS WHICH A CHRISTIAN REFERENCE TO THE PAST AND THE FUTURE MUST LEGITIMATELY SECURE. There ought to be—1. The cultivation of Christian holiness. To secure and to advance in holiness was the apostle's prominent object. "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness," &c. If there be any who imagine that the prospects indicated may lead to licentiousness, let them receive their final refutation. Those who are entitled to anticipate salvation must be holy. (1) To evince the genuineness and reality of their faith. If faith does not purify, it is a fiction. (2) That they may be morally fitted for the world they have finally to inherit. That world is consecrated to unsullied and universal holiness. Seeing ye look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? 2. The cultivation of Christian activity. "It is high time to awake out of sleep." The wakefulness and diligence here summoned has respect not only to our own salvation, but also to the salvation of others. This must be, that the whole of Christian character may be developed, and that the whole of Christian duty may be performed. Earnest activity in this high vocation is urged by the nearness of our own salvation; and because of the nearness of our own salvation therefore our opportunities for usefulness are rapidly contracting. For this reason "it is high time to awake out of sleep." 3. The cultivation of Christian gratitude. Gratitude does indeed become us when we consider the value of the blessings which are imparted, or the principle upon which those blessings are secured and bestowed. (*J. Parsons.*) *Timely reflections*:—1. We commonly speak of "salvation" as the state into which the believer in Jesus is introduced when he passes from death unto life; but here it means eternal glory. 2. Observe the date from which the apostle begins to reckon. He does not say our salvation is nearer than when we were christened or confirmed, but than when we believed. What could ever come of what is before believing? It is all death, and not worth reckoning. But then we started on our voyage to heaven. 3. Between these two points we are now sailing; and at the close of the year it seems meet just to note where we are, and to congratulate my fellow believers that we are nearer the eternal port than when we first slipped our cable. In going to Australia it is the custom to toast "Friends behind," till they get half way; and then it changes, "Friends ahead." Note—I. THE THINGS BEHIND. 1. Recollect when you believed. Of all days that on which you first left shore was the brightest of all; and you know that those who go to dwell on the other side of the world look back with satisfaction at the day when they left. 2. Since then you have had a good number of storms. You have seen one washed overboard that you thought very dear. You have yourselves suffered loss; happy were you if by that you found peace and safety in Christ. You remember, too, when you had to sail slowly in the thick fog, and keep the whistle sounding. You have been nearly but not quite wrecked. Above all the billows Jehovah's power

has kept you. 3. You have had a great deal of fair weather, too, since you left port. We have sailed along with a favouring breeze. Life is not the dreary thing that some men say it is. 4. Behind us, too, how many opportunities of service have we left? Many other ships sailed with us, and some of these, alas! have been wrecked before our eyes; but we had opportunities of bringing some of the shipwrecked ones to safety. Did we always do it? II. THINGS AHEAD. 1. More storms. It is not over yet; but they must be fewer than they were. 2. Fairer winds. Christ will be with us; our communion with Him shall be sweet. There are those Sabbaths ahead, the outpourings of the Spirit, covenant blessings, &c. Let us, then, be comforted, and pass on. 3. More opportunities—and you young people especially should be looking out. Do not let us waste any more. 4. But looking still further ahead, when we remember we are nearer our salvation think of what that salvation will be. First, we shall see Jesus. Oh, what a heaven to be with HIM! Then, next to Jesus, we shall be with all the bright spirits who have gone before us. I do not think Rowland Hill was at all foolish when he said to an old woman upon her dying bed, "As you are going first, take my love to the four great Johns—John who leaned on Jesus's bosom, and John Bunyan, and John Calvin, and John Knox, and tell them poor old Rowly will be coming by and by." I cannot doubt but that the message was delivered. Conclusion: There are some of you who are not nearer your salvation than when you believed; because, first, you never did believe; and, secondly, that which you are nearer to is not salvation. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Cause for spiritual rejoicing*:—The one reason here urged for spiritual activity and rejoicing is the near approach of the day of complete redemption to the believer. Under the image of "night," the apostle represents the state of partial enlightenment and sanctification, and consequent fear and conflict with evil. But "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." "Now," Paul exclaims, in a transport of joy, "is our salvation nearer than when we believed"—nearer as to time and space—nearer as it respects completion and reward. Both time and the Spirit's work have brought the great consummation nearer. And surely such a fact may well fill us with rejoicing, and spur us on to redoubled efforts to make our calling and election sure. I. SALVATION IS NIGH. 1. Actually nigh. "The night is far spent." Life here is short at best—death is nigh, heaven but a little way off. 2. Relatively nigh. (1) "Nearer than when we believed." (2) Nearer at the close of each year, each day. Every moment rolls on the gladsome time! 3. Nearer as to the preparation for it. "Salvation" is a life, a work, a growth, a consummation, a progress from first principles to complete and glorious development and crowning. The Christian is put to school at conversion, and year by year he grows in grace and love and holiness, till his graduation day. His path is as "the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." II. WHAT FOLLOWS? 1. "The night is far spent." (1) The night of spiritual conflict. (2) The night of mystery—seeing things as through a glass darkly—will soon see as we are seen, and know as we are known. (3) The night of sin and suffering. The day that is coming will bring absolute deliverance from evil in every form. 2. "The day is at hand." Not only will the darkness be gone for ever, but the day of perfect and eternal sunlight will have come. Not only will there be a deliverance, but a crowning. The salvation will be a salvation from death to life; from sin to holiness; from shame to glory, Divine and everlasting. 3. And this salvation is nearer the Christian's grasp to-day than when he first believed. Revolving suns bring it continually nearer. Great promises have already been realised; great victories won; many a rough place passed over and many a weary footstep measured off; many a Sabbath day's journey made: and already the "delectable hills" are in sight; angels are bending over the battlements of heaven to welcome the approaching pilgrim; and soon the conflict will cease, and glory immortal—so long contemplated by faith and longed for—will be a blessed realisation. So near to heaven! So soon to be done with earth and sin and evil and conflict! So soon to stand with the ransomed on the heights of glory and shout, "Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (*Homiletic Monthly.*)

Ver. 12. **The night is far spent, the day is at hand.**—*The night and the day*:—These words contain—I. A REPRESENTATION OF THIS LIFE AND OF THE LIFE TO COME. 1. This life is the night. Our condition in this state is one of—(1) Ignorance. What feeble conceptions have we of God! What mistakes do we make respecting the methods of Divine grace. He who knows most confesses "that we know in part, and prophesy in part." (2) Danger. In the night of this life "your adver-

sary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Nor is he a solitary agent. Besides, how many natural ills surround us! (3) Trouble. 2. The next life is day. Heaven will be a day of—(1) Knowledge. Good men will there see things as they are, God as He is, and know even as they are known. (2) Safety. (3) Happiness (Rev. vii. 15–17). II. AN ADMONITION OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE FORMER, AND OF THE APPROACH OF THE LATTER. We are informed of this fact by—1. Revolving periods of time. 2. The doctrines of the gospel. There is not one of them which does not terminate in heaven. Christians are justified and sanctified that they may be capacitated to enjoy heaven. 3. The ordinances of the gospel. Why do we unite in songs of praise, but in the hope of ere long uniting in the praises of heaven? 4. Surrounding objects, combined with our own bodily infirmities. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The night and the day*:—You have here a view of life opposite to the one taken by our Lord. Speaking of what is coming He says, "The night cometh," and speaking of what now is, "Work while it is called day." He looks upon us as labourers in the field, who, when the night comes, must leave their work done or undone, which must stand till the great light comes again to show exactly how it was left. Paul, however, regards us as soldiers in a campaign. The night is come, and we have encamped for the night; the uniform is laid off; some are sitting round the campfire, some are walking about, some are playing tricks, some are doing what they would not dare to do in the day. A voice is heard, "The night is far spent—put on your armour, be ready." I. THE PRESENT DARKNESS. 1. Suppose you are on a hill, say a mile from the Thames. It might be that you could neither see the river nor the objects on it, but that would not prove that they did not exist. The only fact is that they and you are in darkness. Light does not create things; it only makes them manifest. So we are dwelling in the midst of ten thousand grand and mysterious realities, but we do not see them because of the shadows that lie on our souls. 2. By misapprehension we are liable in the dark to take the distant for the near, the little for the great, the common for the valuable, and *vice versâ*. As the armour is scattered in the night the breastplate looks no brighter than the trunk of a tree, the helmet than a stone, &c. And the things which are symbolised by these pieces of armour do not always seem to us of their proper value. There is the girdle of truth—of unutterable price and value; but in this dim world men think that an ingenious deception is better. The breastplate of righteousness—why, many a man thinks more of a royal or municipal decoration. The helmet of salvation—many a woman prefers a new bonnet to that. 3. The dark brings us false anticipations. "When a man walketh in the darkness he knoweth not whither he goeth." A man looking into the dark forms an incorrect estimate of what is before him. He has no power to calculate where he will be after five steps or ten. This is pre-eminently the condition of the man who is going straight towards eternity. 4. Darkness is often the time of dreaming. The sleeping soldier dreams probably not of battlefields, but of sheepfolds, &c.; and in the midst of the dream bursts in the cry, "To arms!" So it may be that thy imagination is full of a life to be that never will be; with plans for this very year that will never be carried out. II. THE COMING DAY. "The night is far spent." I know not in your case how far. The reason why we are in the dark is that this part of the world is turned away from the sun, and we are sitting in the shadow of our own world. And so the reason why we do not see God and heaven is simply because we have turned away from that side of heaven. Absence from the Lord is night-time; the presence of the Lord is the break of day. All you know is by faith; but the time of sight is coming. The moment is fixed, but God will never tell it. But it is at hand! The Judge is at the door. III. THE DUTY TO WHICH WE ARE CALLED. 1. "Cast off the works of darkness"—everything that people will venture to do in the dark, but not in the light. Even here we have certain lamps—dim, it is true—but which cast light on our affairs. The lamp of—(1) Civil law. Is there anything in your action that if brought out to a court of justice would be stamped as guilty? (2) Commercial integrity. Many a thing that would escape the former lamp would, if brought to this, appear odious. Is there in your ways anything that, if subjected to the keen eye of half a dozen honourable men, would be pronounced mean and shabby? (3) Domestic honour. Many a thing that will escape the other two would look very vile under this. Is there aught in thee which would appear shameful in the eyes of those who love thee? (4) Church discipline. Is there anything that, if brought under the knowledge of your brethren, would compel them to say, "It is sin"? Cast them all off. 2. "Put on the armour of light." Look at the man

who has got the polished shield, breastplate, &c., &c. As long as it is night they look poor and common; but when the great sun begins to play, look at them, how they shine in the light! Everything beautiful welcomes the light; and righteousness, peace, truth, &c., are akin to the light. Don't say, "There they are, I can find them when I seek them"; or, "I shall have time enough when the alarm is sounded"; or, "I know some one who will get them for me." Put them on, so that when the day dawns you may be ready. "But the day has not broken yet." No; if it had you would have had no time to put the armour on. "But I have no armour, no girdle of righteousness," &c. Then "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—there is all the armour you need. (*W. Arthur, M.A.*)

The departing night and coming day:—I. THE FACT STATED. The apostle reverses the sense in which our Lord uses these words (John ix. 4). Jesus contrasts the present scene with the darkness of the grave, while the apostle contrasts it with the bright heaven that lies beyond it. 1. "The night" is a picture of the Christian's present state. In comparison with other men, and with his own former condition, he is in broad day. But the apostle is not thinking of these things. As he contemplates eternity, he feels that believers are all still in darkness. And the figure accords with our own experience and feelings. Night is a season of cheerlessness, incertitude, perplexity, inaction, and danger. Who is there that does not feel his spiritual condition here to be the same? But it is our ignorance that this figure most forcibly represents. Night throws a veil over the face of things. The traveller may be passing through the most beautiful scenes, but he might almost as well be going over a desert. So with us. What do we know of the things we most wish to know? Ours, however, is not a night of total darkness. The stars shine above us, and something like the mild, steady rays of an unclouded moon reach us; but it is night still, and we long for the shadows to flee away. 2. "The day" signifies heaven. "There shall be no night there." Nothing to endanger, impede, bewilder, or distress. Everything we wish done away with here shall be done away with there. And there shall all which we have so long wished to see come—sunshine, brightness, beauty, and happiness. Travel on a bright day through a beautiful country, with the glorious sun shining, and all nature exulting in his shining. Then transfer this scene to heaven. There shines in unclouded splendour the Sun of Righteousness. This glorious light is ever shining on the most glorious objects, and we shall behold these objects, and the same light on ourselves shall cause us to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father." Now this day is near. II. THE ADVICE GIVEN is grounded on the fact stated. "Let us cast off," &c. 1. Before, however, we can do this, there is something else to be done. Paul has in his mind a man asleep, who must in the first instance awake. Like a fellow-traveller or a fellow-soldier who has risen before us, Paul announces the approaching morning, and bids us rise. Now all this supposes that Christians may sink into a state of spiritual negligence, sloth, and torpor. And it shows us that out of such a state we must be roused before we can obey this exhortation. 2. We are to "cast off the works of darkness," so called, because they court secrecy, and because they are connected with the prince of darkness. It is impossible to fall into a state of spiritual indifference without getting some of these unclean things upon us. And they are to be got rid of in the first place. There is not a greater delusion than to think we can be clothed in the graces of Christ's Spirit while we are holding fast any beloved sin. As to our bodies, we may put a clean garment over an unclean one, but we can never get our minds imbued with any one Christian grace as long as we are harbouring any one unchristian lust. Hence we are to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," in order to "perfect holiness in the fear of God." 3. The roused-up man is addressed as a warrior, and told to put on the "armour of light." (1) The source of this is Divine. Like the light, holiness is heaven-born. As evil desires and works proceed from Satan in his dark world, so all "holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works," proceed from God in His bright world. This armour is a part of God's own nature. He is Light—"glorious in holiness"; His purity gives Him His splendour. So when He communicates His holiness to us, He communicates with it a portion of His own glory. We look for safety and victory only from the armour He gives us, but that armour dignifies us as we go forth to the fight in it. 2. This holiness accords well with the heaven to which we are going. It is light, something harmonising with the splendid day which is soon to break on us. The expression intimates "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Day at hand*:—I. THE NIGHT

—1. Of time and mystery. 2. Of sin and sorrow. 3. Of individual experience. II. THE DAY—1. Of eternity and revelation. 2. Of righteousness and salvation. 3. Of final decision. III. THE DEPARTURE OF ONE AND THE NEAR APPROACH OF THE OTHER—1. Evident. 2. A call to activity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Preparation for the day*:—I. WHAT WE ARE TO CAST OFF. 1. Works that consisted with a time of ignorance. 2. That will not bear the light. 3. That spring from darkness. II. WHAT ARE WE TO PUT ON? 1. Armour, offensive, defensive. 2. Of light. III. WHY? "Because the night," &c. (*Ibid.*) *Preparation for the day*:—I. THE FACT ASSERTED. 1. In reference to Rome and the heathen world at large, the night of Gentile ignorance and vice was far spent, and the day of gospel knowledge, grace, and blessing was at hand. 2. In reference to the Christian Church at Rome, the night of imperfect acquaintance with the gospel was far spent, and the clear day of spiritual light was at hand. 3. In reference to each individual Christian, whosoever and wheresoever he may be, the night of temptation, trial, and trouble is far spent, and the day of heavenly glory and bliss is at hand. II. THE EXHORTATION FOUNDED ON THIS FACT. 1. From the practice of all sin. The dress to be "cast off" is "the works of darkness," so called because—(1) Their source is darkness. (2) Their scene of action is darkness, as far as man can render it so. (3) Their end is the "blackness of darkness for ever"! Sin must return to the place from whence it came; and woe to him who shall be found in its company at the time! 2. To the pursuit of all holiness. "Let us put on the armour of light." In Eph. vi. 13–17 he enumerates the several particulars of the Christian armour. But it is more briefly described in ver. 14. 1. Make the example of Christ your pattern. 2. Seek for union with Christ as your strength. (*J. Jowett, M.A.*) *The dawn*:—The whole time between His first coming and His second may be looked at as the dawn, the daybreak; light still struggling with darkness, the darkness only slowly receding, but yet ever receding—retreating step by step, and pierced through and through as it retreats by the glittering shafts of the true king of day. (*Abp. Trench.*) **Put on the armour of light.**—*The armour of light* is—1. Divine in its origin. 5. Excellent in its nature. 3. Essential in its adoption. 4. Invincible in its use. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The armour of light*:—Religion is the best armour a man can have, but the worst cloak. (*Bunyan.*) *The armour of light*:—It is a habit of the Apostle Paul to present almost everything in its dual aspect—*e.g.*, the "flesh" fails and corrupts; the "spirit" quickens and nourishes; "sin" condemns and slays; "grace" justifies, purifies, saves; "death" is swallowed up of "life." Here is the same method in another of its applications. There is one who is told the night is almost gone; that the morning is coming, that it is time to put off all the works of darkness, and to stand waiting for the glow of the sunrise. And he wishes to do it. But how hard the work is! How difficult to distinguish! These "works of darkness" are not all wicked and horrible. They are things that may be helpful or inimical, according to circumstances. "And here I stand," one has to think, "in the dark, to watch against evil, to put it away, to keep it away. No! you would have little chance of coming out of it into morning in that way—in the way simply of resistance to evil by inward strength and wisdom. Our apostle never proposes action in that way. He had tried it, and knew what it ended in. "Try it," saith he, "in this way." "Put off"; and in the same act, "put on." Put on what? Not "the works of light," although he might have said that with propriety; but "the armour of light"—thus conveying to us the sentiment that Christian faith, in proportion as we live in it, and Christian virtues, in proportion as we put them on, become a soldier's armour. Live the Christian life fully, and you will become like an armed man. Put on this armour, then. It can be done easily, quietly. Many a gentle soul is clad in it. Many a battle is fought and won without dust, or noise, or blood—by soul-confidence; by heart faith; by patient waiting; by looking to Christ; by longings for heaven. Courage! you who are striving, and you who are weary, and you who are longing for more than you can express. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The armour of light*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. The military girdle, that which was intended to give support and firmness to the body: "Having your loins girt about with truth"—*i.e.*, absolute sincerity in the consecration of ourselves to the service of Christ, our great Head. 2. "The breastplate of righteousness": all holiness, inward and outward. And as the breastplate defended the vital parts, so whatever injuries we may sustain, they cannot reach the conscience while this breastplate is there. And when the conscience is kept pure, all is safe. 3. "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." This refers to the greaves and shoes,

which were designed to give a firm footing and to guard against hidden traps. No man is in a state of preparation for the Christian conflict but he who is at peace with God. But pardoning love and regenerating grace, having set the man free from sin, give him firm ground, and enable him, standing fast in the Lord and the power of His might, to beat down every enemy that assails him. 4. "The shield of faith," the use of which is "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one": in allusion to those firebrands which were sometimes shot along with the arrows, or to the arrows themselves, the iron heads of which had been previously heated, in order to inflict more intolerable pain. This shield quenches the fiery darts—(1) Of persecution. (2) Of temptation and affliction. 5. "An helmet the hope of salvation." It defends the head, the very vital part. Despair chills exertion. 6. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." (1) Our Lord Himself has given us an instance of its defensive power in His own temptation. (2) But the Christian is to carry on an offensive warfare by zealously and consistently, on all proper occasions, proclaiming the truth of God. II. WHY IT IS CALLED "THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT." 1. With reference to its origin, which is heavenly. It is therefore well called the whole armour of God. Though it is true that sincerity, righteousness, faith, suppose acts of the will, and a certain state of the affections, yet, nevertheless, they are wrought in man by God, and are found only in the regenerate. 2. Because it is only found where Christianity exists and exerts its proper influence. No man is seen in the armour of light but a true Christian. We find no instance in which the philosophy of ancient times made a warrior such as the apostle describes, armed him with armour like this, and led him on to victory. St. Paul tried whether Pharisaism would do; so that, "touching the righteousness of the law," he was "blameless." Yet he was held in the bondage of pride, and prejudice, and anger. Take our modern infidel philosopher, with reason and virtue on his lips, and with pride, selfishness, and passion in his heart. 3. Because it corresponds with the character of our dispensation, which is a dispensation of light. III. THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD INDUCE US TO ARRAY OURSELVES IN THIS ARMOUR. Consider—1. The degraded state of the man who is not invested with it. 2. The moral elevation which it gives to every one who is invested with it. 3. That you must either conquer or be conquered. (*R. Watson.*) *A luminous character*:—Humboldt tells us that, after bathing among the *noctilucæ* in the phosphorescent water of the Pacific, his skin was luminous for hours after. In a spiritual sense, is it not true that when we bathe, so to speak, mind and heart in the truths and influences of Christianity, allowing, seeking their appropriate effect upon us, the whole character shines with a heaven-given light and beauty, that we can bear about with us into the common scenes and daily duties of life?

Vers. 13, 14. **Let us walk honestly, as in the day.**—*Rules for walking in the day*:—I. IN GENERAL. Walk honestly (Tit. ii. 12). 1. Soberly. 2. Righteously. 3. Godly. II. IN PARTICULAR. 1. Not in rioting and drunkenness (Isa. v. 13). (1) This deprives us of the use of reason. (2) And so, for the present, blots out the image of God. (3) Makes men unfit for duty (Luke xxi. 34; Hos. iv. 11). (4) Exposeth a man to all other sin. (5) Hath a particular curse entailed upon it (Isa. v. 11; Prov. xxiii. 29, 30, &c.). 2. Not in chambering and wantonness (Heb. xiii. 4). To avoid this—(1) Be careful to keep a good conscience (Gen. xxxix. 9). (2) Watch over your spirits (Mal. ii. 16). (3) Pray against it (Psa. cxix. 37). 3. Strife and envying. (1) They are signs of a carnal mind (1 Cor. iii. 3; Gal. v. 19, 20; James iii. 14, 15). (2) Proceed only from pride and ignorance (1 Tim. vi. 4). (3) Produce confusion and evil works (James iii. 16, 17). 4. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. (1) By baptism (Gal. iii. 27). (2) By faith, we put on—(*a*) His righteousness. (i) Christ took our nature upon Him (John i. 14). (ii) Suffered for our sins (Isa. liii. 5. 6). (iii) By this He expiated our sins, and purchased righteousness for us (1 John ii. 2). (iv) All believers are interested in all His sufferings and righteousness (Gal. ii. 16). (v) Hence their sins are hid, as it were, from the eyes of God (chap. viii. 33, 34; Phil. iii. 8, 9). (*b*) His graces. (i) Humility (1 Pet. v. 5; Matt. xi. 29). (ii) Self-denial (Matt. xvi. 24). (iii) Temperance (1 Cor. vii. 31). (iv) Patience (Luke xxi. 19; James i. 3). (v) Thankfulness (1 Thess. v. 18). (vi) Heavenly-mindedness (Phil. iii. 20). (vii) Charity (Acts x. 38; James i. 27). (viii) Constancy and perseverance (Rev. ii. 26). III. USE. 1. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider—(1) Your sins are many, and it is only by Him they can be pardoned (1 John ii. 1). (2) Your sins are strong, and only by Him subdued. (3) God angry, only by Him appeased (Matt. iii. 17). (4)

Your hearts corrupted, only by Him cleansed (1 Cor. i. 2). (5) Your souls are immortal, and it is only by Him that they can be saved (Acts xvi. 30, 31). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *How the Christian ought to walk* :—I. CONSISTENTLY—as in the day. II. TEMPERATELY—subjecting—1. Appetite. 2. Sense. 3. Passion. III. LIKE CHRIST. 1. Denying himself. 2. Condemning sin in the flesh. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian sincerity* :—Standing near the remarkable spring at Ewell, in Surrey, and watching the uprising of the waters, one sees at the bottom of the pool innumerable circles with smaller circles within them, from which extremely fine sand is continually being upheaved by the force of the rising water. Tiny geysers upheave their little founts, and from a myriad openings bubble up with the clear crystal. The perpetual motion of the water and the leaping of the sand are most interesting. It is not like the spring-head in the field, where the cooling liquid pours forth perpetually from a spout, all unseen, till it plunges into its channel; nor like the river head where the stream weeps from a mass of mossy rock; but here are the fountains of earth's hidden deeps all unveiled and laid bare, the very veins of nature opened to the public gaze. How would it amaze us if we could in this fashion peer into the springs of human character and see whence words and actions flow! What man would wish to have his designs and aims exposed to every onlooker? But why this aversion to being known and read of all men? The Christian's motives and springs of action should be so honest and pure that he might safely defy inspection. He who has nothing to be ashamed of has nothing to conceal. Sincerity can afford, like our first parents in Paradise, to be naked and not ashamed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.**—*Put on Christ* :—I. THERE IS A WONDERFUL FITNESS IN CHRIST'S CHARACTER TO MEET THE CONDITION OF SINNERS. Put on Christ as—1. Your hope before God. 2. Your sanctification. 3. Your help. 4. Your exemplar. II. THERE IS THIS FITNESS IN NOTHING ELSE THAN CHRIST. III. THEREFORE, IF WE WOULD BE HAPPY, WE MUST MAKE USE OF CHRIST FOR OURSELVES. Put Him on in your—1. Thoughts. 2. Affections. 3. Conversation. 4. Profession. (*Matthew Wilks.*) *How and why we are to put on Christ* :—I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY "PUTTING ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." In the East garments are of greater importance than with us. The finest were there accumulated, preserved with the greatest care, and constituted a considerable part of wealth. Hence more frequent allusions are made to this than we are accustomed to use. In the Bible, qualities of character are often represented by clothing. Job says, "I put on righteousness as a robe." In Isaiah the Messiah is introduced as "clad with zeal as with a cloak." Our Lord represents the accepted character of a believer by the wedding garment of a guest, and Peter exhorts us to be "clothed with humility," &c. We put on Christ—1. When we make an open profession of His name. It is not enough to believe. Latent faith can at the best only edify its possessor. But the Church is intended to be the light of the world. Whoever conceals his religion must accept the consequence. "Whoso is ashamed of Me," &c. 2. By cultivating an acquaintance with the doctrines, imbuing our minds with the spirit and sentiments, of the gospel. All the doctrines of Christianity are intended to expel our native corruption, and raise us nearer to the character and will of God. We cannot then put on Christ, without the serious perusal of the Scriptures, and the devout contemplation of the Cross. 3. When we imitate His example. Other models are imperfect, and unsafe for universal imitation: but that challenges our entire pursuit. One great end of His obedience unto death was that He might leave us an example whose steps we might follow. In order to obey the will of God you cannot adopt any method so simple and sure as to inquire, "How can I this day act in a manner most consonant to the mind of Christ?" II. WHY ARE WE TO PUT ON CHRIST? 1. That Christ may be glorified by us. If we love Him, we shall desire to glorify Him: but what can tend so much to His glory, as to let men see the efficacy of His doctrine on our character? Nothing can be so calculated to counteract infidelity and convince men that there is a Saviour. 2. That we may experience religious peace and joy, by making it clear to ourselves that we belong to Him. You never knew a person, however depressed by poverty or sickness, who, if he sincerely served the Lord, was not happy. 3. That we may best prepare for a dying hour, and for the solemn scenes beyond. This is to put on the wedding garment; the want of this, in the day when the King comes in to see the guests, will leave a man speechless! (*Robert Hall, M.A.*) *Putting on Christ* :—The Hebrew language one continual picture. Every fact and emotion rendered by an image. The truth, *e.g.*, that Christ is life, and that apart from Christ is no life, is set forth most often by vivid metaphors. The general significance of the present

metaphor is that the old sinful life is to be doffed like a soiled and sordid garment, and the new nature which Christ gives and inspires, is to be put on like a new and shining robe. I. TRY TO BE LIKE CHRIST. Love what Christ loved, hate what Christ hated. The next clause helps to explain this part of the meaning, by giving us its opposite. II. But perhaps you will say, "If that be all, any moralist might, in other language, tell us the same. We read something like it in every noble teacher. We know in our best moments that we are mean, guilty creatures, but we do not know how to be otherwise. You bid us seek for nobler manners and purer tastes; you might as well bid the snared bird to fly, or the worm to throw off the rock which is crushing it to earth." Well, the gospel of Christ has broken the snare, and rolled away the rock. To put on Christ is TO SHARE His MIGHT, to come into quickening electric personal contact with Him, to derive magnetic force from His personality, to live by His Spirit, and so to be born again and to become a new creature. III. We look at our ruined selves, our corrupted hearts, our wasted lives, and "abhor ourselves in dust and ashes." How can we ever stand before God, who chargeth even the angels with folly, and in whose sight the very heavens are not clean? Ah, but there is yet another and more blessed meaning of "putting on Christ," and it is TO BE FOUND IN HIM; not trusting in our own righteousness which is as filthy rags, but BEING CLAD IN THE WHITE ROBE OF His FORGIVING GRACE. How heart-broken have been the last utterances of even the greatest men! (Grotius. Bacon and Shakespeare in their wills.) Conclusion: Such, then, is the meaning of this Divine message. Break with your past self; come to Christ for strength, and by prayer to Him and earnestly seeking Him, be quickened and transformed. And as it means this hope for the future, and this strength in the present, so also it means forgiveness for the past. Say not, then, that the meaning is not clear; strive rather to make it yours by blessed experience. (*Archdn. Farrar.*) *Putting on Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS? This is a figurative expression for an interest in Christ, union with Him, and conformity to Him. 1. As our wisdom, for our illumination. (1) To give light to our understanding in the knowledge of the Scriptures. (2) To correct and rectify our judgment on all points of necessary belief. (3) To inform our conscience in all matters of practice. (4) To guide our will, and influence our affections, in the subjects of our choice, desire, pursuit, and expectation. 2. As our righteousness, for our justification. 3. As the source of the Spirit, and of grace, for our sanctification. 4. As our example, for our direction and improvement in holiness. This is considered by interpreters as the chief thing meant. Chrysostom remarks, "It is a common phrase that a person has put him on, whom he imitates." The kings of Persia, on their coronation-day, put on a robe which the first Cyrus wore before he was king, to remind them of imitating his exemplary temper and behaviour. Certainly one grand end of the appearance of Christ in our nature, was to set us an example of blamelessness, usefulness, holiness (John xii. 26; Col. ii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6). Hence, those that have put on Christ will conduct themselves as directed in the context. They will walk "honestly," in a manner becoming their privileges. II. WHY WE OUGHT TO DO SO. 1. That "being clothed, we may not be found naked," destitute of the robe of righteousness, and garment of salvation. 2. For decency, it being a shame to be unclothed, especially garments being provided for us. 3. For defence against error, sin, misery, the wrath of God, an accusing conscience, and all the consequences of neglect. 4. For ornament; that we may not be without the wedding garment, and therefore be excluded from the marriage feast. (*J. Benson.*) *Putting on Christ*:—I. THE DUTY ENFORCED. 1. To put on Christ is to endeavour to be like Him, to have Him on is to succeed in the attempt. It is the investment of the soul with the virtues which adorned His character, just as a man clothes his body with articles of dress. Many a man has so done this as to put others in mind of Christ; he was so Christlike; just as if one of His followers after His departure had put on the garments which Christ had worn. Does any one of us put others in mind of Jesus? 2. To put on Christ does not mean any mechanical attempts after mere external likeness, as clothes may be put on a lay figure, or a portrait wrought on canvas. What is meant is not so much a studied imitation of what in Him may have met the eye of observers, as the culture of a deep internal sympathy with His Spirit which manifested itself in words and deeds. You may put royal robes on a corpse, and in particular lights and distances it may seem alive. In the same way a mere simulated likeness to Christ may be put on a dead spiritual nature; but this, so far from representing Him, presents only an aggravated image

of His worst enemies whom He denounced as "whited sepulchres." Christ is not to be put on over the natural man, but the natural man becoming spiritual, a visible Christ comes out as an emanation from within; just as His inward essential glory came out on the Mount of Transfiguration. 3. To put on Christ is not synonymous with the being clothed with Christ's justifying righteousness, and so hiding our sins from the sight of God; it rather refers to sanctification—a subjective participation of life through Christ, and the consequent outgrowth of conformity to Him. It comes after justification. "As many as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ," &c. 4. The precept suggests the moral perfection of Christ. No caution is given, as if there were some things which were not to be put on. There is no fear of your being too much like Him. It would not do to speak thus of any one else, however distinguished. In every other character there is something to be excepted, *e.g.*, Abraham's duplicity, David's bloodguiltiness, &c. Nevertheless (1) There were things in Christ we cannot and must not imitate. Here we distinguish between an example and a pattern. The latter is to be literally traced, just as the engraver produces the facsimile of a painting; the former may be something whose form we cannot repeat, but whose principle we may imbibe and infuse into other acts different in form but of the same kind. Thus we cannot like Christ perform miracles, but we can cultivate the spirit of love which moved Him to do what He did. We shall not be tempted as He was; but the same parts of our nature will be assailed; and we can learn to resist as He resisted, with the sword of the Spirit. It might not be right for us to go into the company of sinners as He did, nor employ His terrible invectives; but we can cherish the spirit which led Him to seek the lost, and sympathise with His repugnance to evil. We have not Christ's personal religion which had no repentance. (2) There were many acts of personal holiness and relative virtue which our Lord could not exercise. He was not a merchant, magistrate, or head of a household. But He embodied the principle of universal obedience, and fulfilled every obligation arising from all the relations which He could or did sustain towards God and man. This is what we are to do, and to learn from Him to do. II. To WHOM THE DUTY APPERTAINS. The words are addressed to a Christian Church, who have received the gospel. Those who believe in Christ, and are reconciled to God by Him, are required to put Him on. But let no man go on sinning in the supposition that some day by Divine grace he may become converted and then put on Christ. This should be remembered by the children of Christian families particularly. Let their earliest lesson be to strive to be like Christ, and after many a failure they may gradually come to a sense of forgiving mercy which will not be lessened by their endeavours before they knew the precise nature of their obligations to Him. III. HOW IT IS TO BE CARRIED OUT. To put on Christ there must be—1. A thoroughly honest desire to be like Him. This needs deep consideration and prayer for the grace of the Holy Spirit. 2. A frequent and devout study of the character of Jesus in order to understand both its form and spirit. 3. A study of what Christ taught and required. 4. A deliberate and habitual effort to realise all this in personal character and life. 5. Seasons of special self-examination as to likeness or unlikeness to Christ. 6. Carefulness to guard against religious acts becoming formalities. IV. THE BLESSEDNESS OF FULFILLING THIS DUTY. 1. It constitutes the most solid and satisfactory proof of inward religion. The spiritual processes of contrition, faith, forgiveness, &c., are all inward and secret, and so there is a necessity for the practical fruits of these in likeness to Christ, to be brought forth, so that the Christian and others may have full demonstration that he is born of God. 2. It is the only way of securing that peace and comfort which specifically belong to the religious life. The peace of the sinner flows into him entirely from without; the peace of a saint from purified affections and Godlikeness, and in proportion as he puts on Christ will this be secured to him in Christ's companionship. 3. It is the great secret of spiritual strength, safety, and perseverance. The text gives us the meaning of "the armour of light." 4. It is the best preparation for the day of His coming, when they only who are like Him will be able to see Him as He is. (*T. Binney, LL.D.*) *Christ's character the soul's true garment*:—The soul requires a garment as well as the body, and the true garment of the soul is the character of Christ. This is—I. A MOST INDISPENSABLE GARMENT. Sin has stripped the soul of its true attire, and three things mark its history everywhere. 1. Moral shame. It shrinks from the eye of scrutiny. 2. Painful exposure. It is at the mercy of the elements around it. 3. Robing expedients. From the time that our first parents sewed their fig leaves, every soul

has been busy at some garment. The old Pagan world was full of such manufactures, nor is the modern religious world destitute of such self-made robes, but they are all "filthy rags." II. A MOST PRECIOUS GARMENT. The most valuable thing in the world is moral goodness, whose most perfect form is the character of Christ. This garment is—1. Ever beautiful. "How great is His beauty." "We beheld His glory," &c. The highest beings in the universe admire this robe. 2. Ever enduring. The costly robes of princes shall rot, even the heavens themselves shall be folded up as a vesture, but the character of Christ shall last for ever. III. A MOST AVAILABLE GARMENT. We are constantly putting on the characters of others. This assimilation is a law of our social being. Our characters are formed on the principle of imitation. The character of Him is most easily attainable by us. He has the most—1. Lovableness. He whom we love most we shall imitate most. Christ is infinitely lovable. 2. Accessibleness. He, if lovable, with whom we can have the most free, constant, and uninterrupted access, will impress us most easily with his characteristics. Christ is ever with us. "Our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The garment of salvation*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? It implies the taking of—1. His merit. 2. His spirit and temper. 3. His badge, and making a public profession of being His servants. II. HOW ARE WE TO DO THIS? By—1. An internal application of Him. Thus we put on Christ before God, and make Him our only—(1) Plea. (2) Ground of justification. (3) Hope of glory. 2. An external profession of Him, by works before men. (*R. Cecil, M.A.*) *The believer's dress* cast every other in the shade. I. COSTLY. It cost the King of Glory His life and death (Phil. ii. 6–8). II. COMFORTABLE. It fills the soul with peace and joy (chap. xv. 13). III. COMPLETE. It leaves not part of body or soul exposed (Col. ii. 10). IV. COMELY, in the eyes of God, angels, and men (Exek. xvi. 14). V. GLORIOUS (2 Cor. iii. 18). VI. DURABLE (Heb. xiii. 8). VII. DIVINE (Jer. xxiii. 6). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The best dress* (Children's Sermon):—It is—I. A NEW DRESS. 1. It is not our natural dress. 2. It is of peculiar excellence. II. A RICH DRESS. To put on Christ is to put on—1. Humility, as the tunic, always worn, fitting the body close. 2. Love, as the cloak, often taken off to cast round others. 3. Truth, as the girdle, making the wearer strong and ready for work. 4. Obedience, as the sandals. III. A CHURCH DRESS, because—1. It is the best. It is right to wear the best dress in church. 2. It is sacred. IV. A COURT DRESS. You will wear this dress in heaven. Keep it well, then; you are to see the King in it. (*J. Edmond, D.D.*) *The drama of life*:—The apostle meant, "Personify Christ; act His part." Never, it is true, shall we be perfect as the Master was; but by patience, prayer, and effort we may come to resemble Him closely. A young artist may be twitted as he sits before his model with, "Are you vain enough to think that you can paint as well as Titian or Turner?" He will reply, "No, but I hope by industry to make fair copies of their pictures." I. DIRECTIONS. 1. Study your part well. No success without this. Alexander carried a copy of Homer with him in all his campaigns. Eminent orators have studied Demosthenes and Cicero. Lord Wolseley has made war his one study. How widely Dickens observed! So success in our line cannot be achieved without habitual regard to Christ. "Beholding as in a glass," &c. A saint had a vision of Christ on which he gazed so long that he afterwards found in his own hands and feet the marks of the nails. A mere fable, but one with an impressive moral. 2. Attend to private preparation. Solitary discipline has ever preceded public proficiency in musicians, soldiers, &c. Communion with God will keep us right in our fellowship with man. 3. Be an enthusiast. He who has no higher ambition than to get through his part will never be a good actor. "How comes it," asked a bishop of Garrick, "that I, in expounding Divine truths, produce so little effect, while you so easily rouse the deepest feelings of your audience by the representation of your fiction?" "Because," said the actor, "I recite fiction as if it were truth, while you deliver truth as if it were fiction." II. ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. You have a prompter—the Holy Ghost, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance," &c. Napoleon III. wrote, "I always make my great uncle my model, his spirit accompanying me, and enabling me to succeed in the same." We may make a higher boast than that. 2. Others have acted their part well. 3. Never mind though you act badly at first. When Kemble made his first appearance he was laughed down; so was Disraeli. 4. You will be applauded if you act your part well—by God and the good. (*T. R. Stephenson.*) *Persuasives and dissuasives*:—Here is—I. A PERSUASIVE TO HOLINESS—put on Christ. 1. His humility and self-denial. 2. His meekness and

patience. 3. His purity and fervent zeal. II. A DISSUASIVE FROM SIN. 1. Guard against its occasions. 2. Check the first desire. 3. Mortify its lusts. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ:—There are two methods of moral improvement: first, acting from ourselves according to an abstract principle; and, secondly, living over again the example of actual excellence. It is the latter method to which the text points. It is certainly a very remarkable power which God has given us, of realising in ourselves a character different from our own. We cannot fail to see in such a constitution the Divine purpose, not only that we should enter into the feeling of others, but moreover that we should enrich our own nature; not be confined strictly to our native tendencies and original biases, but borrow others' wisdom, copy others' virtue, and incorporate into our own being a thousand exotic excellences. A consideration of some of the modes in which this representing, realising power operates may help us to understand it as a moral faculty, and consecrate it to the highest uses. Do we not see a very familiar display of it in the genius of the poet, by which he conceives of characters—creatures of his imagination, yet true to nature—distinguished from one another and from himself in their modes of thought and actuating passions, and, through all the variety of situations in which they may be placed, severally well sustained? Nothing is more common than this representation in the Bible itself. Sacred historian, psalmist, and prophet are continually figuring certain characters before our minds as examples or warnings. The parables of our Lord are commonly but portraitures to our spiritual fancy of diverse moral characters; and we can learn the lesson He intends only by a vigorous use of this representing and reproducing power. The exercises, too, of the human voice in recitation and oratory, only set before us in tones what the pen has first traced in simple words. From the child that is taught to speak the sentiments of some saint or martyr in his earliest declamations at school, to the grave debater in legislative halls; from the narrator at the fireside, to the lively rehearser of inspired pages of human composition, or the edifying reader of the sacred Word of God, what do we see throughout but this very endeavour of the soul to personate and put on the meaning and feeling of some other character, and, so far as it is understood and believed to be a noble character, to adopt, appropriate, and live over again its nobleness? Or, to illustrate the subject from more homely, universally known facts, the strong working of this assimilating power of the soul will not be doubted by any who have noticed how in daily life we continually fashion each other, and are fashioned by those we are with; who have observed the contagion of custom in a community, the transfer of manners, the mutual likeness often obtaining both of moral traits and visible expression between husband and wife, and more or less all the dwellers under a single roof, and, in short, the transforming force upon our own hearts from the scenes we enter, the presence we stand in, the books we read, the images we contemplate. This impersonation of the soul, in the use and actual bearing of every man, exceeds in subtlety and extent all the imaginations that poetry has ever expressed. Therefore is not the Divine wisdom toward us shown, when the Scripture fixes on this fundamental instinct as a moral power to be dedicated, for its main employment, to our spiritual growth? Like the painter who drew in a single likeness the transcript of what was best in each selected countenance, we shall be continually transferring from the vast galleries of Providence and Holy Writ, from the society of the present and the past, and from the face of those on earth or in heaven, the manifold moral beauty which is "every creature's best," and thus put that imitative and personating faculty, by which we pass into another's heart, to its highest designed use. The justice we admire, the charity we love, the holy zeal and endurance we revere, the fervent adoration and self-devotion which makes our hearts burn—all these we possess and become. The whole gospel is preached and summed up in that single exhortation. "To put on Christ"; "to be found in Him, not having our own righteousness"; to be "clothed" with His meekness and humility; to have "His spirit," and "the same mind in us that was also in Him"; to open our hearts for His "abode," and have Him "formed within us, the hope of glory"—who but recognises at once, in this so controverted and abused language, the burden of the New Testament? And wherein is the sense of this language, if not in the appropriation of His worth to our nature, by the force of sympathy, and of a twofold spiritual consciousness operating to unite Him to ourselves? Thus the Divine graces of His character are not impressed in the way of mere commandment alone; but, as the beauty of the landscape and the fragrance of flowers possess our outward senses, so these finer influences sink into the deeper perceptions of the spirit. No poet's imagination, no

speaker's expression, no artist's fancy, no friendship's experience, and no other character on the historic page, can work on us the elevating transformation which we feel in gazing on our Master as He appears in the artless evangelic accounts, till our whole thought becomes identified with the object of our regard, and He appears to us, not in human articles of theoretic belief, but shines with a living glory into our real knowledge and love. Neither can any simple self-culture, which has perhaps been too much our method, any laborious efforts of will, any works or merits of ours, suffice for our salvation, and lift us into the highest Divine frame, without this adoring absorption of mind into the model and mould of perfection, by which we "put on Jesus Christ." (*C. A. Bartol.*) *Robed in Christ's righteousness*:—The moment the man believes in Jesus Christ he is in the righteousness of Christ—perfectly righteous; he has put upon him the Saviour's garments. You heard Mr. Weaver say on this platform—I thought it was a good illustration—that one day he met with a very poor man who was in rags. This man being a Christian, he wished to befriend him; he told him if he would go home with him, he would give him a suit of clothes. "So," said Richard, "I went upstairs and took off my second best, and put on my Sunday best, for I did not want to give him my best. I sent the man upstairs, and told him he would find a suit which he could put on; it was my second best. So after he had put on the clothes, and left his rags behind, he came down and said, 'Well, Mr. Weaver, what do you think of me?' 'Well,' I said, 'I think you look very respectable.' 'Oh, yes, but, Mr. Weaver, it is not me; I am not respectable, it is your clothes that are respectable.' And so," added Mr. Weaver, "so is it with the Lord Jesus Christ; He meets us covered with the rags and filth of sin, and He tells us to go and put on not His second best, but the best robe of His perfect righteousness; and when we come down with that on, we say, 'Lord, what dost Thou think of me?' and He says, 'Why, thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.' We answer, 'No, it is not me, it is Thy righteousness; I am comely because Thou art comely; I am beautiful because Thou art beautiful.'" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER XIV.

VERS. 1–12: **Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations.**—*Strong and weak*:—Here is a lesson—I. FOR THOSE WHO ARE STRONG IN THE FAITH. 1. Not to provoke. 2. Nor despise those who are weak. II. FOR THOSE WHO ARE WEAK. Not to judge their stronger brethren. III. FOR BOTH. 1. To think and let think. 2. To give each other credit for sincerity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The weak in the faith to be received, or the duty of mutual forbearance*:—1. "Faith" is not here used in the sense of confidence in Christ, but of the faith. The question was, did Christianity or did it not require abstinence from certain meats, and observance of certain fasts and festivals? The man who maintained that it did is here held to be weak in the faith. He had but faintly grasped the breadth of Christ's redeeming work; while he who had attained superior light, and had been set free from all such scruples, was therefore strong in the faith. 2. Now, the apostle assumes that the latter was right. Had he been wrong, there could have been no discussion, and there could be no just ground for a moment's toleration of him. But he was not wrong (ver. 14). The Mosaic law on these subjects had been done away in Christ (Col. ii. 16, 17). 3. The question was whether the man who conscientiously abstained and observed might, or might not, be received into the Church. He was certainly not required in order to salvation to disregard the Jewish festivals, nor to eat unclean meats. But it never could be tolerated that he should set up his scrupulous conscience as the normal standard of Christian faith (Gal. ii. 3–5; iv. 9–11; v. 1–4). No one must bind burdens upon men which the Lord had not bound. Hence the weak in faith is to be received, but not to judgings or condemnations of opinions. If he is content to enjoy the advantages of fellowship with you, without insisting that you are all wrong, let him be received; but if his object is to promote contention, &c., then he has no rightful place amongst you. 1. LET NOT THE STRONG IN THE FAITH DESPISE THEM THAT ARE WEAK, for their convictions rest ultimately upon Divine revelation. The law of Moses was of Divine authority, and, although done away in Christ, was subject to it.

Therefore it was not surprising if some of the Jewish converts still felt insuperable objections to its abandonment. It was a matter of conscience, and the man who respects his conscience deserves respect, even when prejudiced and wrong (ver. 6). The strong, therefore, must not put a stumbling-block in their brother's way. This may be done—1. By a contempt of his scruples. The disposition to sneer at his stupid weakness will not convince him that he is either stupid or weak, but will rather drive him utterly away from those who tolerate such an ungenerous spirit, and perhaps to apostasy. Now, though the strong had a perfect right to disregard the distinctions of meats, he had no right to imperil the salvation of any one for whom Christ died (ver. 17). The weak are not required to abstain from meats, but you are not bound to eat them (1 Cor. viii. 13). 2. By example or persuasion. It was quite lawful for the strong to employ argument in order to convince the weak that he misapprehended the character and purpose of Christianity: but it was not lawful for him to laugh at his scruples, and to assure him, without adducing proof, that there could really be no harm in eating, &c. That might be quite true for him, but it would not be true for his weak brother. If this man presumed to eat the meat, or to disregard the day, while his scruples remained, his own conscience would accuse him of unfaithfulness. Thank God for thy liberty (ver. 22); but use it lawfully (Gal. v. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 16; 1 Cor. viii. 9). II. THE WEAK IN THE FAITH ARE NOT TO JUDGE OR CONDEMN THE STRONG IN THE FAITH, the thing to which they are always predisposed. Incapable of grasping comprehensive principles, that, *e.g.*, of Christian love, they feel to require a multitude of minute prescriptions. Days and meats and dress must all be fixed by enactment. And so being most punctiliously conscientious themselves, are ready to condemn brethren who are not equally scrupulous. Admit them into the Church by all means, says the apostle; but they must lay aside this censorious spirit. For it is not suffered them to usurp the place of the great Supreme. These matters are in themselves morally indifferent (ver. 14; 1 Tim. iv. 4). Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and act upon his own convictions. Your judgment is not binding upon any conscience but your own. As to all other matters there must be mutual forbearance and charity. Yet it is for each one to see—1. That he is loyally and earnestly devoted to the service of his Lord. Whether strong or weak his object must be to approve himself unto the Lord in everything, and for the Lord's sake to promote the comfort and perfection of all his brethren. 2. That conscience is not offended. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth in his own practice. Where there is doubt, respect that doubt. Seek that your conscience may be well informed. (*W. Tyson.*) *The treatment of the weak:*—Weak Christians have infirmities, but infirmity supposes life; and we must not despise them in heart, word, or carriage. We must rather deny ourselves than offend them. We must support them—bear them as pillars bear the house, as the shoulders the burden, as the wall the vine, as parents their children, as the oak the ivy; and this because—1. THEY ARE BRETHREN. Are they not of the same body? Shall the hand cut off the little finger because it is not as large as the thumb? Do men throw away their corn because it comes into the barn with chaff? II. THEY ARE WEAK. Bear with them out of pity. In a family, if one of the little ones be sick, all the larger children are ready to attend it, which they need not do if it were well. III. CHRIST DOES SO. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ"—the law of—1. His command. 2. His example. He takes special care of the lambs, will not quench the smoking flax, and is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. (*Philip Henry.*) *The duty of forbearance in matters of opinion:*—Differences of opinion—I. MUST NECESSARILY ARISE EVEN AMONG CHRISTIANS, out of—1. Human ignorance. 2. The different constitution of the mind. II. IN TRIVIAL MATTERS INDICATE WEAKNESS OF FAITH IN THOSE WHO ARE RIGIDLY SCRUPULOUS. They do not understand the spirituality and liberty of the gospel. III. SHOULD BE MAINTAINED IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE. 1. The strong may not despise the weak. 2. The weak and scrupulous may not judge the strong. IV. ARE OF INFINITELY LESS IMPORTANCE THAN CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD. He whom God has received must be—1. Respected. 2. Treated as a brother beloved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Religious toleration:*—The argument for this is founded on—I. THE NATURE AND CONDITION OF MAN. He is imperfect, and therefore should also be tolerant. There is nothing more universal than ignorance, and hence there should be no virtue more universal than toleration. The facility with which we all absorb error and fall into prejudices, should make us always ready to tolerate many shades of religious opinion. It is folly to demand a unity

of belief in a world where there is no one wise but God, and no one good except God. Some of the best men have been the victims of great errors. All intolerance is based upon egotism. It proceeds from the assumption that you have reached the ideal. The dreadful Popish persecutions all originated in a human egotism that cried, "I have found it!" They had become the exponents of God. Whereas now history shows that in all cases the persons exiled or put to death held a better creed at the time than those who forced upon them the bitter fate. II. IN THE FACT THAT THE IDEAS OVER WHICH MOST BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN PROVEN EITHER USELESS OR FALSE. But one might have premised that the most intolerance would always be found gathered about the least valuable doctrine, because the most valuable doctrines are always so evident that no thumb-screw or faggot is ever needed to make the lips whisper assent. No man has ever been put to death for heresy regarding the Sermon on the Mount. But when a church comes along with its "legitimacy," its Five Points, its Prayer Book, or its Infant Baptism, then comes the demand for the rack and the stake to make up in terrorism what is wanting in evidence. When witnesses were wanting, the high priests rent their clothes. If God has so fashioned the human mind that all its myriad forms can agree upon doctrines that are most vital; and if, as a fact, persecution has always attached itself to the small, then we would seem to have the curse of God visibly revealed against intolerance. (*D. Swing.*) *Toleration*:—A Quaker, after listening to Whitefield's preaching, came up to him and said, "Friend George, I am as thou art. I am for bringing all to the life and power of the everlasting God; and therefore if thou wilt not quarrel with me about my hat, I will not quarrel with thee about thy gown." (*J. R. Andrews.*) *Toleration: its value*:—Sailer, afterwards Bishop of Regensburg, could be identified with no party, and was hated by each. Napoleon prevented his promotion at one time by assuring the king he was a mere hanger-on to the Roman court; the Pope refused it at another because he suspected his attachment to the Church. . . . He was one of the mildest and most tolerant of men—mild to excess. It is told that having preached one morning near Salzburg, the parish clergyman rose up and said he would preach himself in the afternoon, as Sailer had made the doors of heaven too wide. "You are excellent at bandages," said one of his friends, "but a bad operator." "Very possibly," he replied; "in my life I have seen more wounds healed by a good bandage than by a knife." (*Dr. Stephenson.*) *Unity to be maintained in spite of differences of opinion*:—I. HOW IT IS IMPERILLED. 1. By forcing our own opinions on others. 2. By overestimating our own practice. II. HOW IT MAY BE PROMOTED. 1. By forbearance (ver. 3). 2. By humility (ver. 4). 3. By aiming at personal conviction (ver. 5). 4. By keeping in view the glory of God (ver. 6). III. WHEREON IT RESTS. 1. The common assurance that we serve one Lord. 2. That we are all redeemed by Him. IV. WHAT IT REQUIRES. 1. That we avoid all unbrotherly conduct. 2. That we all submit to God. 3. That we remember our final account. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Religious disputations*:—This chapter is written to dissuade men from acting the part of religious critics. It cannot be said that men are indifferent to religion in other folks. It is only to religion in themselves that they are comparatively indifferent. Men are so accustomed to criticise each other's church service, &c., that they lose the very spirit of religion. The apostle dissuades everybody from it. A little spring comes out from the side of a mountain, pure and cool. Two men are determined that that spring shall be kept perfectly pure and drinkable. One wants it to be done in one way, and the other in another way; and they are so zealous to keep the spring pure that they get to quarrelling about it, and tramp through it, and make it muddy. They defile it in their very zeal to keep it pure; and the water flows down turbid and unfit to drink. Now, men are so determined to glorify God that they act like the devil. They are so determined that charity shall prevail that they slay men. They are so determined that a kind spirit shall exist that they will not have a word to say to a man who does not believe in their catechism. They are so determined that the world shall be generous that they stir up all manner of corrupting appetites and passions. They condemn their fellow-men, saying, "Well, they are not orthodox. They are not true believers. They do not belong to the true Church. There are no covenants for them." So, under one pretence and another, the great Christian brotherhood, through the ages past, has been turmoiled and distracted; and the world has seen the spectacle of anything but what God meant to establish in the world. The Church by which He meant to make known His manifold wisdom, has made manifest narrowness, sectarianism, selfishness, unjust partialities, and all manner of irritable jealousies. It has not made manifest

the beauty of God, the sweetness of Christ Jesus, nor the love of the Spirit. It is a fact which I think can be stated without fear of contradiction, that the general aspect of religion, as presented by churches throughout Christendom, is not winning and attractive, and that the "beauty of holiness," of which the Scriptures speak, has not yet blossomed out in the world. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Practical godliness better rectifies the judgment than doubtful disputations* :—1. The weak one is—(1) Not one that is weak and sick to death, erring in the foundation of faith—one who doth "not hold the Head" (Col. ii. 19), who "denieth the Lord that bought him" (2 Pet. ii. 1; 2 John 10). (2) Nor one who is sick about "questions" (1 Tim. i. 4, v. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 13). (3) But one who, though he hath embraced the Saviour, yet is not of a mature judgment, clear enough about the abolition of ceremonial observations, things [which] he judgeth ought to be forborne or done. 2. Charity is enjoined towards such. "Take them to you, receive them into your houses" (chap. xii. 13; Luke v. 29). When they fly for their religion and lives, supply their wants, though not just of your opinion. Do not force them to practise what they cannot freely do, but receive them into your arms, love and converse, that you may instruct them and win them into your communion. Let not little differences cause the greatest distances (ver. 3). 3. The limitation of this exception. "Not to doubtful disputations." I. DISPUTATIONS ARE NOT EASILY JUDGED OF BY SUCH AS ARE WEAK IN FAITH. This is evident from the first dispute that ever was in the world. 1. By this first dispute with the serpent, our first parents were foiled when in uprightness and strength of the image of God. But now sinful man is in a much more dark and doleful state. For—(1) He cannot form an idea of anything as it is in itself (1 Cor. viii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 5). (2) His judgment, therefore, must needs be dubious or wrong whereby he is to compare things that differ or agree (Hosea ix. 7; Isa. v. 20; Heb. v. 14). (3) His conclusions, therefore, must needs be distorted from these premisses; and the errors in the first and second concoction are not corrected and amended by the third. He who cannot make one straight step, can never take three together. 2. As we are lame in our feet by our naturals, so even those who by the light of the gospel and grace are brought over to better understanding, yet by virtue of the old craziness they are not thoroughly illuminated and refined. The very apostles themselves were plainly told by our Saviour of His sufferings and resurrection, yet "they understood none of these things" (Luke xviii. 33, 34, xxiv. 45). Paul says, We "know" but "in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). We see but one side of the globe. These weak Jews were zealous for their ceremonies; the Gentiles, as hot for theirs; let no man think himself infallible, for these were all mistaken. 3. Nothing so convulseth men's reason as interest. II. THE PRACTICE OF HOLY DUTIES IS THE READY WAY TO HAVE OUR MINDS ENLIGHTENED IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF PRINCIPLES. These practical duties—1. Give light (John iii. 21). The very entrance into the command giveth light (Psa. cxix. 130); the door is a window to him that hath a weak sight. 2. Advance light. Every step a man takes he goeth into a new horizon, and gets a further prospect into truth. 3. Keep from error or help out of it. Communion with the saints, *e.g.*, as in a team if one horse lash out of the way, if the others hold their course, they will draw the former to the right path. "If any man will do this will of God, he shall know of the doctrine" (Psa. xxv. 14). III. CHRISTIAN CHARITY AND RECEPTION WILL SOONER WIN WEAK ONES TO THE TRUTH THAN RIGID ARGUMENTS. 1. Opposition breeds oppositions. When men dispute, they jostle for the way, and so one or both must needs leave the path of truth and peace. The saw of contention reciprocated, with its keen teeth eateth up both truth and love; for such contentions are rather for victory than truth. 2. Loving converse taketh off those prejudices which hinder men's minds from a true knowledge of others' principles and practices. 3. Sincere love and converse breed a good opinion of persons who differ from us. They can taste humility, meekness, and kindness, better than the more speculative principles of religion. (*T. Woodcock, A.M.*) *Unwise disputations* :—Such facts remind us of an incident that occurred on the south-eastern coast. A noble ship with its crew and passengers was in awful peril, having struck on a sunken rock. Having been observed by those on shore, the lifeboat was run down to the beach. Everything was in readiness when a most unseemly quarrel arose. There were two rival crews, each of which claimed the right to man the boat, and to receive any remuneration that might be earned by pulling out to the wreck. Neither crew would give way to the other, and so the boat was not launched, and while those men were wrangling with each other the ship and all on board her went under the raging billows. That was a sad scene. But in the eyes of Heaven it must be a still sadder spectacle to see the Church

wasting her time and energies in disputing about points of doctrine and discipline, and yet leaving vast multitudes of men to perish in their sin and misery and despair. (*Christian Journal.*) *Christian forbearance*:—Let each receive every other in his individuality, and that not to doubtful disputations. We are not to attempt to shape men to that which we think they ought to be in a hard and systematic manner. In churches we see exhibited certain styles of character. The lines have been laid down with accuracy. The members are to believe such and such things, and they are to observe such and such bounds and theological lines, or else they are like a plant that is in a pot that is too small for its roots, and they are dwarfs all the rest of their lives. There are a few Christians (I would to God there were more) in whom the kingdom of God is like an oak or cedar of Lebanon; but there are many who are called Christians in whom the kingdom of God is no bigger than a thimble. There are men who have a few catechetical ideas, who are orthodox, and who make no mistakes in theology; but woe be to the man who does not make any mistakes. Count the sands of the sea, if you can, without misreckoning. A man that has a hundred ducats or dollars may count them and make no mistake; but multiply them by millions, and then can he count them without any mistake? I am sorry for a man who does not make mistakes. If you have a huge bucket, and a pint of water in it, you will never make the mistake of spilling the water; but if a man is carrying a huge bucket full of water he will be certain to spill it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Disputations to be avoided*:—John Wesley, a man whose bitterest enemy could not fairly accuse him of indifference to the doctrines and faith "once delivered to the saints," wrote thus liberally and large-heartedly to a correspondent: "Men may die without any opinions, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we be without love, what will knowledge avail? I will not quarrel with you about opinions. Only see that your heart be right toward God, and that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and love your neighbours, and walk as your Master walked, and I ask no more. I am sick of opinions. Give me a good and substantial religion, a humble, gentle love of God and man." *Christian contention*:—God grant that we may contend with other churches, as the vine with the olive, which of us shall bear the best fruit; but not, as the brier with the thistle, which of us will be most unprofitable! (*Lord Bacon.*) *Contagious contention*:—As a little spark many times setteth a whole house on fire; even so a contentious and froward person, of a little matter of nought, maketh much debate and division among lovers and friends. As we see one coal kindle another, and wood to be apt matter to make a fire; so those that are disposed to contention and brawling are apt to kindle strife. (*Cawdray.*) *Test of controversy*:—A cobbler at Leyden, who used to attend the public disputations held at the academy, was once asked if he understood Latin. "No," replied the mechanic; "but I know who is wrong in the argument." "How?" replied his friend. "Why, by seeing who is angry first." *Christian liberty*:—In such points as may be held diversely by diverse persons, I would not take any man's liberty from him; and I humbly beseech all men that they would not take mine from me. (*Abp. Bramhall.*)

Vers. 3, 4. **Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not.**—*Strong and weak*:—I. THE STRONG SHOULD NOT DESPISE THE WEAK BRETHREN. 1. Tenderness and sensitiveness of conscience is a quality as precious as it is rare. 2. The clearer light of the strong is due to God's special mercy and their superior advantages. 3. He who is good enough for Christ should not be rejected by man. 4. Possibly, for aught one could tell, their brother's prejudices might decrease, and he ultimately outshine the strongest of the strong in Christian usefulness. II. THE WEAK SHOULD AVOID CENSORIOUSNESS. 1. Difference of opinion will ever exist upon minor questions. No two minds regard the same subject exactly alike. Two artists, looking at the same landscape under like circumstances, will behold it with different eyes, and will represent it, though truthfully, yet according to their own previous education and peculiar stamp of mind. 2. It is the office of God alone to judge, and we should be charitable to others, but severe on ourselves. A weak brother, in regarding his strong brother's conduct, was like a man beholding an object through a mist. 3. Supposing our brother to be somewhat mistaken in trivial points, yet God is willing to receive him; and shall we venture to excommunicate and unchurch him, or withdraw from his fellowship? Might not such conduct irritate his mind, stamp deeper his prejudices, and lead him to magnify the importance of these really subordinate and less essential questions on account of which he is despised, and thus neglect or depreciate fundamental truths? "Errors," writes

John Scott, "like paper kites, are many times raised and kept up in men's minds by the incessant bluster of over-fierce opposition." Conclusion: The weak and the strong have their representatives in all ages of the Church. The former are the conservative, and the latter are the liberal elements. Both parties are necessary in the present order of things. They may be compared to the centripetal and centrifugal forces which keep the Church in its due orbit of practice. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) **God hath received him.**—Accepted him in Christ, adopted him into His family, approved of that which the weak brother condemned. Their conduct was pleasing to God because according to gospel truth and liberty, not from laxity or flesh pleasing, but from religious principle. Man often condemns when God receives, and *vice versâ*. Believers therefore are to be temperate in judging as well as in living. God's views and conduct are to guide us—1. In our judgment of things. 2. In our treatment of persons. The question in regard to a brother is, Does God receive him? The great question for ourselves is, Does God receive me? (*J. Robinson, D.D.*) **Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?**—*Censoriousness*:—I. THE PRACTICE CONDEMNED. 1. Not all judgment. 2. But measuring and condemning others by our own standard. 3. This is exceedingly common. II. THE EVIL OF IT. 1. It is impertinent, because beyond our province. 2. Presumptuous because it is to invade the prerogative of God. 3. Perilous, because God may justify whom we condemn, and the condemnation falls back on ourselves. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God the defender of those who are unjustly censured*:—He—1. Challenges the offender. 2. Asserts His own prerogative. 3. Defends the right. (*Ibid.*) *Christian liberty on debatable ground* (text and ver. 15):—1. A certain divine has said that "since Jeremy Taylor and Richard Baxter, English Protestantism has had no great casuists." Nor is this to be regretted. "It is safer to leave men to the guidance of those great and obvious moral laws, whose authority every pure and honest heart acknowledges." But as to what are those laws, the world has never been entirely agreed. On the one hand is the denial of all such moral laws. The nihilist and socialist agree in repudiating all moral restrictions. The utilitarian has his selfish statute of limitations to personal liberty. The Christian disciple finds the sum of obligation in one word—love. 2. We are now to consider Christian liberty, as Paul unfolds it. In doing so we are not to forget that "the great and obvious moral laws" of the Christian system are, like their Author, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," but that the scene and the conditions of their manifestation, in human conduct, are ever shifting, The open questions at Corinth and Rome in the first century touch us not at all, except as illustrations of a principle; while they may be the living questions of the hour in India and China. I. LIBERTY IS NOT FREEDOM TO DO AS ONE PLEASES. 1. Nobody on earth enjoys such liberty. Liberty is limited by conscience, by the views of others, by our health, by lack of means, by lack of courage, by hereditary traits and disabilities. We cannot believe what we please, for we are limited by the laws of thought and evidence. We are limited in our conduct by society. No man lives to himself in the trades, the schools, or the professions. We cannot divorce liberty from law. This would be to bring in anarchy. 2. Strictly speaking, personal and Christian liberty are the same. What is morally binding upon a Christian man is, in a sense, binding upon everybody. What any man may rightly do as accountable to God, a Christian may do. It will always be the duty of every man to love God and his neighbour, and to put his liberty under the limitations of that reigning principle of love. 3. Christ bound this as a yoke upon the necks of His disciples, to draw this world out of the sloughs of selfishness up on to the table lands of righteousness, and brotherhood, and consequent peace. Some things are for a Christian man innocent and harmless. If he abstain in things indifferent, it is not because it is morally wrong to indulge, but out of deference to the conscience or scruples of others, or the possible peril to which his example might expose those not so strong. His Lord and Master "pleased not Himself." And "it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." II. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS THE LIBERTY TO BE CHRISTLIKE. When a man becomes the disciple of Christ he advances into a higher realm of liberty than that of the merely ethical right; into the liberty, the self-sacrifice, and self-forgetfulness of love. To the man who has put on Christ this is the grandest liberty in earth or heaven. The one absolutely free man who ever walked the earth was Jesus. The truth makes other men free. He was the Truth, and so was Freedom itself. Saul of Tarsus becomes the slave of Christ and the child of liberty at the same moment. This slave of Christ was the freest man in Greece or Rome. To his great, strong nature, his skilled, dialectic mind, meats

and drinks and special days were indifferent matters; every creature of God was good and to be received with thanksgiving. But all were not able to make their way through this tangled mass so easily. All could not so easily shake off the influence of the past. III. THE LIBERTY TO BE CHRISTLIKE IS ALL THE LIBERTY WE HAVE. In this light—1. If Christian brethren are disposed to stand upon their rights and do what they think themselves honestly entitled to do, Christian liberty gives to their brethren who differ from them no right of censorious judgment. So long as he is true to his convictions in his bolder, freer course, "he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand," and in condemning him, we may be violating the royal law of charity. 2. Christian liberty gives no warrant to any to follow the example of such at the expense of conscience. Though it be not immoral to enjoy it in and by itself, it is sinful in the man who thus, against his conscience, imitates the freer Christian. 3. The rights of Christian conscience are above the rights of Christian liberty. And so far is this from being a burdensome yoke, worn from love to Christ and men, it is a yoke easy and light and joyous. 4. The question arises, Are the weak always to give law to the strong? There are limits to self-abnegation. Weakness is a bad thing; and if a constant homage be paid to it, it tends to make others weak. I may think it right, for the sake of my own moral vigour and for that of those who are in danger of becoming morbidly scrupulous, to live the bolder freer life which my own conscience approves. We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves; . . . for even Christ pleased not Himself. It is not the weak giving law to the strong; it is the strong giving law to himself in accordance with eternal principles of heavenly love. Yea, it is Christ, the mighty, leading the way in self-abnegation, and we, who have the mind of Christ, following on as best we can. The infant in the cradle: Is that weak, puny thing always to give law to mother-love? Does infantile weakness give law to mother-love, or does mother-love, obedient to its own instinct, tie itself down to the cradle—the freest thing this side the love of Christ on this earth? But the mother ties herself down to infantile weakness only so long as she must, and for the sake of leading weakness up on to the heights of strength. And so let us do toward the weak everywhere. (*H. C. Haydn, D.D.*) *The servant of God: his privileges and immunity*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN IS THE SERVANT OF GOD. The highest designation he can wear. Worn by Christ, angels, the best of men. He is the servant of God. 1. By creation. He was *made* to serve—to glorify God. 2. By purchase, and at what a cost—the precious blood of Christ. 3. By willing consecration. II. THE SERVANT OF GOD IS RESPONSIBLE TO HIS MASTER. 1. To Him supremely in indisputable duties. Christians are under obligations to their fellow-men in innumerable matters, but largely because their fellow-men in certain relationships are the representatives of God. We cannot pay our debts to God directly, but we conform to the Divine law of honesty by paying our creditors. The servant discharges her duties to God through diligent domestic service. 2. To Him only in doubtful matters. Upon matters about which there is no clear Divine pronouncement, and in conforming or nonconforming to which our only guide is conscience, our only referee is God. This is obvious from the very fact that men differ so widely about them, and from the fact, too, that so often variant opinions are right. The man who ate only herbs was right—they agreed with his constitution, and were not forbidden by Divine law. The man who ate meat was right—it nourished his body, and was allowed by the law of Christ. Circumstances, however, might make either harmful or wrong. Who was to be the judge here? Not another, for no man has a perfect knowledge of the whole of another man's circumstances. The obvious appeal therefore is to the omniscient God. (1) To God he stands. He must learn from God what is right in given circumstances. If he obeys he stands before God upright. And no man must impugn his moral rectitude. (2) If he disobeys, acts contrary to the promptings of conscience and the indications of providence, he falls. He has fallen from his moral rectitude. But this being a matter between a man and his Maker, it is criminal for his fellow-creature to interfere. III. THIS MASTER WILL UPHOLD HIS SERVANT (chap. xvi. 25; 1 Pet. i. 5; Jude 24). 1. He has promised to do so. (1) To guide him by His counsel, so that he shall safely thread his way through stumbling-blocks over which he might fall. (2) To uphold him with His right hand when in slippery places where he might fall. The promise of God's supporting grace covers the whole of life. 2. This promise is very—(1) Needful. Were the Christian left to the instincts of an unenlightened conscience, or to the judgment of his fellow-mortals, he would be most unsafe. Hence the need of that infallible wisdom

and almighty strength he has in God. (2) Encouraging. If the Lord is on our side we may be independent of man's censures, and have the comfort of His witness that we are in the right. (3) Admonitory. Beware, then, of uncharitable estimates. If the brother you condemn is approved of God, you impugn God's judgment. Hence the indignant, "Who art thou?" &c. Conclusion. In disputable matters. 1. Let each mind his own business. 2. Let each see that his business is pleasing to God. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Meddlesome people*:—I knew a man, in my youth, an elderly man, who was a great observer of human nature. I will not say of him, as it was said of Oliver Cromwell, that he could look through a man's skin right to his backbone—but he had a most shrewd knowledge of mankind. A young man used to converse with him, occasionally, on this very theme of human character; and, one day, after a long conversation upon it, the young man said, "Ah! well; there are all sorts of people in the world." "Nay," said the elder man, "there is one sort wanting." "What sort is that?" asked the young man eagerly. "The people," replied the elder man, "who mind their own business, and let other people's business alone." (*Thomas Cooper.*) *Minding one's own business*:—A lady made a complaint to Frederick the Great, King of Prussia: "Your Majesty," said she, "my husband treats me badly." "That's none of my business," said the king. "But he speaks ill of you," said the lady. "That," said he, "is none of your business."

Vers. 5, 6. **One man esteemeth one day above another.**—*The Sabbath question*:—It has been argued—"If we adopt the supposition, that a Christian Sabbath law was then in force, the propriety of the apostle's counsel of forbearance must appear questionable, inasmuch as it must have been regarded by all as of indispensable obligation. How, then, could Paul have affirmed that "he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it"? We reply, that there is no evidence that the Sabbath was included in the apostle's representation at all. For—I. THE WHOLE REASONING HAS REFERENCE TO OBSERVANCES DISTINCTLY JEWISH. But the Sabbath was no such institution; it was instituted for mankind at the creation. If so, then it was not among the things that "vanished away" with the Jewish dispensation. II. IN CONTROVERSY UNQUALIFIED TERMS ARE ALWAYS TO BE UNDERSTOOD ACCORDING TO THE EXTENT OF THE SUBJECT IN DISPUTE. Suppose, *e.g.*, in a controversy respecting the propriety of certain days long observed in the Romish and Anglican churches, a person might use the language before us, and speak of one man "esteeming one day above another," while "another esteemed every day alike," without being understood to refer to Sunday. No one would think of such a thing; but simply of the days in question. So the present difference was about days of Jewish observance; and therefore the previous question would demand settlement, Was the Sabbath one of these? III. THE LANGUAGE CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD WITH NO QUALIFICATION; for then it would follow that they were under obligation to appropriate no day whatever to religious services. Now let us try this in application both to the seventh and to the first day of the week. 1. As to the former—those whose argument I am considering, hold the continued obligation of the seventh day upon Jewish believers, till the final overthrow of the nation. Very well, then; if it did continue obligatory its observance could not be optional and left to the mere persuasion of every man's own mind. 2. As to the latter—it is clear that if the reference be to it, the apostle's language leaves all at perfect liberty to observe it or not. It is vain to say, that by agreement of the Church, its stated meetings for worship were held on that day; for the terms of the passage contradict such agreement. From which it would follow, that here was a church that had no fixed observance of social worship, but every one left to do what was "right in his own eyes." Whether such a state of things be consistent with that God who is not the Author of confusion, I leave you to judge. The passage, therefore, having reference to Jewish days of the week, does not in the least invalidate the fact of the observance of the first day, as it had no place among the days in dispute. And if it has no bearing against the observance of the first day, it leaves the reasonings for it from other sources in full force. IV. ALTHOUGH THE SABBATH WAS NOT A PECULIARLY JEWISH INSTITUTION, YET, BEING ENJOINED UPON THE ISRAELITES BY MOTIVES PECULIAR TO THEMSELVES, IT BECAME SO. WE MAY ADMIT, THEREFORE, THAT THE APOSTLE REFERS TO IT IN THE LIGHT IN WHICH IT WAS CONTENDED FOR BY THE ADHERENTS OF THE LAW—because, if the original and universal Sabbath was transferred to "the first day of the week" in commemoration of the finished work of redemption, then it could only be as a part of the Jewish law that the

retention of the seventh day was contended for. And this view of the case suits well with the apostle's argument, and avoids the difficulty as to there being no day at all on which they were at one, as to the duty of spending it differently from other days. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *The religious non-observance of the Sabbath*:—Consider—I. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH PAUL DECLARED THE REPEAL OF THE SABBATH. 1. Christ had vindicated all for God: therefore there was no one thing more God's than another. (1) God's parental right to all humanity. "There is neither Jew nor Greek," &c. (2) God's property in all places: therefore there could be no one place intrinsically holier than another. (3) The sanctification of all time. To assert that Sunday is more God's day than Monday, is to maintain Monday is less His. 2. It is not at all inconsistent with this, that just as it became desirable to set apart certain places for worship, in which the noise of business should not be heard, so it was desirable to set apart certain days for worship. But then all such were defensible on the ground of wise and Christian expediency, and not on that of a Divine command. Accordingly in early times the Church felt the necessity of substituting something in place of the ordinances which had been repealed. And the Lord's day arose. II. THE MODIFICATIONS OF THIS VIEW. 1. With reference—(1) To those who conscientiously observed the day. "He that observeth the day, observeth it to the Lord." Let him act then on that conviction. (*a*) The spiritual intent of Christianity is to worship God every day in the spirit. But had this law been given to the unspiritual Jews, instead of turning every week-day into a Sabbath, they would have transformed every Sabbath into a week-day. Therefore the law specialised a day, in order to lead them to the broader truth that every day is God's. Now, so far as we are in the Jewish state, the fourth commandment is indispensable. For who is he who needs not the day? He is the man so conformed to the mind of Christ, that he needs no carnal ordinances to kindle spiritual feelings, seeing he is, as it were, in heaven already. The Sabbath was made for man. The need of it, therefore, is deeply hidden in human nature. He who can dispense with it must be holy and spiritual indeed. And he who, still unholy and unspiritual, would yet dispense with it, would fain be wiser than his Maker. (*b*) No man, therefore, who knows himself or the need of his brethren will wantonly desecrate it. And no such man can look with aught but grave apprehensions on a scheme which will invite millions to an unreligious use of the day of rest. (2) To the religious non-observance of the Sabbath. He who, not observing it, observeth it not to the Lord, feels that Christ has made him free and strives to live all his days in the spirit. But he who, not trying to serve God on any day, gives Sunday to toil or pleasure, his non-observance is not rendered to the Lord. He may be free from superstition; but it is not Christ who has made him free; and Paul would not have said that his liberty is as acceptable as his brother's scrupulosity. 2. Here, then, we are at issue with the defenders of public recreations on the Sabbath-day. With respect to—(1) The grounds on which they are approved. They claim liberty; but it is not Christian liberty. They demand a license for non-observance; only, it is not "non-observance to the Lord." The abolition of Judaism is not necessarily the establishment of Christianity; to do away with the Sabbath-day in order to substitute the Sabbath of all time given up to God, is well. But to do away with the special rights of God to the Sabbath, in order merely to substitute the rights of pleasure, or of Mammon, or even the license of profligacy, that is not St. Paul's "Christian liberty!" (2) The assumption that public places of recreation, which humanise, will therefore Christianise the people. Æsthetics are not religion. It is one thing to civilise and polish; it is another thing to Christianise. The worship of the beautiful is not the worship of holiness; nay, the one may have a tendency to disincline from the other. It was so in ancient Greece, when the arts debilitated and sensualised the nation's heart. No; the change of a nation's heart is not to be effected by the infusion of a taste for artistic grace. Not art, but the Cross of Christ. 3. On the other hand, we dissent from those who would arrest such a project by petitions to the legislature. (1) It is a return to Judaism. It may be quite true that such non-observance of the day is only a scheme of mere pecuniary speculation. Nevertheless there is such a thing as a religious non-observance of the day; and we dare not "judge another man's servant." We dare not refuse a public concession of that kind of recreation to the poor man which the rich have long not hesitated to take unrebuked. We cannot substitute a statute law for a repealed law of God. We may think that there is much which may lead to dangerous consequences in this innovation; but we dare not treat it as a crime. (2) Coercion is in danger of injuring the conscience. It is always dangerous to

multiply restrictions and requirements beyond what is essential, because men feeling themselves hemmed in, break the artificial barrier with a sense of guilt, and thereby become hardened in conscience and prepared for transgression against commandments which are Divine. (3) There is a danger of mistaking a "positive" law, which is one laid down for special purposes, and corresponds with statute laws in things civil, and a moral law, which is one binding for ever, which a statute law may declare, but can neither make nor unmake. Now when men are rigorous in regard to laws positive, the tendency is to a corresponding indifference to the laws of eternal right. The Pharisees who observed the Sabbath, and tithed mint, anise, and cummin, neglected justice, mercy, and truth. And so, many a man whose heart swells with what he thinks pious horror when he sees the letter delivered or the train run upon the Sabbath-day, sits calmly in a social circle and scarcely feels uneasy in listening to its slanders, and surveys the relations of the rich and poor in this country, and remains calmly satisfied that there is nothing false in them. No, it may be that God has a controversy with this people. But if judgments are in store for our country, they will fall—not because public permission is given to the working classes for a few hours' recreation on the day of rest—but because we prefer pleasure to duty, and traffic to honour; and because we love our party more than our Church, and our Church more than our Christianity; and our Christianity more than truth, and ourselves more than all. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) **Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.**—*Christian liberty* :—1. Under the Christian dispensation much is left to the determination of a man's own conscience. 2. He must, however, be fully persuaded in his own mind—whatsoever is not of faith is sin. 3. It follows this liberty may not be infringed by the dictation of others. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian liberty* :—I. ITS NATURE—it is the right of determining our own conduct in things indifferent. II. ITS EXTENT. It reaches to all matters—1. Not determined by the Word of God. 2. Not settled by human relations, or law. 3. Not calculated to offend the consciences of others. III. ITS TEST. 1. Can we do it to the glory of God? 2. Can we give God thanks? (*Ibid.*) *Bigotry* :—1. There had been a hot discussion upon the subject of dietetics. There were some vegetarians who quarrelled with those who thought it right to eat flesh. Paul decides the matter, "Now, let this quarrel stop. You men who want to eat herbs, eat herbs. You men who want to eat flesh, eat it. Your own consciences must rule: 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.'" 2. This lays down a principle applicable to ten thousand cases of conscience. The religious world is divided into a great variety of sects. While our conscience will not allow us to choose some of these beliefs, we must allow to others the liberty of conscience which we demand for ourselves. 3. The air and the sea keep pure by constant circulation, and there is a tendency in religious discussion towards moral health. Between the fourth and sixteenth century the Church proposed to keep down all error by prohibiting free discussion; but the world has found out that you cannot change men's beliefs by twisting off their heads. Let error run! Only let the truth run with it, and in the long run truth will win. 4. A king who had a great deal of trouble with his subjects was afterwards imprisoned, and to while away the time he made watches and clocks, and tried to make the watches tick alike, and the clocks strike alike. Of course he failed. Then he said to himself: "What a very foolish king I was! How could I expect to make all my subjects alike?" I. THE CAUSES OF BIGOTRY. 1. Wrong education in the home. There are some who caricature and throw slurs upon other denominations in family circle and produce little bigots ten years old. 2. The superior power of any one denomination. People think that all other churches are wrong, and that theirs is right, because it happens to be more fashionable, wealthy, or influential. 3. Ignorance. Knowledge enlarges the mind. A thorough bigot is the man who thinks he knows a great deal, but does not. In the East there is an obelisk; one side of it is white, another blue, another green. Some travellers went to look at that obelisk, and soon got into a fierce contest—one saying that it was white, another blue, &c. "Stop this contest," said some one. "I walked all round, and find you are all right and all wrong." If there is any man to be pitied, it is the man who has just one idea in his head. II. ITS EVILS. 1. It cripples investigation. The different denominations were intended, by holy rivalry and honest competition, to keep each other wide awake. While each denomination ought to preach all the doctrines of the Bible, I think that it is the mission of each more emphatically to preach some one doctrine, *e.g.*, the Calvinistic Church to preach the sovereignty of God, the Arminian man's free agency, the Episcopal the importance of order and solemn ceremony, the Baptist the necessity of ordinances

the Congregational the individual responsibility of its members, the Methodist holy enthusiasm; but when one says, "All others are wrong, and I am right," from the realm of God's truth, over which the archangel might fly from eternity to eternity without touching the limits, they shut themselves out, and die like blind moles under a corn-sheaf. 2. It prejudices people against Christianity. The perpetual bombardment of other sects drives men away from religion. You go down the street and you see a contest and hear the report of firearms. You are not foolish enough to go through that street. 3. It hinders the Church's triumph. How much wasted energy! Suppose there were a common enemy riding up the Narrows to-morrow morning, and our batteries around New York were to fire into each other, you would cry out, "National suicide!" And yet while all the navies of darkness have been riding up the bay, sect has been warring with sect, and belief with belief, and there has been suicide instead of conquest. III. How to cure it. 1. By a realisation of our own infirmities and weakness. If we make so many mistakes upon other things, ought we not to be a little modest in regard to our religious belief? 2. By dwelling chiefly upon those things on which we agree, rather than upon those in which we differ. The gospel platform is large enough to hold all who put their trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. By realising that all denominations of Christians have yielded beneficent institutions and noble men, and therefore are to be respected. One gave to the world a Robert Hall and an Adoniram Judson; another gave a Latimer and a Melvill; another a Wesley and a Summerfield, &c. 4. By toiling in Christian work with men of other beliefs. Here are two men in hostility. Let them go and kneel by that dying woman and commend Christ to her soul. If they went into that room with antipathies, they will come out with love. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The value of a firm conviction of the right*:—I. To ourselves. 1. We act on fixed principles. 2. Are preserved from wavering. 3. Secure inward peace. II. To others. 1. They know with whom they have to do. 2. Can put confidence in us. 3. Derive benefit from our example. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Strong convictions in religion*:—The apostle teaches that in every circumstance we should have a firm conviction as to duty, and act accordingly. We should reach conclusions concerning right and wrong upon our own responsibility. I. The prevailing want of strong religious convictions. 1. Paul's faith was not a vague, cloudy sentiment, but his very life. He was not a fanatic; yet he was willing to even die for his principles. The martyrs of the early church—Savonarola, Huss, Wiclif, Luther, Calvin, the Puritans—furnish examples of people governed by strong convictions in the sphere of faith and practice. 2. It is to be feared that most Christians are not characterised by such earnest convictions in our day. The masses do not think; they let the press do their thinking for them. It is too possible to have our editors, lecturers, professors, and preachers do our thinking for us. This intellectual lassitude is especially blameworthy in religion. Sunday-school teachers should strive to have views of their own concerning Bible subjects, not relying implicitly upon any mere "lesson helps." Church members should cultivate independence, depth and earnestness of thought. We are each, in our separate personalities, to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. We are to be judged for our thinking and acting; not for those of others. II. Incentives to the cultivation of strong religious convictions. 1. A person of strong religious convictions will be an active figure in life. This explains the prominence in the anti-slavery movement of men like Wendell Phillips, Whittier, and Beecher. Followers of Christ, with an intense belief in the need and power of the gospel, will be inside the vineyard instead of standing in the market-place idle. 2. The possession of strong religious convictions gives the believer a purpose in life, gives life a meaning and a definite end. To live for Christ, to believe in that life is to have life directed to a definite port, to supply compass, quadrant, chart, helm, and pilot, to keep it in the straight line through waves and storm till the voyage is over. No life was ever a failure that was genuinely lived for Christ. 3. Truth is promoted where emphatic views of things prevail. The hardest class of hearers are those who have no opinions and do not care what the truth is. A mind which tends to earnest thinking is like fertile soil. It may be full of weeds now; but even that is better than a soil that will support no life whatever. A sea-captain would rather encounter an opposing breeze than to be held in a dead calm. (*G. F. Greene.*) *Be true to yourself*:—I. There are circumstances under which this exhortation has a peculiar meaning. 1. As a young artist, lawyer, doctor, &c., enters upon his profession, advisers gather about him, and some kind, thoughtful old man says, "I have but one thing to say to you, be true to yourself." 2. At times communities sink down into a sort

of dead contentment. Enterprise is, comparatively speaking, unknown; men read little and think less; religion, for the most part, is a repetition of things, and everything goes on in a servile and ignoble routine. Now, under such circumstances, it is a wholesome thing for a man to stir men up, and inspire them with curiosity, and make them long for other views of truth, and nobler ideals of life. Then, when there is resurrection from sloth, stupidity, and base conformity to a vulgar life, there is power in the maxim, "Be true to yourself." II. TO BE TRUE TO YOURSELF YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A DEVILISH AND A DIVINE SELF IN EVERY MAN. 1. Now the lower animal self no man can afford to be true to. Shall you say to a man who lives for eating and drinking, or to an old miser, "Be true to yourself"? Fidelity to self has been their damnation. One man is true to himself: he is a peacock. Another man is true to himself: he is a monkey. Another man is true to himself: he is a lion, or a tiger, or a bear. I say, in regard to your whole lower self, "Deny, discipline, educate, restrain that self." 2. But then, there is a Divine self. God comes into our consideration. Our mind takes in a nobler sphere, a larger range. Now, in regard to this higher self, be true to it. (1) Every child who comes out of his father's house should be exhorted, "Be true to yourself, as a man of honour." The spirit of honour is one of the things without which society would be bankrupt. No man, therefore, ought to go into society without having it. I love to hear a man, where there is occasion for it, say, "Do you doubt my honour, sir?" It is not best that he should talk much about it, or boast of it; but he ought to have it, and it should be fashioned on those elements which constitute a Christian gentleman. Sir Philip Sidney was considered a perfect gentleman; but not, I take it, on such a pattern as 1 Cor. xiii. prescribes. Oh that I could make a bath of that chapter, and roll men in it till the colour struck through and through! What perfect gentlemen I would make of them! This is a thing of education. It is a work for the table and for the nursery. It is a process which we are to carry along with religious instruction. Young men! do not adopt that base and servile maxim, "When you are in Rome do as Romans do." You might as well say to a man, "Among foxes do as foxes do; among wolves do as wolves do; among lions do as lions do." No; be a man always and everywhere; and never forget that the more sensitive your honour the better for you. And if others are unlike you, let your light so shine that men shall see in your religion the type of higher character. (2) Cultivate conscience, too, which is something more comprehensive than honour. (*a*) Do you tell me that you cannot get along and be an honest man? I say that you cannot afford to get along then. I reply to you as Talleyrand replied to a man who said, "Why, you know I must live"—"I do not see that." Do you say, "I must have money"? Ah! that ends it for you. "They that will be rich," says the apostle, "fall into temptation and a snare." "The love of money is the root of all evil." If you cannot maintain your integrity and succeed, less success with a clear conscience will bring you more happiness. And success surely comes with conscience in the long run, other things being equal. Capacity and fidelity are commercially profitable qualities. (*b*) Be true to yourself, also, as a conscience-bearer against ridicule. Many a man from fear of this goes aside from what he understands to be the truest and best things. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Do not comply with others' opinions unless they commend themselves to your judgment. Do that which you think is right, whatever others may say or think. (*c*) Be true to yourself against sympathetic bias through your best affections. We hear people who have done what they knew was wrong say: "I could not say 'No,' and disoblige one who has been so kind to me." No one ever became a full man without some cross-bearing. (*d*) Be true to your conscience against all those society compliances which may be easy and pleasant, but which in the end lower the tone of your manhood and self-respect. (3) Be true to yourself, likewise, as a Christian man—a man according to the pattern of Christ Jesus. Be true to that manhood which has for its father, God; for its friend, Christ; for its light, the Holy Ghost. Conclusion: In attempting to be true to yourself, beware of conceit, narrow-mindedness, indecent haste, of that laziness which refuses to read or think, of that presumption which leads you to suppose you can safely depart from the results of centuries of experience. So be true to yourself, not in any vandal spirit, but with humility and meekness, with teachableness, with yearnings for a higher and better life. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christian casuistry*:—1. There are questions relating to the degree of our conformity to the world, and to the share it is lawful to take in its company and amusements, about which there is the greatest indecision from the absence of any decisive principle of authority to bear

upon them. And so the mind fluctuates, for while one class dogmatises with all the readiness of minds that are thoroughly made up, others wait till a clear reason approve itself to their judgments, ere they utter a confident deliverance. 2. When the renunciation of these things is laid down for the observance of the young disciple in the shape of so many categorical impositions—I. IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT HE MAY BE THEREBY MISLED AS TO THE DESIGN AND NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY. 1. For these acts of abstemiousness occupy the place of works, and may minister the complacency of self-righteousness. And, besides, they are such acts as do not necessarily imply any graceful or elevated morality, and may be the mere heartless austerities of Pharisaical devoteeship—the morose penances of one who denies himself that gratification which he nevertheless is still most desirously set upon. So Christianity instead of a religion of freedom, because her only control is that of heavenly principle over delighted votaries, may be transformed into a narrow system of bigotry, whose oppressive mandates of "touch not, taste not, handle not," bear no relation whatever to the spiritual department of our nature. 2. For this reason it is greatly better, with every young inquirer at least, to begin at the beginning—to aim a blow at the root of his corruption, instead of mangling and lacerating at one of its branches; instead of charging him with a matter of doubtful criminality, to put it direct to his conscience, whether the world, or He who made it, has the greatest ascendency over him. After having reached his convictions on this point we would tell him that the thing for adjustment was not the habitual attendance of his person upon places of amusement. We should rather move the previous question—or proceed to the order of the day. The point of immediate urgency is his general state with God. Our indictment is not that he has been incidentally seen in places which lie without the territory of sacredness, but that from that territory he is wholly an outcast and a wanderer. 3. On the personal settlement of this question a great personal change takes place. Other glories than those of this world's splendour now engage the affections; and other paths than those of this world's dissipations are now the ways of pleasantness. It may not, however, be with the fierce intolerance of a bigot that he looks on the amusements of other days, but simply with the indifference of one who has found his way to higher and better amusements. And should the result be that he keeps himself from the ball-room or the theatre, this result is only one among the many. II. IT GIVES TO THE GENERAL EYE AN APPEARANCE OF NARROWNESS TO OUR RELIGION WHICH REALLY DOES NOT BELONG TO IT. 1. Better surely to impregnate the man's heart first with the taste and spirit of our religion; and then, if this should supersede the taste and affection for the frivolities of life, it impresses a far nobler character of freeness and greatness, than when it is merely a reluctant compliance with a rigid exaction of what seems to be an unreasonable intolerance. Better that it spring up, in kindly vegetation from the soil of the new nature, than be forced forward at the call of an uncompromising or unmeaning dogmatism. The new wine that was put into old bottles had not yet done with its fermentation; and the bottles that had lost their elasticity did not expand to the process, but burst, so that both wine and bottles were destroyed. And the same may often be the result of prematurely putting into an unregenerated man those new observations which are in most pleasing accordancy with the whole desire and habit of an altogether Christian. When the new wine is put into a new bottle, both are preserved. The commandment to renounce the amusements of the world ceases to be grievous, or rather ceases to be necessary. He is taken up with something else that he likes better. As the new wine is suited to the new bottle, so are the present habits of the present heart of the new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord. The reply that was once given by an aged Christian to the question of an anxious beginner whether he should now continue to go to the theatre was that he might go as long as he could. And was this not greatly better than admitting him to doubtful disputation? 2. But still it may be asked, Is it not true that in all the amusements referred to the spirit of earthliness has the predominancy; and that the places where they are held, leave their company on the broad way? Grant this to be true, and that all these assemblages were broken up and their visitors dispersed, these visitors may still keep on the broad way; and we cannot see what is gained by drawing thousands away from the theatre and ball-room, if they shall all tarry at any point short of the conversion of their souls. We should feel as if nothing had been effected by pulling any one away from the theatre, if we had not pulled them across the mighty line of separation that marks off the region of grace from the region of unconverted nature. Whitfield once preached for several days at one of the great London fairs, and we may be sure that

he was not content with denouncing with intemperate and untimely zeal as a gross abomination the scenes of madness wherewith he was surrounded. He went there charged with the gospel, and his errand was not to put down one of the modifications of worldliness, but all worldliness. He did not break up the fair, but he did a great deal better, he gathered out of it a harvest for eternity. 3. To intrude a sermon now into any place of amusement would be impossible, and could not be tolerated. But among her other caprices fashion has been known to send her votaries to church; and to vary by a sermon on the Sabbath the giddy round of her week-day entertainments. And should any of her enamoured followers be now listening, we would have them to know that it is not with any of those entertainments that we are holding controversy. We are charged with one far more tremendous. Our direct affirmation, and let them carry it to their consciences and try it there, is, that they live without God in the world; and that in the whirl of time's gratifications and concerns, they have buried all effective consideration of eternity. Be first Christians, and then we may satisfy your curiosity about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of theatres. Conclusion: A heart with rightly-set affections and desires is the best of casuists. If the heart in its various regards be as it ought, this is our securest guarantee that the history in its various manifestations will be as it ought. The new-born desire of a Christianised heart is worth the catalogue of a thousand solutions to a thousand perplexities. We need scarcely speak on the details of Sabbath observation to him who already loves that hallowed day. Give us a heart set on the things that are above, and what call for warning against the amusements of the world the man who in the midst of higher and better engagements feels their utter insipidity! (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Vers. 7–9. **For none of us liveth to himself.**—*None of us liveth unto himself*:—This is seen in—I. SUCCESS, which can be secured only by co-operation. When one devotes himself to one kind of work and another to another, the results of their labours are brought together to complete a perfect mechanism. Thus by these labour exchanges the experience of all is made to benefit each. One man does not make a whole pin. II. CURIOSITY. We are anxious to know about our neighbours. It may be denounced by some as impertinence, but after all God has made us look at others—"Look not every man on his own things." God said early, "Where is thy brother?" And it was a Cain who replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is true that this curiosity often degenerates into gossip. It is evil when we speak of others only to criticise their garb, &c. It is a higher use of curiosity when we want to know not how a dress fits, but whether these people have on the wedding garment; not whether such an one is of obscure origin, but whether she belongs to the family of God. It is a right curiosity when we inquire about our brethren in foreign lands. The Lord has joined us together by a bond of brotherhood, as the very curiosity we manifest in each other shows. III. OUR LOVE OF SOCIETY. The child wants other children to play with just as soon as it knows anything. The young man or woman goes forth in search of companions. The old man, though becoming deaf, still desires to be told by the voice of affection of what is said. A child plays around while his elders converse about politics, science, or literature, and he seems not to hear. But let one tell of a friend dying, or a battle raging, or a dreadful accident, and the child will at once drop his playthings and cease his sports to listen. Why is this? Because there are common bonds which unite us all, and because we are not made to live to ourselves. Everything that touches one heart awakes an echo in another. There is no punishment more dreadful than solitary confinement. The reason of men so confined sometimes has given way. Human beings, when they could not have men to talk to, have talked to beasts. Baron Trenck, in his solitary dungeon, made a friend of a spider. The greatest of poets made the desolate Lear talk to the clouds and the winds. All these things serve to show that "no man liveth to himself." IV. THE DISPOSITION TO IMITATE. The girl saw her mother nurse the baby, and must have a doll. The boy saw his father chop the wood, and must have an axe and a saw. This principle is in the very heart of man, for God has put it there. V. THE JUDGMENT WE FORM OF OURSELVES AND OTHERS. When we turn away from a beggar we cannot help feeling that we have done wrong, and we begin to reason so as to relieve our conscience from a sense of having failed in duty. We came home tired. We were told that a neighbour was ill, without a friend to do anything for him. We hesitated, but went to bed. Next morning we learned that he had died in the night, alone, and without any one to speak to him of a Saviour. Then we

reproached ourselves. Why? Was it not right to take rest? Certainly; but God had taught us not to live for ourselves alone, and we condemned ourselves for our selfishness. If we had gone we might have had a pain in the head next day, but the heart would have felt all right. Here was a generous, benevolent man, doing all he could for the welfare of society, and trying to help the poor every way possible. When he died, what a funeral! The secret was that that man did not live for himself. There was another man, just as honourable and moral, but a miser. When he died there were no tears, only a host of relatives fighting over his hoard. We admire heroes, not because they are men of blood, but because they live not for themselves, but for others, for their country. Think of Howard, whose name still lives as a synonym for all that is self-denying and beneficent. So is it with Miss Nightingale, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. Conclusion: If we should not live for ourselves, for what ought we to live? 1. To live for Christ is the only way to live for humanity. Many have tried to live for their friends and failed. A priest, thinking he was doing the European inhabitants of the Spanish colonies a favour, suggested that the African race could better stand the climate and the work of the tropics. In that way slavery was originated in this part of the world, and what a price it has cost us to free ourselves from the curse! 2. When we live for Christ we take Him as our pattern and live for humanity. Then will we lift up the fallen, cleanse the leper, lead the blind, &c. 3. We have to be introduced to Christ by some one who knows Him. But introduced, we can introduce others. (*Bp. Simpson.*) *None of us liveth to himself*:—Each living man bears a relation to his whole race: his having lived will never cease to be felt throughout the universe. We own each other, and God owns us all. A man never stands alone, unrelated to anything, but his closest relation is always to his Creator. A willow tree may stand far from the banks of the stream, and with no apparent support, except from the ground about its trunk; but what are its roots doing? Down burrowing amid the rocks, forcing a way through the earth, seeking for openings, pushing whithersoever is the smell of moist soil, diving to the level of the cool well, and drinking deep of its nourishing waters, shooting out by the brook side many, many rods away, till its banks are fringed like a shawl, seeking everywhere for nutriment, which gives life to the tree above them. This is what the roots are doing; and man is like a tree, only his roots shoot upward as well as downward; his firmest tie is to the heart of God, as his surest and best supply is from thence; but he is also indissolubly connected with all below him and round about him. Who, then, can say, "I am mine own; I stand alone, unrelated, unlinked, solitary, uninfluenced and uninfluencing"? Such a thing cannot be; and so it is written by the unerring pen of inspiration—"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *None liveth unto himself*:—I was not born for myself alone; my country claims a part, my relations claim a part, and my friends claim a part in me. (*Plato.*) *The duty of not living to ourselves*:—It is the excellence of our rational nature that by it we are capable of living to some known end, and of governing our lives and conduct by some rule, whereas brute creatures necessarily live and act at random, just as the present appetite influences them. Let us, then, make the most of this our prerogative by proposing to ourselves the noblest end of human life, and engaging in such a course of action as will reflect the greatest honour upon our nature, and be productive of the most lasting happiness. I. We should, according to this apostolical maxim, by no means confine our regards to ourselves, and have our own pleasure, profit, or advantage in view in everything we undertake; but LOOK OUT OF, AND BEYOND OURSELVES, and take a generous concern in the happiness of all our brethren of mankind; make their sorrows our sorrows, their joys our joys, and their happiness our pursuit; and it is in this disinterested conduct, and in this only, that we shall find our own true happiness. 1. This disinterested conduct of man is most agreeable to the course of nature without us. The sun, the moon, the planets, and comets, are strictly connected, and combined into one system. Each body, though so exceedingly remote from the rest, is admirably adapted, by its situation, magnitude, and velocity in its orbit, to the state of the whole, in those respects and many others. This connection, probably, also extends to the remotest bodies in the universe, so that it is impossible to say that the withdrawing of any one would not in some respect or other affect all the rest. The clouds and the rain are designed to moisten the earth, and the sun to warm it, and the texture and juices of the earth are formed so as to receive the genial influences of both, in order to ripen and bring to perfection that infinite variety of plants and

fruits, the seeds of which are deposited in it. Are not all plants likewise suited to the various kinds of animals which feed upon them? The various kinds of animals are, again, in a thousand ways adapted to, and formed for, the use of one another. That brute animals are excellently adapted to the use of man, and were, therefore, made to be subservient to the use of man, man will not deny. The strength of some, and the sagacity of others, are as much at our command, and are as effectually employed for our use, as if they belonged to ourselves. 2. The situation of man in this world, or the external circumstances of human nature, oblige us to assert, with Paul, that no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Man himself is but a link, though the highest link, of this great chain, all the parts of which are closely connected by the hand of our Divine Author. Nay, the more extensive are our powers, either for action or enjoyment, on that very account, the more multiplied and extensive are our wants; so that, at the same time that they are marks of our superiority to, they are bonds of our connection with, and signs of our dependence upon, the various parts of the world around us, and of our subservience to one another. The rich, if they would receive the greatest advantages from society, must contribute to the happiness of it. If they act upon different maxims, and think to avail themselves of the pleasures of society without promoting the good of it, they will never know the true pleasures of society. And, in the end, they will be found to have enjoyed the least themselves who have least contributed to the enjoyment of others. Thus it appears from a view of the external circumstances of mankind that man was not made to live to himself. The same truth may be inferred—3. From a nearer inspection of the principles of human nature and the springs of human actions. Whence is that quick sensibility which we are conscious of with respect to both the joys and the sorrows of our fellow-creatures if their happiness or misery were a matter of indifference to us? Can we feel what is sometimes called the contagion of the passions when we find that our minds contract a kind of gloom in the company of the melancholy, and that this melancholy vanishes in company which is innocently cheerful, and question the influence of social connections? Much less can the reality or the power of the social principle be doubted when a fellow-creature in distress calls forth the most exquisite feelings of compassion, attended with instant efforts towards his relief. Doth not the sense of honour in the human breast derive all its force from the influence which social connections have over us? Of what use could it be but to beings formed for society? Lastly, of what doth devotion itself consist but the exercise of the social affections? What are the dispositions of our minds which are called forth into action in private or public prayer, but reverence for true greatness, humility, gratitude, love, and confidence in God, as the greatest and best of beings; qualities of the most admirable use and effect in social life. II. Having given this general view of the social turn of our whole natures, whereby we are continually led out of ourselves in our pursuit of happiness, I shall now consider farther HOW ALL OUR APPETITES AND PASSIONS, which are the springs of all our actions, do, in their own nature, TEND TO LEAD US OUT OF OURSELVES, and how much our happiness depends upon our keeping their proper objects in view, and upon our minds being thereby constantly engaged upon something foreign to themselves, after which I shall show what are the fittest objects thus to engage our attention. Our benevolence, for instance, leads us immediately to relieve and oblige others. Pleasure, indeed, always attends generous actions, but the satisfaction we receive in our minds from having done kind offices to others is far less pure, and less perfectly enjoyed, if at all, when we had any private gratification in view before the action. In like manner, he who courts applause and does worthy actions solely to obtain it, can have no knowledge of the genuine pleasure arising either from the good action itself or the applause that is given to it, because he is sensible in his own mind that if those who praise his conduct were acquainted with the real motive of it they would be so far from admiring that they would despise him for it. It is chiefly an anxious solicitude about ourselves, and the appearance we shall make in the eyes of others, which is the cause of that affectation and constraint in behaviour which is so troublesome to a person's self, and so ridiculous in the eyes of others. This trifling remark, being so frequently verified, may serve to show that these sentiments are by no means merely speculative, but that they enter into the daily scenes of active life. Indeed they are in the highest sense practical, and upon them depend those maxims of conduct which contain the great secret of human happiness, and which are confirmed by every day's experience. Why are persons whose situation in life obliges them to constant

labour, either of body or mind, generally more happy than those whose circumstances do not lay them under a necessity to labour? Persons thus employed have not much leisure to attend to the idea of self, and that anxiety which always attends the frequent recurring of it, whereas a person who has no object foreign to himself, which necessarily engages his attention, cannot have his faculties fully exerted, and therefore his mind cannot possibly be in that state of vigorous sensation in which happiness consists. III. We now come to see what CONSIDERATIONS DRAWN FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES will further confirm and illustrate this maxim of human conduct which was first suggested by them. Nothing is more frequent with the sacred writers than to exhort men to the practice of their duty as the command of God, from a principle of love to God, of love to Christ, and of love to mankind, more especially of our fellow Christians, and from a regard to the interest of our holy religion—motives which do not at all turn the attention of our minds upon themselves. This is not borrowing the aid of self-love to strengthen the principles of benevolence and piety, but it is properly deriving additional strength to these noble dispositions, as it were, from within themselves, independent of foreign considerations. (*J. Priestley, LL.D.*) *Related life* :—I. "NO MAN LIVETH UNTO HIMSELF." 1. We gather about the grave of one who, while he lived, withdrew himself largely from contact with men, and from the activities of his generation; and we say of him, "There was a man who lived entirely to himself." No, he did not! That reserve and isolation are as definite a power in the world as the marching of a regiment. When, on the sea, the wind suddenly becomes chill and the fog thickens, and the commander paces the deck with anxious face, you know that you are in the neighbourhood of an iceberg—though the iceberg has cabled you no message. And just so with those moral icebergs. The air grows chillier whenever they approach. The frost of their selfishness nips the kindly buds of other lives and makes them as fruitless as their own. 2. And if this is so, how clearly we see the force of the text when we look at some character of an opposite type! Here is a man with fine sympathies and endowments whose life seems to be engrossed in his business or his studies. What an influence he could wield, we think, if he could set out of that narrow round which holds him to such petty cares! But every one of those cares touches some other life. His partners, clerks, workmen, children, and servants—all these are conscious that something warmer and ampler than the starved currents of their own being has flowed into their lives through him. 3. In a word, all life in man is consistent—the highest form of it with the lowest—the life of the soul with the life of the nerves. There are two sets of nerves, those of motion and those of sensation, running side by side like a railway with a double track. One set of nerves or tracks brings us the incoming trains—the tidings and influences from without; the other set dispatches the influences from within. To have both these sets of nerves constantly doing their duty—to have my eye and ear and the nerves which are connected with them correctly reporting to me the beauty and the melody that are outside, and then to have lips and every organ of expression accurately transmitting to others the thought and purpose that are within—this is life. But suppose that while my nervous system is receiving impressions it has become incapable of expression. It would be paralysis, and paralysis is simply an incipient form of death. Life is virtually impossible without expression, and that expression for ever betrays the man that is behind it. There are many who are trying to live to themselves in the sense that they are trying to keep the quality of their lives a secret. Let me exhort them to desist from such an impossible undertaking. The world will be quick to find out what brings the throb into your pulse and the light into your eye. And therefore your life will be worthier and happier if you frankly recognise that it is the law of your being to betray itself. II. "NO MAN DIETH TO HIMSELF." 1. Does this mean that when a man comes to his death-bed, his end must needs reveal himself, and so strongly influence others? Hardly; for there is a physical terror of death which is the characteristic of certain timid and sensitive natures, and the more devout the character, the keener often is its dismay. And on the other hand, there are persons with such force of will, that the acted career they have been playing all along, they play with equal composure to the very end. 2. The significance of death is to be found in the temper and purpose with which it is contemplated and approached. Do we understand that the process of life is double, and that every step forward is a progress in decay and an experience of death? The worn-out weariness of the octogenarian utters itself, incipiently, in the tired slumber of the child. Man is acting, from the beginning, with a certainty in view. And how is

he acting? Knowing that he will die, is he using his life as if it were a vestibule or a terminus? Conscious that a part of himself will drop away into the grave and a part endure beyond it, is he living for what will perish, or rather for what will last? For what is it that happens at death? (1) We have been too busy to recognise clearly the character and quality of a man who lived, it may be, right alongside of us. But suddenly he falls, and then all the past somehow pieces itself together and becomes an intelligible whole; and behind the mannerisms, or whatever it was that sometimes offended us, we see the shining track of a noble Christian life. And, looking back over such a pathway, we realise how "no man dieth to himself"; we see how death groups together and garners up the whole drift of the man's career, and we thank God for one more good example. (2) To such a portraiture there must needs be an opposite. Did you ever think to yourself with a shudder that you were glad some one was dead? Here is a life that has touched nothing that it has not debased. But the misery of the death of a bad man is that it has so enormous a propagating power. Their burial galvanises into new life all the memories of their dreary past. (*Bp. H. C. Potter.*) *Living to self*:—The first question which arises as we meet these words is as to their scope and sweep. Must we not begin by putting them under limitations? Is it true? Are there not multitudes of persons who are living to themselves? We ought not to limit any truth until we find it impossible to do otherwise. Truth as it comes from the lips of a man specially endowed to speak it is always likely to be greater than our comprehension of it. First of all, we know, as a matter of fact, that no man is simply an individual. An individual life would have to start as it was said of the life of Melchisedek, without father and without mother. We all of us are related. Whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, the fact remains. We need not concern ourselves, however, about remote ancestries. Those immediately back of us have influenced us more or less. We see family likenesses extending not alone to facial expression, but family likenesses extending to character. If you find a proud and obstinate mother you are pretty sure in a family to find also a proud and obstinate son; if you find a weak and indolent father you will not be surprised if somewhere in the family you find a still weaker and more indolent daughter. Our relationships count for something. They are not mere matters of arrangement or of convenience. Soul, as well as body, descends. And yet every man has something which individualises him. There is a spark as it were of spiritual life in every one of us, as there is a spark of electricity in every drop of water and in every grain of sand. Electricity in matter seems in a certain way, and remotely, to represent spirituality in mind. Very well, then, take only these two facts—the fact of relationship to others making our life a continuation of their life, and the fact of each of us having a distinct personality—and how mysterious it is! And yet nobody can deny the facts. Now this relation to others from whom we cannot free ourselves shows that the good in us and the evil in us are not entirely our own, and that no man can be judged simply as an individual. It is not our own till we adopt it as our own. Related all round as we are, then, does it not become clearer and clearer that the apostle simply indicates a universal law of life when he says, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"? It is manifestly impossible that any man should live to himself in unrelated and uninfluential independence of others. Every man is related all round. Is it not clear that no good man lives to himself? The very idea of goodness implies unselfishness, kindness, sympathy. When a man intelligently and voluntarily co-operates with God, "lives unto the Lord," as St. Paul phrases it, then we all agree that he is not living to himself. And yet if we look into the matter sufficiently close we shall find that there is a sense in which a man is never so much living to himself or for his own interests as when he is voluntarily living to God. The laws of the universe are such that benevolence ultimately hangs up by the neck the man whose penuriousness has blinded his eyes to the fact that he has been occupying himself all his life, like Haman of old, in gallows-building. For living to himself, mark you, is an impossible task. In some degree or other every man is multiplying himself, his character does not remain at home, but it travels abroad. Is there not great comfort in the fact that no man can be good without doing good? We used to be taught in the days gone by that we must not think of ourselves, but we must be good and unselfish. Did we not feel at the time that there was something impossible and unnatural in that advice? Self is here with us, we cannot rid ourselves of it. The consciousness of self I cannot escape. (*Reuen Thomas, D.D.*) *None of us liveth to himself*:—I. SENSES

IN WHICH THIS IS TRUE. 1. That of personal influence over our fellows. (1) Many a godless man is encouraging himself in the way to perdition by some foolish or sinful word or deed of a professing Christian; and also many in whom all that is good dates from some solemn word said by a believer who never knew what that word was to do. And the humblest exercises this influence just as truly as the mightiest. The little child that died before it ever spoke an articulate sentence may have done more than the wisest and greatest to permanently affect the whole character and life of its parents. There is a sense in which the most selfish man cannot live and die to himself. He will influence by the tone and atmosphere of his life. Every professing Christian is an epistle known and read of all men. By his entire life he is saying, "One thing is needful: seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"; or else, "All these things are very well to talk of, but give me the main chance." (2) And as we cannot live, neither can we die to ourselves. Our death is the testing-time of all our life, the thing that fixes the character of it all. And what different influences come from different deaths! Think of the hardening effect of a death of which you say, "Ah, he's gone; no great loss to anybody but himself"; and then think of the effect of a death about which you say, "Well, religion must be a real and wonderful thing to have kept a man up in suffering as it did there!" And very naturally Balaam's wish will follow. 2. That of mutual dependence. The work of many of you is rather for your children than for yourselves: and even the young should know that their parents' happiness is dependent on their turning out well. Effects, reaching to millions of people, come of causes in human beings thousands of miles away, and never seen nor known. A fancy, in a savage race, for some article of British manufacture, will increase the comforts of many homes in a great manufacturing town. Or a people arise in war for slavery; and the consequence is felt in trade and religion all over the world. We are gradually finding out that the welfare of one race or nation is the welfare of all. We are learning to cast away the infidel question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and are learning instead those wise words of a heathen, "I am a human being, and I feel that I have something to do with everything human!" which are an echo of St. Paul's. Yes, my friend, there are some who could not do well for a while yet without you. There are those whom almost every human being would miss if he were taken away. Very few lives could be quenched without loss and grief to some one. II. THE SENSE IN WHICH PAUL MEANT IT. 1. The text is a step in an argument. Paul has been arguing for toleration, and showing that though men may differ on points short of the great essential doctrines of salvation, they may yet be conscientious and devoted Christians. So we are to recognise as Christians all whom God would recognise. Everything the true Christian does, the apostle says he does as for his God and Saviour. "For none of us liveth unto himself," &c. And thus the great truth taught is that the Christian does not live to himself in the sense of thinking mainly of self. His will is subordinated to God's; his great end is not to get on in life, but rather "to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." Now, in this sense of the phrase, many do live entirely to themselves and not at all to God. There are people who could not seriously say that, from Monday morning to Saturday night, they bestow any real thought on anything beyond the horizon of this world. 2. Here, then, we have a test by which to try the reality of our Christian profession and character. Would it be a safe thing for any one to say to this congregation, We differ one from another in a great many respects; but there is one thing in which we are all agreed, "None of us liveth to himself, and none of us will die to himself!" We are all living and will die to God. But this great test is one that is thoroughly accepted by people who are not Christians, who hold very cheap the fair words of the man in whom all is tainted with the plague-spot of selfishness. The great secret of usefulness is the ceasing to live to yourself! "They glorified God in me," said St. Paul of those who heard of his conversion; and God shall be glorified in each of us, whether in life or in death, if we be truly devoted to Him. (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Religious selfishness*:—Do we all live up to the spirit of the text in our—I. PRAYERS? The Lord's Prayer is all in the plural number. Our Saviour's prayers were and are essentially intercessory. So were Daniel's, Paul's, Jeremiah's, Abraham's. In fact, all the great prayers of the Bible are intercessory. But is it not with most of us, *my* wants, *my* sorrows, *my* difficulties, *my* soul? Is not the thought of others a very small part when you are upon your knees, and thanksgiving for others the smallest of all? May not this be a reason for the very few answers you have had? God turned the captivity of

Job when he prayed for his friends. Inscribe it in your oratory as the life of your prayers—"None of us liveth to himself." II. RELIGIOUS LIFE. The religion of most men consists of little more than going to church, reading religious books, and now and then talking to some religious person. Whereas every Christian is to be a leavening element, placed in this world to germinate and extend truth. Every feeling which God gives a man is the property of the Church and of the world. III. CONVERSATION. The right rule for this is, that there should be a reciprocity, and that each person should try, according to the character of the persons to whom he is talking, to get good, or to do good, but the tendency is to think far more of the good we may get than of that we may give. IV. RELIGIOUS VIEWS. Most of us live in a very narrow system of ideas. God forbid that we should be so liberal as to profess to find truth everywhere and leave it nowhere. But so the more essential truths are held, and the Lord Jesus is magnified, we ought not to break up the great continent of truth into so many little islands, on which each puny man takes his stand, and says, "This is the Church." V. CHURCH WORK. Can it be a right state when, out of such a congregation as this, there is such a little band to be found of those who give themselves to any expressed work of usefulness? How many are living in their little daily circle, attending to their own health, or their own business, or their own souls! But will the kingdom of God ever be spread in this way? (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Religious selfishness:*—The Emperor Constantine said to one who was dissatisfied with every church he had attended, "Some are so supremely selfish that they would construct a special heaven for themselves and their friends." (*S. Milner.*) *Selfish and unselfish workers:*—Of all things beware of that most mortal selfishness, that greedy selfishness, which makes a man unwilling to labour, for fear that somebody else will get the benefit of his labour instead of himself. Remember Him who for ever and for ever labours for something or somebody beside Himself. What can the sparrow give to God? And yet God every morning thinks of the sparrow. What can ten myriad, myriad worms on the earth give back to God? And yet God never forgets the worm. What return can the great tribe of insects make to God for His watchful care? Piping on their tiny instruments they can raise no song of praise worthy of His hearing. All living creatures on the broad universe receive God's benefaction; and it is His joy to work for their benefit. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Self or Christ; which is it?*—I. THE SETTING ASIDE OF SELF. Not annihilating it, but giving it its proper place. Selfishness is the master-sin, the master-curse of man. The selfish man is not like one looking round on a noble landscape, and forgetting himself in the beauty of the wide expanse, but like one carrying a mirror with him, so that every object is seen in connection with self, and is only admired as it helps to set off self. The apostle reverses all this. From the Christian's life, death, and all between, self has been displaced. The first setting aside of self is in the matter of justification before God; for, previously, man's object was to amend, improve, or mortify self, in order that he might recommend himself to God. The Holy Spirit, however, shows that self can contribute nothing towards man's acceptance with God. What is conviction of sin but just the setting aside of self? From that point it proceeds onwards throughout a man's whole life. Others may live and die to themselves, but not we who have been "bought with a price." How this—1. Elevates life! That which degrades life is the introduction of self, but now life is lifted up into its true glory—the position which God originally designed for man. 2. Takes away life's littlenesses. 3. Establishes and strengthens life. 4. Secures us against all failure and disappointment. II. THE SUBSTITUTE FOR SELF. 1. In the matter of our standing before God. As the first thing the Holy Spirit does is to set aside self, in the matter of justification and acceptance, so His next is to present to us the Son of God as the true ground of our acceptance. Having taken Him in the place of self, we find ourselves at once "accepted in the Beloved." 2. As the object for whom we live. In Him we find an object worth living for. (1) What solemnity is thus thrown over life! All its parts and movements are now consecrated to the Lord. (2) What dignity this imparts, both to life and death! (3) What importance now attaches to life! All triviality has passed out of it. (4) What an imperishable character is thus imparted to life! It was self formerly that ruined everything. He is come in, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and He imparts His immortality to us. (5) What an incentive to zeal this gives us! (6) What a reason for consistency and holiness of life! Everything we do tells, not merely upon our comfort, earthly prospects, good name, but upon the glory of Christ. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH

THIS SUBSTITUTION IS EFFECTED (ver. 9). Christ's claim over us as Jehovah is eternal, and nothing can be added to it. But His claim over us as the Christ is a superadded claim. This claim He has made good by His death and resurrection. Nor can any one dispute it or present a rival one, for no other has done what He did. 1. The least, then, that we can give Him is our life; the undivided service of our being, in every part. 2. Our death is to be His. In dying He thought on us; so in dying let us think on Him. Our death is to be for His glory. 3. Our eternity is to be His. He ever liveth for us; let us anticipate the ever living for Him. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The action of presence*:—1. One of the most remarkable phenomena in chemistry is that which is known as "catalysis," or the "action of presence"—so called because the mere presence of a certain substance among the atoms of another substance produces the most extensive changes upon these atoms; and yet the body thus operating is itself unchanged. Thus, *e.g.*, starch is converted into sugar and gum, at a certain temperature, by the presence of an acid which does not participate in the change. A current of hydrogen gas directed upon a piece of polished platinum will take fire, and yet the platinum will remain completely unaltered. Very many of the most important actions of growth and decay, of life and death throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms, are produced by this catalytic power. We find illustrations also in the attractions of cohesion and gravitation, in the resemblance of many animals to the soil on which they live, or the objects by which they are surrounded, and in the regional resemblance subsisting between all the plants and animals belonging to one continent and its dependencies. Ascending higher, we find the influence of this principle in the characteristic features of mental, moral, and physical likeness which the inhabitants of a particular district acquire; and in the resemblance so often noticed between the countenances of husband and wife who have lived long together. 2. But it is in the social world that we see the most striking examples. Human beings are unceasingly exerting unconscious influence upon one another, and producing results of the most vital and lasting importance. The very presence of some is like sunshine, while the society of others acts like a dark cloud. We feel at once at our ease in the presence of some people, and awkward and reserved in the presence of others. On a large scale we see the effects of the same law in the conventionalities of life, in fashions, in the enthusiasm of a crowd, in the panics of trade, and in moral epidemics. 3. The hem of Christ's garment was instinct with healing power; and the very shadow of the apostles shed silent virtue on the sick laid by the wayside. And so in a manner is it with Christians still. But this nameless influence is different in different cases. The natural man often shines through the new man, and produces an alien impression. One is morose and bigoted; his very presence acts like an acid. Another is Pharisaically strict, and makes sad the heart that God has not made sad. A third is morbid, oppressed with little fidgety difficulties and trials. All these Christians are, insensibly to themselves, producing an effect upon others quite contrary to what they wish: they are giving a wrong idea of their religion to the world. On the other hand, there are Christians who produce in others a sense of their close relation to God, and breathe around them an atmosphere as healthy and exhilarating as the air on a mountain-top. They give an adequate representation of what Christianity is and does. Note respecting this spiritual catalysis—I. ITS TRUTHFULNESS. We say of children that they instinctively know those who love them, and go to such at once; while no kind words or sweet looks will allure them to the side of those who are not lovers of the little ones at heart. What is this but just the impression which a true character is making upon a heart gifted, by virtue of its simplicity, with an insight unknown to the wise and prudent? So also every one has noticed the fondness of animals for certain persons, and their aversion to others. Every Christian is producing two sets of influences. One is the involuntary influence of his real character; the other is the influence of what he says and does for a special purpose. Now these two currents may be opposed to one another. The character may be saying one thing, the lips and conduct another. But in vain does a man profess to be what he is not. The mask worn for a purpose continually slips aside, and reveals the natural face behind. There is a species of animalcule called Rotifera, living in tufts of mosses, which, when placed under the microscope, is found to be transparent as crystal. You see all its internal organs and the processes of life as you see the works of a watch through the glass. We are like this creature. I may not be able to tell why I think a certain person is not a genuine character, but I have an instinctive feeling that he is not what he pretends to be. II. ITS CONSTANCY. Not more constantly is

the sun shining, or a flower exhaling its fragrance, than the Christian is radiating or exhaling influence from his character upon those around him. What a man voluntarily chooses, says, or does, is only occasional. But what he is—that is necessarily perpetual. I cannot always speak a word for Christ, but I can always live for Him. The voluntary language of what I say or do is spasmodic, and liable to continual interruption; but the language of what I really am is as continuous as my life itself. Just as the leaven, by its mere presence, changes the particles of meal in the midst of which it is hid, so does each human being, by his mere presence, affect for good or evil those with whom he associates. III. ITS RESPONSIBILITY. This we do not always acknowledge. We are responsible, we say, for the influence that we desire to produce upon others; but for the voluntary effect of our life, we think we are no more responsible than we are for the involuntary beating of our hearts. We cannot, however, thus repudiate our responsibility. For what is our character? The sum of our thoughts, feelings, and actions. This character we ourselves have formed, and while we cannot help the silent influence of our character, when formed, we are responsible for the formation of it. Our very accountability to God rests upon our ability to build up a good character; and if we are judged according to the goodness and evil of our character itself, we may certainly be held responsible for the good or evil influence which, unknown to us, it produces upon others. We cannot live in the world and escape this responsibility, because we cannot live in the world and not exert a moral influence upon others. The radiation of heat from one object to another, the equalisation of temperature, is not more certain in the physical world than the distribution of influence in the moral. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *Influence*:—I. THE POWER OF HUMAN INFLUENCE. 1. Nothing in the universe is self-contained. There is an intimate connection and mutual dependence existing between all things and beings. This is true in—(1) The angelic world (Heb. i.). (2) In the world of nature. Not a single atom of matter, ray of light, &c., stands alone. The fall of a bullet (so says Mr. Grove) "changes the dynamical condition of the universe." Bacon affirms that "All things that have affinity with the heavens move upon the centre of another which they benefit." (3) The human world. The interdependence of one another is an absolute fact. Isaac Taylor has well said, "On principles even of mathematical calculations each individual of the human family may be demonstrated to hold in his hand the centre lines of an interminable web-work on which are sustained the fortunes of multitudes of his successors." 2. Influence binds us to one another and the world. It is twofold. (1) Direct and palpable. Such is seen in the active employment of that moral power which we all possess, *e.g.*, in teaching, &c. (2) Indirect and imperceptible. This is the most constant, uniform, and powerful. We all come beneath this law. Each soul born into this world increases or diminishes the sum total of human happiness or woe. Every deed, word, thought, and emotion must sometimes be known and influential. What an awful solemnity does this give the present life; how closely does it link the future with the present! "Yonder" is but an outgrowth of this "here" and "now." II. HUMAN INFLUENCES SHOULD BE CONSECRATED TO GOD'S SERVICE. 1. God claims this power as peculiarly belonging to Him. His empire is as extensive as space and eternity, "He is sovereign Lord over life" and "death." Either with or against our wills, our influence must minister to His purposes. 2. The Christian who realises the principles of the text consciously and willingly consecrates this power, "his life," "his death" to God. In every state of being we belong to Christ. 3. All claims to service rest either upon—(1) Ownership. (2) Authority, or—(3) Engagement. Upon each and all of these grounds God claims our conscious consecration. III. THE ADVANTAGES RESULTING FROM AN UNRESERVED CONSECRATION OF INFLUENCE TO THE DIVINE SERVICE. 1. The end of life in its holiest and highest form is answered. The springs of an action determine its value, selfishness is adverse to usefulness. A disinterested Christian life alleviates much moral and physical misery. 2. Is the fountain of the purest and most permanent happiness. 3. Gilds the close of life with unspeakable light and peace. (*J. Foster, B.A.*) *Influence, a child's*:—In a cemetery a little white stone marked the grave of a dear little girl, and on the stone were chiselled these words—"A child of whom her playmates said, 'It was easier to be good when she was with us'"—one of the most beautiful epitaphs ever heard of. *Influence, a child's*:—A gentleman was once lecturing in the neighbourhood of London. In the course of his address he said, "All have influence." There was a rough man at the other end of the room with a little girl in his arms. "Everybody has influence, even that little child," said the lecturer, pointing to her. "That's true, sir," cried

the man. Everybody looked round, of course; but the man said no more, and the lecturer proceeded. At the close the man came up to the gentleman and said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but I could not help speaking. I was a drunkard; but as I did not like to go to the public-house alone, I used to carry this child. As I came near the public-house one night, hearing a great noise inside, she said, 'Don't go, father.' 'Hold your tongue, child.' 'Please, father, don't go.' 'Hold your tongue, I say.' Presently I felt a big tear on my cheek. I could not go a step farther, sir. I turned round and went home, and have never been in a public-house since—thank God for it. I am now a happy man, sir, and this little girl has done it all; and when you said that even she had influence I could not help saying, 'That's true, sir'; all have influence." (*Freeman.*) *Influence, inevitable:*—That which a man *is*, that sum total made up of the items of his beliefs, purposes, affections, tastes, and habits, manifested in all he does and does not, is contagious in its tendency, and is ever photographing itself on other spirits. He himself may be as unconscious of this emanation of good or evil from his character, as he is of the contagion of disease from his body, or, if that were equally possible, of the contagion of good health; but the fact, nevertheless, is certain. If the light is in him, it must shine; if darkness reigns, it must shade; if he glows with love, it will radiate its warmth; if he is frozen with selfishness, the cold will chill the atmosphere around him; and if corrupt and vile, he will poison it. Nor is it possible for any one to occupy a neutral or indifferent position. In some form or other he must affect others. Were he to banish himself to a distant island, or even enter the gates of death, he still exercises a positive influence, for he is a loss to his brother—the loss of that most blessed gift of God, even that of a living man to living men, of a being who ought to have loved and to have been beloved. (*N. Macleod, D.D.*) *Living for others:*—"I live not wholly for myself," said a beautiful flower one fair morning, as it lifted to the sun its crest sparkling with dewdrops. "I live not wholly for myself. Mortals come and gaze on me, and breathe my fragrance, and go away better than they came; for I minister to their perceptions of the beautiful. I give to the bee his honey, and to the insect his food; I help to clothe the earth in beauty." "I live not wholly for myself," said a wide-spreading tree. "I give a happy home to a hundred living beings; I grant support to the living tendrils of the vine; I absorb the noxious vapours in the air; I spread a welcome shadow for man and beast; and I, too, help to make earth beautiful." "I live not wholly for myself," said a laughing mountain streamlet. "I know that my tribute to the ocean is small, but still I am hastening to carry it there. And I try to do all the good I can on my way. The tree and the flower love my banks, for I give them life and nourishment; and even the grass which feels my influence has a greener hue. The minnows find life and happiness in my waters, though I glide onward only a silver thread; and men and animals seek my brink to assuage their thirst, and enjoy the shadow of the trees which I nourish. I live not wholly for myself." "I live not wholly for myself," said a bright-hued bird, as he soared upwards into the air. "My songs are a blessing to man. I have seen the poor man sad and despondent as he went home from his daily work, for he knew not how to obtain food for his little ones. Then I tuned one of my sweetest lays for his ear, and he looked upward, saying: 'Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet my heavenly Father feedeth them. Am not I better than they?' and the look of gloom changed to one of cheerfulness and hope. I live not wholly for myself." "I live not wholly for myself," should be the language of every thinking, reflecting mind. It is the language of duty, guiding to the only paths of happiness on earth, and preparing the soul for unalloyed bliss throughout "the measureless enduring of eternity." (*Great Thoughts.*) *Every man has a good or evil influence:*—The fact that no man can evade the responsibility of living either for good or for evil in this world, is strikingly set forth by Dr. Chalmers in the following weighty paragraph:—"Every man is a missionary now and for ever, for good or for evil, whether he intends it or designs it or not. He may be a blot, radiating his dark influence to the very circumference of society; or he may be a blessing, spreading benediction over the length and breadth of the world; but a blank he cannot be. There are no moral blanks; there are no neutral characters. We are either the sower that sows and corrupts, or the light that splendidly illuminates, and the salt that silently operates; but being dead or alive, every man speaks." *The power of influence:*—Look at those concentric rings growing wider and wider, rolling their fair ripples among the reedy sedge, tipping the overhanging boughs of yonder willow, stirring the nest of the

startled water-hen, producing an influence, slight but conscious, to the farthest margin of the lake itself. That idle word—that word of heat or scorn—flung from my lips in casual company. "Oh," you say, "it produced a momentary impression upon the mind of those who listened to it, and that is all." No; it is not. Believe me it is not. It deepened that man's disgust at godliness; and it sharpened the edge of that other man's sarcasm; and it shamed that half-convinced one out of his penitent misgivings; and it exerted an influence, slight but determining, upon the destinies of that immortal life. Oh, this is a terrible power that I have—this power of influence. And I cannot get rid of it. It clings to me like the shirt of Nessus upon Hercules. It looks through my eye: it speaks from my lips; it walks abroad with me. I cannot live to myself. I must either be a light to illuminate or a tempest to destroy. (*W. M. Punshon.*) *Influence, permanent:*—The pulsations of the atmosphere, once set in motion by the human voice, cease not to exist with the sounds to which they gave rise. Strong and audible as they may be in the immediate neighbourhood of the speaker, and at the immediate moment of utterance, their attenuated force soon becomes inaudible to human ears. The waves of the air thus raised perambulate the earth and ocean's surface; and, in less than twenty hours, every atom of its atmosphere takes up the altered movement due to that infinitely small portion of the primitive motion which has been conveyed to it through countless channels, and which must continue to influence its path throughout its future existence. Thus considered, what a strange chaos is this wide atmosphere we breathe! Every atom, impressed with good and with ill, retains at once the motion which sages and philosophers have imparted to it, mixed and combined in ten thousand ways with all that is worthless and base. The air is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said, or woman whispered. There, in their mutable but unerring characters, mixed with the earliest as well as with the latest sighs of mortality, stand for ever recorded vows unredeemed, promises unfulfilled, perpetuating in the united movements of each particle the testimony of man's changeful will. (*Babbage.*) *Influence, perpetuity of:*—It is a high, solemn, almost awful thought for every individual man, that his earthly influence, which has had a beginning, will never, through all ages, were he the very meanest of us, have an end! What is done is done; has already blended itself with the boundless, ever-living, ever-working universe, and will also work there, for good or for evil, openly or secretly, throughout all time. *Influence, personal:*—The greatest works that have been done have been done by the ones. The hundreds do not often do much, the companies never do: it is the units, just the single individuals, that, after all, are the power and the might. Take any church,—there are multitudes in it; but it is some two or three that do the work. Look on the Reformation!—there might be many reformers, but there was but one Luther: there might be many teachers, but there was but one Calvin. Look ye upon the preachers of the last age, the mighty preachers who stirred up the churches—there were many coadjutors with them; but, after all, it was not Whitefield's friends, nor Wesley's friends, but the men themselves, that did it. Individual effort is, after all, the grand thing. A man alone can do more than a man with fifty men at his heels to fetter him. Look back through all history. Who delivered Israel from the Philistines?—it was solitary Samson. Who was it gathered the people together to rout the Midianites?—it was one Gideon, who cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" Who was he that smote the enemy?—it was Shamgar, with his ox-goad; or it was an Ehud, who, with his dagger, put an end to his country's tyrant. Separate men—Davids with their slings and stones—have done more than armies could accomplish. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Influence, posthumous:*—Da Vinci's famous painting of "The Lord's Supper," originally adorning the dining-room of a convent, has suffered such destruction from the ravages of time, war, and abuse, that none of its original beauty remains. Yet it has been copied and engraved; and impressions of the great picture have been multiplied through all civilised lands. Behold a parable of posthumous influence. *Influence, small, its value:*—"I have no more influence than a farthing rushlight," said a workman; to whom his friend gave reply, "Well, a rushlight does much. It may burn a haystack or a house—nay, it helps me to read God's Word. Go your way, and let your rushlight so shine before men that they may glorify your Father in heaven." *Influence, unconscious:*—It is related that when Thorwaldsen returned to his native land with those wonderful marbles which have made his name immortal, chiselled with patient toil and glowing aspiration during his studies in Italy, the servants who opened them scattered

upon the ground the straw in which they were packed. The next summer, flowers from the gardens of Rome were blossoming in the streets of Copenhagen from the seeds thus accidentally planted. The genius that wrought grandly in marble had unconsciously planted beauty by the wayside. *Influence, unconscious, its power* :—Many years ago an intelligent youth was apprenticed in the town of Poole. He had been piously trained by his good parents, but unhappily, having left home, he yielded to temptation, neglected the reading of his Bible, disregarded the Sabbath, and gave up prayer. John was gradually declining from bad to worse, when one night a new apprentice arrived. On being pointed to his little bed, the youth put down his luggage, and then, in a very silent but solemn manner, knelt down to pray. John, who was busily preparing for rest, saw this. He did not raise a laugh, as many youths would have done; conscience troubled him. God's Holy Spirit strove with him: it was the turning-point in his life. He again began to pray, sought the Saviour, and was enabled at length to rejoice as one of God's forgiven children. A few years afterwards he began to preach to others. He ultimately devoted himself altogether to the ministry, and became one of the most laborious, successful, and honoured of God's servants. His writings are to be found in many languages, and in almost every part of the world, and his name will probably be had in grateful remembrance as long as time shall last. A few years ago a funeral—such a funeral as is seldom seen—took place in one of our great manufacturing towns. Clergymen, ministers, civic authorities, merchants, and thousands of men of all classes were paying honour to the departed. Shops were closed, and the whole town seemed wrapt in mourning, as though some great prince had fallen. And who was the departed? None other than John Angell James, of Birmingham, the author of "The Anxious Inquirer," once the boy whose turning-point in life was brought about by the unflinching and devout example of his fellow-apprentice. *The object of life* :—To whom, for whom do we live? This is a question of the utmost importance to everybody, even when we look at it singly; but this importance acquires an awful character when we cast our thoughts forward from this question to the next. To whom, for whom shall we die? And each person will have to make his own answer. I. MOST MEN LIVE TO THEMSELVES. Some hunt after riches, others after pleasure, others after ease and comfort, others after power, others after honour and a good name, a few after knowledge; but all for themselves. However the tunes may change, the same keynote runs through them all—self, self, self. Where do we hear of any, labouring for the sake of gaining riches, pleasure, &c., for others? A few, indeed, here and there, are not unwilling to spend the odds and ends of their time for the good of others, who will eat the dinner themselves, and then call in their neighbours to pick up the crumbs under the table. Thus far the natural man may mount. But so long as our natural heart continues unchanged, so long will self be the idol which that heart worships, and the taint of selfishness cleave even to our least blamable actions. II. HOW STRANGE THAT MEN SHOULD LIVE TO THEMSELVES! For we cannot fail to see that by our very nature we were made, not to live to ourselves, but to each other. 1. We are brought into the world by others. We cannot grow up without others; nor learn to walk, to speak, to do anything without others. All that we learn by reading we learn from others, most of whom have been long lying in their graves. The tea you drink comes from China; the cotton for your clothes from India or America. 2. It is impossible for any person to live wholly for himself; at least unless he shuts himself up in a cell or a wilderness. But this is an act so contrary to our nature, that no one would frame such a design, unless with a purpose of living, not for himself, but for God. In their ordinary condition men have numberless wants, which bind them together, and make them dependent on each other. The help, which, during the period of our entire helplessness, was given through the stirrings of natural affection, we cannot obtain, when we are grown up, except by helping others in turn. The richest man cannot live without the ministries of his poorer brethren: nor can he gain their help, except by making them in some measure sharers in his riches. The reason why, as society advances, men are set apart for different trades, is, because they will help each other far more than each man could ever help himself by following every trade at once. III. MEN SHOULD NOT LIVE TO THEMSELVES, BUT TO GOD. The text is more especially meant as a warning against one particular branch of selfishness—self-will. It tells us that we are not to live according to our own will, but according to a higher will than our own. 1. This too is a lesson, which the whole order of our nature and condition in the world and the constitution of society are meant to teach us. It is plainly one of the

reasons why we are born so helpless, and continue so long in childhood, in order that we may learn to obey, so that our stubborn will may be mortified and crushed. Again in after life, whatever we do, if we are to do it successfully, we must do patiently, obediently, conforming our will to nature, watching the course of the seasons, and ploughing and sowing accordingly, ministering to nature, to the end that nature may minister to us. Moreover, when men unite into societies, they are constrained to sacrifice, each his own will, to the will of the society, which is set up on high as law, and claims obedience from all. 2. Yet all these forces, mighty as they would seem to be, are totally unable to subdue our self-will. In spite of all the lessons of experience, we cling to the persuasion that happiness consists in having our own way, although no man ever had his own way without falling sooner or later into the bottomless pit. 3. Nor is there any power mighty enough to deliver us from the bonds of selfishness, except the free Spirit of Christ. We must learn to live to God, to do all things for His glory, and with an eye to His will, and we shall then learn to live for others. The Christian must endeavour to fashion himself after the perfect pattern set before him by his Lord. For Jesus lived not to Himself, but to God, not seeking His own happiness, but the happiness of all mankind. This was the very purpose for which He left His throne and died upon the Cross. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *The end of life*:—I. IT IS GOD'S DESIGN THAT WE SHOULD NOT CONFINE OUR REGARDS TO OURSELVES, BUT EXTEND THEM TO OUR FELLOW-MEN. Various considerations may be presented in support of this proposition. 1. The duty relating to man enjoined in the moral law is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." 2. This testimony of Scripture is confirmed by the gregarious tendencies of man. The instinct implanted in our nature by the Author of our being, which leads men to cling together and to form themselves into communities for mutual assistance and protection, affords no small proof of the Creator's design that they should be fellow-helpers of each other. 3. Additional confirmation of this truth may be found in our social relations. (1) Men cannot marry within certain limits of consanguinity without their offspring becoming degenerate. Thus God has placed the ban of His displeasure upon the exclusiveness of caste. (2) Rich and poor have to combine for the accomplishment of given ends. Without the combination of the one's capital with the other's labour, various results now obtained would not be realised. Capital can purchase the raw material; but how, without labour, can it be transported and manufactured? Labour, again, can build the house; but capital is necessary to procure the material and the site. (3) The division of labour and union of workmen teaches me the same truth. I cannot look on a building or a vessel without being reminded that such works could not have been produced by any number of individuals working in a state of isolation. To how many beside the agriculturist are we indebted for our food! To how many beside the draper for our clothing! It may be said, almost, that every man is indebted to every man, and that every man is to some extent the servant of the humblest man that lives. And it is with nations as with individuals. The superabundant produce of one may, for the profit of both, be exchanged with the manufacture of another, whose produce is insufficient to support its teeming population. II. IT IS GOD'S DESIGN THAT WE SHOULD NOT LIVE TO OURSELVES, BUT FOR THE PROMOTION OF HIS GLORY. 1. The same law which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves, also requires us to love God supremely. 2. The nature of man echoes this verdict of inspiration. When I look at heathen nations, I find them everywhere in their own way acknowledging their obligations to a God. There is a law written on every man's heart to the effect that as we are indebted to God for the origin and maintenance of our existence, we owe Him our supreme regard and constant service. 3. Our conviction is strengthened when we survey the external world. (*W. Landels.*) *Living and dying to the Lord*:—This is an instance of Paul's way of rising from a particular question to a general principle. A doubtful disputation springs up, on a small and narrow point of casuistry, as to meats or days. Instead of its being discussed by subtle argumentation and a fine balance of small reasons for and against, the case is at once carried into a region of spiritual thought and duty, from whence there may be got both a nearer insight into heaven and a larger oversight of earth. I. THE FACT STATED. 1. Negatively. There is a sense in which we speak of a man living to himself, when he acts with a selfish eye to his own interests or pleasure. Is this the explanation here? It might be so, were it not for what follows; for no selfish man dies for his own profit. When dying or not dying to one's self is connected with living or not living to one's self, it is plain

that states of being, not deeds or actions, must be intended. There can be no reference to what is matter of voluntary choice, but rather to what is ordered and arranged for us. (1) And in a sense the text is true of the unregenerate as well as of the regenerate. (*a*) I enter the busy hall of commerce or the haunt of gaiety and dissipation, and not one in either place is living really to himself. The life you are living, whether in the pursuit of gold or pleasure, is not indeed to yourselves. You heap up riches, and know not who shall gather them. You live in wantonness, but you live in vain. A man cannot isolate himself in this great and goodly universe of being. He cannot become either a hermit or a god. (*b*) And how awfully true is it of the ungodly that none of them dieth unto himself! Did any one of the company of Corah die to himself? Or take those who close a life of vanity with self-righteous decorum or mere slumbering insensibility, does any one of them die to himself for his own benefit, as if his death were for himself alone? How great, ye godless ones, is your madness! If you could live to yourselves, or die to yourselves, then indeed ye might have some apology for trifling as you now do with life's precious gift and death's awful doom. (2) But it is of believers that the apostle speaks. For the believer both life and death are invested with new character and value: and it must be with reference to this character and value that it is here said of him that he does not live or die to himself. Your new life and death, then, believers, are not to yourselves. (*a*) As if they belonged to you as being purchased or procured by you. (*b*) As if for your own sakes and on your own account merely they were given to you. (*c*) As gifts terminating in yourselves. They have respect to something out of and beyond yourselves. 2. Positively. (1) The life you have got is not only from Him; it is also and emphatically to Him. You are not made spiritually alive merely for your own comfort and peace. It is for Himself that He has redeemed and renewed and quickened you (Ezek. xxxvi. 22; 1 Tim. i. 16). (2) And so also as to death. Very different, indeed, is your death from that of unregenerate men. Even they die unto the Lord, who endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. But to you death is no more penal; it has no more sting. It is a falling asleep; a departing to be with Christ. And, with all its blessedness, it is unto the Lord. Your hopeful death, like your holy life, you owe to Him. And your being enabled thus to die is unto Him. He is glorified in your dying. 3. These views may tend to soothe our spirits, in the contemplation of the lives and deaths of God's people. (1) They often have a troubled course in life. But the explanation is found in this, that none of them liveth to himself. God has other ends to serve by it besides the believer's own peace, or even his salvation. (2) And to their death may this same consideration reconcile us. These deaths may seem to be, many of them, premature. One consolation we have in the assurance that for themselves to be with Christ is far better; but the text suggests that their death is not for their own sakes merely, but to advance the Lord's cause and promote the Lord's ends. II. THE INFERENCE DEDUCED. "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." 1. All men are the Lord's, whether they will or no. It is true of unbelievers that living and dying you are the Lord's. He has you in His grasp, and you cannot escape. Ah! were either of these two things otherwise, your case might not be so desperate as it is. If your life and death were unto yourselves; or if you, living and dying, were still your own, you might have some apology for your unconcern, and for living and dying as you please. But do but consider what it is to belong absolutely and helplessly to that very Lord who tells you that, live and die as you may, it is to Him and to His ends. Oh! surely "it is hard for you to kick against the pricks!" Consider who this Lord is. Is it not He who, at a great price, has purchased this lordship over you, this ownership of you? It is Jesus who died and rose again, to whom the Father has given power over all flesh. 2. But again, I turn to you who believe. (1) It is your comfort to know that, whether you live or die, you are the Lord's; and very specially to know this in connection with the assurance which goes before. What a guarantee, both for the safe preservation and for the right ordering of your life, as a life that you live not unto yourselves, but unto the Lord! And if thus living unto Him, you are so securely His, how, as regards your dying, may you cast all your care upon Him! (2) The text is applicable for admonition as well as for comfort. It gives the death-blow to all selfishness, both as regards your judgment of others, and as regards your management of yourselves. For the fact that you live and die unto the Lord, makes you the Lord's in respect of your obligation, whether you live or die, to feel and own yourselves to be His, and to seek not your

own ends, but His. (*R. S. Candlish.*) *Christian devotedness:*—I. NO MAN LIVETH TO HIMSELF. This is essentially characteristic of the true Christian; for a man who lives to himself, by the sentence of the text, is not a Christian. The Christian—1. Regards the great end of his being. Human existence must have an object. God acts not in anything without design. What am I? and, Why am I? are questions we ought frequently to ask; and he who acts according to the answer which the Scripture gives, will live not to himself, but to the Lord. 2. Habitually respects the approbation of God. (1) Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. For no man can be acceptable to God but through that. (2) Through the active employment of that moral power which faith in Christ gives to maintain that character, and to do those works which God approves. 3. Feels an interest in the cause of Christ. To live unto ourselves is quite incompatible with this. We must renounce either the one or the other. "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself." 4. Is concerned for the temporal miseries of his suffering fellow-men. He who lives to the Lord will follow His example in going about doing good. Nor is this work of charity obstructed by the most earnest concern for the salvation of men. II. NO CHRISTIAN MAN DIETH TO HIMSELF. This is his reward for not living to himself. God takes his cause into His own hands, and binds up his death with His own plans. 1. It may be in judgment to others. So many prayers are lost to the world; an influence is withdrawn; a light is quenched; one fewer is left to stand between the living and the dead. It may be in judgment to families who have refused admonition, and to unfaithful churches, and to nations. Properly, indeed, do we often pray that God would spare useful lives. 2. It may be hastened in mercy to him. The righteous are often taken away from the evil to come. 3. It is deferred, in many cases, in mercy to others. He is sometimes to endure the evil to come, and his private feelings are to give place to the public good. Thus Jeremiah was doomed to weep over the destruction of his people. St. Paul desired to depart; yet it was needful for him to continue. 4. In all cases God is glorified by his death. Perhaps in extreme suffering we may show a power of patience, a great triumph, an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord. Perhaps our death may be a calm dying into life; a summer wave gently rippling to the shore. It is enough. Let us live to Him, and in our death we shall glorify God. III. HE IS THEREFORE THE LORD'S IN LIFE AND DEATH, to do His will, to be acknowledged, guarded, blessed, and honoured as His. The Christian man is the Lord's—1. In life. Life includes—(1) Our earthly blessings; and they are given as far as they really tend to our advantage. (2) Our afflictions; for these we have comfort, support, and a glorious issue. (3) The period in which we are to be trained up for the maturity of holiness. 2. In death. The Christian man has served in the outer apartments of the house; he is now called into the presence-chamber. (*R. Watson.*) *The Christian's mission:*—I. THE NEGATIVE PRESENTMENTS OF THE TRUTH INVOLVED. 1. None of us ought to live to himself; for God has an original claim upon the service of every one of us, based upon the right of creation, the mercy of continued being, the mystery of redemption, the derivation from Him of a spiritual nature, gifts, and covenants, and revelations, and hopes of heaven. 2. None of us can do so. We have duties to discharge, which it must be to the injury of others if we neglect; a moral example to hold up, which must influence, either for good or evil, some subordinate mind. A man cannot dwell apart; nor divest himself of the necessity of doing some good or harm every day. 3. Nor is this view to be limited to the present generation. Our good or our evil deeds live after us. No man dieth to himself. We believe in the joyous meetings of the redeemed. To their unutterable sorrow the ungodly shall have meetings likewise, as well with those whom they have tempted, as with those who have tempted them. II. THE AFFIRMATIVE VIEW. 1. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord." This expression—(1) Implies the possession of a life derived from, centred in, devoted to Christ. A man must live before he acts. (2) Asserts a great rule of duty. We "live unto the Lord" when we live for the good of His people, for the honour of His cause, for the extension of His Church, for the glory of His name. And the consciousness that we are so living, and must so live, is one of the first indications of the renewed mind. 2. "Whether we die, we die unto the Lord." Christians can neither live useless lives, nor die useless deaths. 1. God gets to Himself honour from the dying hours of a Christian by the blessing to survivors, often occasioned by the affecting circumstances of his removal. A man may be permitted to win souls to Christ by his death, whom he could never win to seriousness in his life. 2. A good man dies unto the Lord,

because his removal may assume the aspect of a witness or a judgment, and so become a vindication to a faithless world of the rectitude of our Maker's ways. It is the world's loss; the loss of so many fervent prayers, so much of beneficent influence, so much of bright example to lure to heaven and lead the way. 3. A Christian "dies unto the Lord," because he dies to the glory of the Lord; to the honour of His grace, to the vindication of His faithfulness, to the magnifying of His gospel, to the illustration of His unchanging love, to the swelling of His redeeming triumphs in the life of the world to come. He dies to the Lord who dies in the Lord. 4. "Whether, therefore, we live or die, we are the Lord's" Such is the apostle's conclusion of the whole matter. It tells of—(1) Our safety in all worldly changes. The Great Ruler of the universe has a property in us, and He will guard and keep His own. (2) Our original; of our kindred with immortal natures; of our designation to endless life. (3) Our perseverance in faith and holiness, and of our final triumph over death and the grave. Jesus "having loved His own which were in the world, loves them unto the end." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Divinity of the inner and outer life of the good:*—The context suggests—1. That there is a variety of grades in Christian attainments—"weak in faith" and the "strong." The causes of this diversity are difference in mental capacity, methods of education, in the period of adopting Christianity, in the means of improvement and the manner of employing them, &c. 2. That those in the lowest grades of Christian attainment have generally displayed an undue attachment to religious ritualism. "Another who is weak, eateth herbs." 3. That the lowest grades, who act in conformity with their sincere conviction, demand the generous respect of all. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not." Had this always been acted upon the Church would have been spared all acrimonious controversies, schisms, and persecutions. 4. That the grand characteristic common to every grade in Christian attainment is devotedness to the Lord (ver. 6). The text is but an amplification of this idea. I. CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN'S INNER LIFE. "We live unto the Lord." Whatever power controls the soul is the true sovereign. The political Cæsars are but impotent pretenders compared with this. The supreme love is ever this power. The text suggests in relation to this inner sovereignty of Christ—1. That it is a principle of rule which stands opposed to all personal aims. "None of us liveth unto himself." There is a sense in which no man *can* live unto himself. Man is a link in the vast chain of being. He cannot move without influencing others. But what the apostle means is, that we Christians live not to self as a supreme end. Whilst it is the glory of man's nature that he *cannot* live unto himself, it is his shame that he will strive to do so. Is there a crime on the black scroll of human depravity that may not be traced to this source? Now, St. Paul intimates that living unto the Lord is the very opposite of this; it is to live as He lived who "pleased not Himself." 2. That it is a principle of rule held supreme amidst all the variations of life. "We live." "We die." It is not long since we commenced life: not far hence we shall close it. Now, the Christian holds the principle of Divine rule within him supreme amidst all these changes, even in the greatest death itself. "Not My will, but Thine, be done." Perhaps these variations are but the types of future changes. Eternity is not a scene of monotony. Death here, to the good man, is but an out-birth to a higher life; and may it not be that holy souls will emerge into higher, and still higher, forms of being for ever? But there will never be a change as to this governing principle of the soul. But why yield up our existence so entirely to the influence of another? (1) It is the only course congenial with our spiritual being. To live to self is to offer the greatest indignity to that soul whose relations are infinite, and whose sympathies were intended to compass the world. Happiness is defined as loving and being loved. But the selfish man has no generous love within him; and because of this others have no heart to love him. The soul must go out of self, and be filled with God in order to fill self with joy. (2) It is the only course agreeable to the universal law of right. We are absolutely the Lord's. To consecrate our all to Him is therefore our "reasonable service." (3) It is the only course that will ensure the approbation of God. God's smile is the glory of heaven, and His frown the midnight of hell. Surely, then, to seek His favour is the highest dictate both of wisdom and duty. And those who now, and at the last day, will secure the "Well done!" are those who are inspired and ruled by the benevolent spirit of Jesus. II. CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF HIS OUTER LIFE (ver. 9). 1. Let it not be supposed that He is the Sovereign of both in the same sense. (1) His sovereignty over the inner life is dependent upon individual choice. For

Jesus to force His way to power over the human heart would be to destroy human responsibility. Nothing can rule the soul that it does not love, and there is no power that can force it to love. This inner sovereignty, then, is by the suffrage of mind. "We are made willing." But not so with the outer. Christ sits on His throne independent of the volitions of the universe. "He must reign"; to Him every knee shall bow. (2) His sovereignty over the inner life is a Christian virtue. To be ruled by the benevolent spirit of Christ has ever been felt and acknowledged praiseworthy. But the sovereignty of Christ over our outward circumstances is not to us a virtue. We had no power in raising Him to the throne, nor does His continuance there depend on us. (3) His sovereignty over the inner life is limited. In every age the numbers who have spiritually yielded to His sceptre have been few comparatively; but this external government stretches over the race, as it exists here, and in eternity, "the dead and the living." (4) His sovereignty over the inner life is ever a blessing, but over the outer it is frequently a tremendous curse. The man who enjoys His inner reign, exults beneath His outward sceptre. But the man who rebels against Him in his heart, writhes under His external authority. The mighty forces of government, which work in favour of willing subjects, proceed in dread array against Him as a rebel. 2. The basis and extent of Christ's outward authority. (1) It is founded on His death and resurrection. It is here implied that these facts occurred by Christ's own personal intention. (*a*) "For to this end He died." Not because of any law of mortality or violence, but simply because He purposed it (Heb. ii. 14). Have you anything analogous to this in the history of our world? It may be said that many men have been found willing to die; but their willingness was nothing more, at most, than a desire to die now rather than then. The question never rested with them to decide whether they would die or not. But Christ chose to die, whilst He might have avoided it for ever (John x. 17, 18). But wherein is the moral propriety of this? To die by self-resolution, what is it but suicide? The reply is this: that Christ was what no man is—the Proprietor of His own existence. (*b*) He rose as well as died, by His own personal purpose. It is not said that He was revived, but that He revived. This is wonderful, and there is but one way of explaining it: Jesus was God-man. The man-nature died, and the God-nature revived it. Now, these two facts are the basis of His mediatorial authority. "I am He that liveth and was dead, and am alive again, and have the keys of death and hell." (2) This outward authority extends over the "dead and living." Conclusion: If Christ is the "Lord of the dead and the living," then—1. There is nothing accidental in human history. He presides over all the acts of our being. 2. The departed are still in existence. Had the apostle believed that all that remained of the dead was the dust that lay in their graves, would he have spoken of Jesus as their Lord? 3. Death is not the introduction to a new kingdom. 4. We may anticipate the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Lord of the dead and the living:*—When our Lord had reached the end of His redeeming work He announced to His Church, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." This explained the whole mystery of His life on earth, and connected it with His future reign in heaven. The text is an echo of the Saviour's final saying. I. THE REDEEMER'S DOMINION OVER MEN. This is declared to be the end of His ministry on earth. 1. His death was a means to an end. (1) This great intention pervades the Scriptures. It was the eternal purpose of the Trinity, the meaning of the first promise, the keynote of psalm and prophecy. When He came it was a King that angels worshipped. His miracles were wrought to illustrate His kingship, and His teaching was based upon it. In the agony of death He spoke in the spirit of a King. (2) Without His death this dominion could not be reached. He might have come as the Son of God incarnate to assume His rightful sway, but that could only have been in wrath to vindicate His Father's violated law, and hence would have been the ruin of our race. But the government He came to obtain demanded that man should be redeemed from another power and then brought back to his lost estate of obedience and love. (*a*) Sin had dominion over man in virtue of the penalty of violated law. The Redeemer died to atone for sin, to absorb its sentence in Himself, and thus to reign in the bestowment of pardon and peace. (*b*) Sin had dominion over man through the law of evil ruling in his nature. By His atoning death the Redeemer obtained for man the Spirit of a new life making him free from the law of sin and death. 2. His resurrection declared that His end was attained, and that His empire was won. II. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THAT DOMINION 1. Its extent. The words "Lord of the dead and living." (1)

Place the whole race under Christ's feet. (*a*) The phrase gives mankind its distinct definition. Elsewhere the Redeemer's dominion is the entire creation. (*b*) It suggests the whole sad history of our ruin and wretchedness. We are a dying race, from generation to generation succumbing to our mortal enemy. But our Redeemer is ruling over our ruin and translating it into salvation. Our death His government turns to life. (*c*) It is not, however, the living and the dead, but the dead and living. The dead must have the pre-eminence, for they are the bulk of our race, sanctified to our thought by their mystery and multitude. (*d*) But it is the language of mortals. Christ has no dead subjects. All live to Him, as He told the Sadducees. (*e*) It prescribes the limits of the Redeemer's lordship which is to last while mankind are made up of dead and living. When death is swallowed up in victory it will cease, and God shall be all in all. (2) Distribute our Lord's dominion over two provinces. (*a*) He is the Lord of the world of disembodied spirits. He entered this world and Death yielded Him the keys which had been His from the beginning, but now became His by another right. But here the light fails us, and the evangelical record which follows the Lord's passion to His final cry suspends its story till He opens His lips to Mary; and we do well to respect its silence. The same restraint is laid upon us when we speak of the nature of Christ's empire here. Concerning one great province, that tenanted by those who died without the gospel, all we can say is that Christ is their Lord. Concerning those who have sinned against all revelation, inward and outward, He is their Lord too, and only their Lord. Over the remaining province, paradise, Christ rules, but there He also *is*, and all who enter follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. (*b*) We must now return to the living. He is their absolute Lord. It is the probation of every man who hears the gospel to accept or reject His sway. Rejection of that sway seals every man's fate; while acceptance is the foundation of personal religion. 2. Its character (ver. 7). The Lord to whom we have submitted has become—(1) The director of our being. We live unto the Lord. His loyal subjects have renounced self, and taken Him to be their supreme Lord (ver. 6). (2) The disposer of our being. We die to the Lord. Death is part of our sum of duty. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

Ver. 8. **For whether we live, we live unto the Lord.**—*The Christian idea of life*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF LIFE: "To the Lord we live: to the Lord we die." That idea of life is founded on ver. 7. In one aspect that is a universal and inevitable law. Now, Paul says that what all other men must do unconsciously, the Christian does consciously. Life has two aspects—the voluntary and the involuntary. Both these spheres of life are to be consecrated. 1. In the Christian idea the whole of those marvellous activities that rise from our will are to be one scene of dedication to God. This seems visionary and impossible. I believe it is practicable and attainable. To illustrate this. Our voluntary actions are most powerfully influenced by silent currents of emotion which only now and then flash into sight. Just as in the ocean, underneath the constant motion of its waves, there are deep currents setting in one fixed direction, undisturbed by the roar of the storm, and moving on still when calmness rests on the sea—so in the life of the soul. You see this in great transgressors. The silent progress towards crime culminates suddenly in outward action, and the unseen smouldering fire leaps out in flame. You see it in great discoverers. They had long been seeking for a truth; in a moment it revealed itself, and the silent train of inquiry flashed then to its result. We see it in ourselves. We have found temptation suddenly assume a gigantic and almost irresistible strength after periods of carelessness or unwatchfulness over our inner life. Or we have often found, after long fear and foreboding of some trial, a strength of soul arise which enables us to bear it. Now, if these silent, secret tendencies of thought and feeling control so much of our voluntary life, may not that life be wholly consecrated, if a great silent consecration be the strong impulse of our being? Have we not met with men whose lives were silent prayers, who have made us feel—even by passing words and trifling things—that Christ was being "formed within them"? Such men apparently forget the future in their work, but really, never. Present a temptation to them, and their strength of resistance manifests itself. If, then we are dedicated, we "live unto the Lord." 2. But there are the inevitable occurrences in life. Against them our wills are powerless. Constantly do we feel the truth of the proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes." Now the question arises, How can such things be consecrated; can we consecrate the unknown and inevitable? We cannot, but we can dedicate

ourselves by accepting the inevitable as coming from the hand of our Father. Not in mechanical submission, like slaves broken into discipline by the lash; not in hard stoicism, like the creatures of an inscrutable and remorseless fate; but in patient, trustful resignation, as children who, though they cannot trace the Father's plan, can yet repose on the knowledge of His love. To the man who can thus see God's glory through the windows of life, all adverse circumstances become consecrations. Disappointments bear on their bitter winds the sounds of songs. Great sorrows may rend the temple of life, but they will reveal within an altar and a sacrifice kindled by a Divine fire. Therefore, "whether we die, we may die unto the Lord." II. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH THIS CONSECRATION MAY BE REALISED (ver. 9). There are two aspects of this—1. By the power of His love Christ is Lord over our voluntary life. Christ must possess us, and we must yield up our hearts daily as living sacrifices to God through Him. It may be said, "But this is ideal and impossible, and would generate a morbid pietism." I do not say we can always be consciously acting under the power of Christ's love. But a deep communion with Him may so penetrate us with His Spirit as to hallow and glorify all our life, and thus "we may live unto the Lord." 2. Christ is Lord over the inevitable events of life. All things are given into His hands. He is King over our whole histories. Our disappointments, failures, sorrows, "death's agonies and fears," are known to and sympathised with by Him. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *A consecrated life*:—I. IMPLIES—1. Complete submission to Christ's authority. 2. Devotion to Him as our highest aim. 3. Subserviency to His designs. II. SECURES—1. Happiness. 2. Honour. 3. Blessing. 4. Success. 5. Final salvation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Living unto the Lord*:—I. WHAT THIS IS. It is the consecration to Christ of the life. 1. Intellectual. To think for Him, study Him, understand His will, read His Word. 2. Emotional. To make Him the object of our love, joy, hope. 3. Practical. To use the mouth to speak for Him, the hands to work for Him, the feet to carry His messages. 4. Spiritual. To be one with Him. II. HOW THIS IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. 1. By His living unto us. This He has done and still does. 2. By His drawing us to Himself. This He does by the allurements of His love. 3. By our willing surrender to His attraction. 4. By definite acts and a permanent spirit of self-consecration. III. FOR WHAT PURPOSE THIS IS DONE. 1. Supremely—for Christ's glory. 2. Mediately—for the benefit of the world. 3. Subordinately—for our own perfection. IV. TO WHAT ISSUE DOES THIS TEND? 1. Christ's universal supremacy in fact as well as by right. 2. A regenerated universe. 3. Endless personal reward. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Living unto the Lord*:—I. LIVING UNTO THE LORD may be considered as including the following particulars—1. That we make His will the rule, the only rule, of our conduct. 2. That we make His approbation our governing aim, and to study to please Him in all that we do. 3. That we make His glory our end in everything we do. 4. That we be wholly resigned to His disposal; blessing Him at all times, in adversity as well as in prosperity, making Him as welcome to take from us as to give unto us. 5. That we be so thoroughly devoted to Him as to account that we live not at all, but in so far as we serve Him and show forth His praise. II. Apply this description of genuine Christianity AS A MEASURE OR STANDARD FOR HELPING US TO JUDGE OF OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION. 1. Of what weight is the authority of God in your hearts? 2. Whom do you seek to please, and whose approbation do you principally covet? 3. What regard do you feel for the honour of your Lord? 4. What is it that gives the highest value to everything in your esteem? Conclusion—1. Unless we live unto the Lord we shall counteract the very design of that marvellous love He hath manifested towards us in giving Himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. 2. We are therefore obliged to live unto the Lord, as we regard the honour of our Master, and the credit of that saving religion which He taught. 3. We are bound to live in the manner I described by the strictest ties of justice and equity (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). (*R. Walker.*) *Living unto the Lord*:—1. Christ is the giver of our life. 2. He is the sustainer of our life. 3. He has redeemed our life. 4. He should therefore have the devotion of our life. 5. Then He will be the rewarder of our life. (*Ibid.*) *Working as to the Lord*:—Let me say this—we want to work as in the presence of the Lord. We know that the apostle in writing to Timothy in the Second Epistle says when he was speaking of his adversaries, "Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." There is such a thing as working under the eye of men. I was in a factory the other day in Fife, and the head of the firm took me through it; and while there was considerable activity and diligence on the part of the hands

employed, I noticed when the master stood beside the man or woman engaged in a certain work that there was a kind of special care. They were working under the master's eye. Ah! my brethren and my sisters, if we know that the Lord is with us in the pulpit or in the class or as we speak to individual souls we shall seek to do the work as under His eye. (*W. Lockhart.*) **And whether we die, we die unto the Lord.**—*Dying unto the Lord*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO DIE UNTO THE LORD? To have a view to the glory of God in all that pertains to our death. 1. In the state of our views and feelings in the prospect of death. It is not to be wondered at that the ungodly should fear death. But when God's people are alarmed it is a disparagement to Christ. When, however, they look forward to death with holy calmness and no longer regard it as the king of terrors, trusting in the sufficiency of Christ to bear up, God is glorified. Such count not their lives dear to them. 2. In the frame of our mind, and the tenor of our actions, during the various preparatory exercises which may precede death. (1) A deathbed brings around you affectionate friends, and places you in a situation to speak with effect and with power on Christ's behalf. Many good men and women are found on their deathbeds to be eminent and successful preachers of righteousness. (2) You may glorify God also in the meditations of your own hearts by the resignation with which you endure the chastenings of your Father. 3. Amidst the struggle and pain with which death is attended. Some only of God's saints are privileged thus to give glory to God. Times of trial and persecution are the seasons in which God has been most signally glorified amidst the last sufferings of His saints. II. WHAT MEANS SHOULD BE EMPLOYED THAT WE MAY BE PREPARED TO DIE UNTO THE LORD? 1. Enrich your minds with the stores of Divine truth. A deathbed needs these supports, and they are then very precious. 2. Do not entangle yourself needlessly with the concerns and cares of the world. Many Christians, by erring in this respect, greatly disturb the peace of their dying hours, and impair the force and value of their testimony. 3. Mortify all the evil tempers and corrupt feelings of the natural heart. Fretfulness and impatience, excessive concern about personal indulgences, and discomposure at apparent neglect sit ill on a dying Christian. These can only be obviated by attending when you are in health to the right ordering of every feeling and temper, and by self-denial. 4. Accustom yourselves to just and scriptural notions of death. Considering—(1) The uncertainty of your dying hour. (2) How near it is. (3) Its consequences. 5. Learn to lean with a simple, childlike trust on Christ. The nearness of Christ to the dying man is the great concern, and then all helps and accessories may be withdrawn. (*S. Smith.*) *Dying unto the Lord*:—It is true that no earthly friend can accompany us through the swellings of Jordan. But though we may then be alone in one sense, yet we need not in another: the Saviour has promised to accompany us. He says, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." See that child who has to go through a dark plantation at the dead hour of night. Does he fear? No. Why? Simply because his father's hand is locked in his. The presence of his father dismisses his fears. So, when we are in the hands of our heavenly Father, we need not fear. He who holds up worlds can surely protect us, and He has pledged Himself to do so if we fully trust ourselves to Him. (*J. Whitson.*) *Dying unto the Lord*:—"Paid the debt of nature." No; it is not paying a debt: it is rather like bringing a note to a bank to obtain solid gold in exchange for it. In this case you bring this cumbrous body, which is nothing worth, and which you could not wish to retain long: you lay it down, and receive for it, from the eternal treasures, liberty, victory, knowledge, rapture. (*J. Foster.*) *Dying unto the Lord*:—A lieutenant in an Iowa regiment was brought into the hospital, wounded in the shoulder. At first it was thought that he would recover; but, after a few days, he rapidly declined. Just before his death, a lady nurse said to him, "Lieutenant, you have but a few moments to live: if you have any word to send to your wife and little one in Iowa, you must speak it very quickly." He looked up at her, his face shining like an angel's, and said, "Tell my wife that there is not a cloud between me and Jesus." (*G. S. F. Savage.*) *Living and dying unto the Lord*:—I. REAL CHRISTIANS ARE THE LORD'S. 1. By election. 2. By redemption. 3. By sanctification. 4. By adoption. He has received them into His holy family, and entitled them to all the privileges and blessings of it. II. THEY ARE WILLING BOTH TO LIVE AND TO DIE TO THE LORD. There is no medium between men's living and dying to God, and their living and dying to themselves (ver. 7). They are willing—1. To live to Him, by—(1) Self-dedication. (2) Submission to His government. (3) A cheerful and universal obedience to His com-

mands. (4) Promoting the interests of His kingdom. 2. To die unto the Lord. (1) As to the time when they shall die. (2) As to the place of their dying. (3) As to all the other circumstances of their death, whether with disease or accident, &c. Conclusion: If Christians are willing to live and to die to the Lord, then—1. The life of a real Christian is a life of self-denial. 2. They live much happier than those who live to themselves. 3. Their life is an exemplary life. 4. Their death, though a gain to them, is a loss to the world. 5. They are willing to bury their friends who die to the Lord, whenever they are called to the trial. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) **Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.**—*We are the Lord's*:—I. LIVING. 1. Consecrated to Him. 2. At His disposal. 3. Under His protection. 4. Acknowledged and blessed by Him. II. DYING. 1. When and where He pleases. 2. Glorifying Him. 3. Delivered by Him. 4. Claimed as His property for ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *We are the Lord's*:—I. BY VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE. 1. We live to Him. 2. We die to Him. II. BY INALIENABLE RIGHT. 1. In life. 2. In death. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 9. **For to this end Christ both died and rose, . . . that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.**—*How we should improve the end of Christ's death and resurrection*:—Christ's death and resurrection are firmly believed, and often considered by us; but too little attention is paid to the end of both. I. WHAT IS THIS END? 1. That He, as man, might be the lawful possessor of the dead and living. Man has, by sin, forfeited all he has and is, into the hands of justice. Christ, by His death, has satisfied justice, and purchased us for Himself: and in consequence of His resurrection He rescues us, both the living and the dead (Phil. ii. 6–10). 2. That He might be their Deliverer, Protector, and Ruler, defending them from their enemies, and reigning in and over them. 3. That He might be their Master, that they might obey His will, and promote His glory: His sufferings and death supply the greatest inducement to this, and procure grace for us: His resurrection confers that grace, and enables us to live to Him. 4. That He might be the Head and Husband of the dead and living. Lord sometimes means husband. His death manifests His love to His spouse, the Church (Eph. v. 25): His being raised, makes Him able to fulfil the part of a husband (chap. vii. 4), including union (1 Cor. vi. 17), communion, maintenance, guidance, government. Hence it appears that the dead are not dead: He will not be the Husband of the dead. 5. That He might be the Judge of the dead and the living (vers. 10–13; Acts xvii. 31). This honour is conferred upon Him as a fit reward of His sufferings and death: He rose to give full assurance of it: He is thereby capacitated to exercise it. II. THE USE WE SHOULD MAKE OF THIS DOCTRINE. Did He die and rise again—1. That He might be our Owner? Then let us give Him His own (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). 2. That He might be our Governor? Then let us be subject to Him in heart and life, and dependent on His protection. 3. That He might be our Master? Then let us live to Him (2 Cor. v. 14, 15); this is our duty, in justice and gratitude. 4. That He might be our Husband? Then how great the honour and happiness He designs for us! Let us immediately embrace it. 5. That He might be our Judge? Then let us keep the awful day in view, and prepare for it. (*J. Benson.*) *Christ, Lord of the dead and the living*:—This Lordship—I. PROVIDES THE ONLY SOLID AND SATISFACTORY ASSURANCE OF THE FUTURE REUNION AND RECOGNITION OF HIS FOLLOWERS. The question that rises oftener than any other to the lips of the bereaved touches this point of reunion. You may try to construct a heaven cut clean off in all its sympathies and attachments and recoguitions from this world we are in now. But you will almost certainly then have before the mind a heaven practically destitute of sympathies and attachments, too vague to awaken expectation, too unreal to inspire enthusiasm. He who rose is the Lord of the living and the dead. They are not two families, but one, because they are all in Him, in spite of the transient curtain that hangs between the departed and ourselves—a curtain that probably has its only substance in the eyes of our flesh. The resurrection of the body of Jesus signifies the literal reality of all that is promised the Christian in his future home—the actual identity of the person here and the person there, and the actual renewal of affections and their interchange; for what is the identity, or the blessing of it, if the heart has got to begin its whole history afresh? It signifies the actual restoration, too, of the society, only in more exalted forms, of those who have believed and worshipped the same Saviour here. There will be no confusion of persons, no obliteration of the lines that mark off one soul from another. We shall be just as distinct persons, with all personal faculties, affec-

tions, sympathies, substances, yes, and appearances, as we are now. In those celestial congregations there will, no doubt, be something to be recognised by, in feature or form, inbred on earth and indestructible by dissolution. Hence the need of a glorified resurrection body, to be set free at the last change—following the analogy still of His body who died and rose the same. II. SUGGESTS THAT OUR RESURRECTION LIFE WILL BE SOCIAL AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL. As everything in the kingdom of heaven has its type and model in the Person of our Lord, so in the rising of His form, and the subsequent interviews with His disciples, we see a promise that, literally and for ever, those to whom He imparts His Spirit will move together in a family order and freedom about Him. Nothing less than this can be taught us by the parable of Lazarus, by the inspired images of the Apocalypse, by the company of saints made perfect; but, more than all these, by the reappearing, in the body, of the Lord of the dead and the living. Whither would the forthgoing soul take its strange journey if there were no centre of spiritual attraction, no Christ receiving the believer to Himself where He is? (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Christ's Lordship*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Universal. He is Lord over all the dead and all the living; but in a peculiar manner over His Church, even as a husband is lord over his wife, which is a lordship with sweetness. It is indeed a lordship; but it is such as is good for His subjects. Christ accounts Himself happy in His Church, which is His fulness, and (Eph. i. 23) the Church is most happy in His government. 2. Independent. Only His Father joins with Him. All human authority is derived from Him (Prov. viii. 15). "King of kings," He is Lord Paramount over all. 3. Complete. He is a Lord of the whole man, body and soul. He sits in the throne of conscience. There He prescribes laws to it, pacifies, stablishes, and settles it against all fears. He bows the neck of the inward man, and brings it wholly to be subject to Him. 4. Eternal. Other lords have nothing to do with men when they are dead, because they are lords over the outward man only. But Christ's lordship is when we are gone hence, and then more especially. For then we are more immediately with Him (Phil. i. 23). 5. Excellent. He hath all things that a lord should have. (1) Authority. He purchased it, and His Father gave it Him (Psa. ii. 8; Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2). (2) All graces and virtues fit for a lord and governor—righteousness, wisdom, bounty, affections, &c. (Psa. xlv. 6). (3) Strength. Answerable to His authority; for He is a Lord that is God. II. DEDUCTIONS FROM IT. We see—1. That the grounds of a Christian's faith and comfort are very strong. God doth all to ends, it being a point of wisdom to prefix an end, and work to it. Here the greatest work hath the greatest end. 2. That the principal points of religion have an influence on all the particulars. For one is the cause of another, and one depends upon another. Christ is proved to be Lord of all, because He died and rose. 3. The truth of the Catholic Church, from the first man living to the end of the Church, under one head Christ (Heb. xiii. 8; Acts iv. 12). 4. The blessedness of being under the sovereignty of Christ. To be Solomon's servant was accounted a great happiness (1 Kings x. 8). What shall we think of those that are under Christ, who is greater than Solomon (Matt. xii. 42). For Christ's servants are so many kings (Rev. i. 6), and such kings as do not rule over slaves, but over the greatest enemies of all. A Christian can think with comfort upon those enemies that make the greatest tyrants quake—death, sin, and the law. Therefore, those Christians that are afraid of death, forget their dignity. If Christ be their Lord when they die, what need they fear to die? 5. The duty we owe to our Lord—(1) To live to Him. This we do—(*a*) When we know and acknowledge Christ hath a full interest in us. Upon this issues all other obedience. (*b*) When we are directed by His will, and not our own. Christ squared His life immediately according to His Father's will (Psa. xl. 7). So all that are Christ's must have the same spirit. (*c*) When we aim at the glory of Christ in all things (1 Cor. x. 31). The contrary to this the apostle complains of (Phil. ii. 21). (2) To die to Him. This we do when we know and acknowledge that Christ hath power over us when we die, and (*a*) thereupon submit ourselves to Him, and not murmur when He comes to call for our life. (*b*) When upon any good occasion He calls for our life in standing for a good cause—for the Church or State—we are ready to lay it down. (*c*) When we carry ourselves so, when death comes, as we may express such graces as glorify God, and when we study to do all the good we can, that we may die fruitfully. 6. What we may expect from Christ, and what we ought to return to Him again. For relations are bonds. (*a*) That He will make us willing and able subjects. He is such a Head as quickeneth dead members; such a Husband as makes His spouse beautiful. A king cannot alter

his subjects; but He is such a King as can, and does. He takes them out of a contrary kingdom, as being not born His subjects, but "born anew by the Spirit." (*b*) Advancement. The meanest man that is a subject to Christ is a king, and a king over that which all others are slaves to. They rule over others, but they are in thraldom to their own lusts. 7. How to carry ourselves to men otherwise affected. Christ rules over us, both living and dying; therefore be not the servants of men, but "in the Lord"—*i.e.*, so far as it may stand in the will and pleasure of Him that is the Lord of lords. For when the authority of any superior doth countermand against the will of this Lord, it ceaseth to bind. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Christ's lordship over the dead and living*:—I. IT IS PLAINLY A MEDIATORIAL LORDSHIP THAT CHRIST IS HERE SAID TO HAVE. It is altogether apart from the supreme dominion belonging to Him as God, and from that universal lordship which has been conferred on Him as Mediator. The apostle is teaching a lesson of Christian forbearance. You differ from one another about some doubtful points. But do not judge one another. Let every man judge for himself. You are not one another's lords. Nay, you do not belong to yourselves. You all belong to Christ, who, that He might be your Lord, both died and rose again. Thus far the argument tells for its being a restricted lordship. But why is there any mention made of the dead as distinct from the living? It is the living only who are or can be concerned about the rule. But the living, who have to do with the rule and the reason for it, are soon to be themselves the dead. You are to look at the point in dispute in the light in which it will appear to you when you are dead. You are equally amenable to the Lord now as then. Dead, you will completely own His lordship; living, own it all the same. The lordship of Christ, therefore, is a lordship over His people; and such a lordship over them living, as has its type, one may say, as well as its consummation, in His lordship over them when dead. II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AND HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION IS VERY CLOSE. "To this end" (Heb. xii. 2)—1. It is the appropriate reward, the natural fruit and issue of His dying and rising again, that He is Lord. Christ died and rose again, not as an isolated private individual, transacting with the Father for Himself alone. He bore a representative character. He had gathered up in His one single person all the interests of all His people. Lordship over them is really involved in His dying and rising again. He has them as much at His disposal as He has His own body. 2. Yet there is not much of apparent lordship here. He appears rather as passive than as active. Dying and rising again, He stands forth as not Lord, but servant. But it is through this service that He reaches His lordship. And the lordship answers to the service in all respects. (1) The persons interested are the same. He is, no doubt, Lord over all mankind; but what is here asserted is a lordship which only true believers can acknowledge—viz., a lordship founded on the Lord's dying and rising again. They may not be more absolutely in His hands, as mediatorial Lord, than all creation is. And in both cases His mediatorial lordship is the fruit of his dying and rising. But—(*a*) There is intelligence and consent in the one case that we cannot find in the other. (*b*) There is a real distinction, as regards the dependence of Christ's lordship, in His dying and rising again, between the two cases. It is indispensable to the accomplishment of the end for which He died and rose again, that He should have as part of His recompense this wide prerogative of universal lordship. But the end itself, the joy set before Him, was surely a lordship more peculiar and more precious (John xvii. 1, 2). (2) There is a correspondence between the lordship itself and that on which it rests, and from which it flows. It rests on service and flows from service—the service of sacrifice. But He died and rose not that He might be different as Lord from what He was as dying and rising. No. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It would seem, therefore, that His lordship must be in some sense a continuation of His service. Christ, as His people's Lord, cannot be to them different from what He was when as the Father's servant on their behalf He died and rose. 3. Thus, carrying back the lordship into the dying and rising, we may see, even in the humiliation, the real glory of the exaltation. He is Lord, when He dies and rises and lives; Lord, in their life and in their death, of those for whom He dies and rises and lives. His dying and living again is in itself an act of lordship over them. III. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS CONNECTION, CONSIDER THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IN ITS BEARING UPON THOSE OVER WHOM IT IS EXERCISED. 1. As dying and rising, He is Lord of His own dead. (1) Giving them victory, and taking from death his sting. (2) Receiving them to Himself. (3) Changing their mortal bodies, that

they may be fashioned like unto His own glorious Body. (4) Leading them among the many mansions of His Father's house, and finding them, as He rules them, congenial subjects. 2. The Lord of you living; the Lord of your life—of the life which you have in Him as dying and rising. Surely it is a blessed lordship for you now to realise and own. Is not that a source of confidence alike in life and in death? And is it not also a motive to most thorough self-surrender? (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *The dominion of Christ over mankind* is—I. MEDIATORIAL. 1. As God, He reigns in His own eternal right. 2. As man, by the appointment of the Father. II. ABSOLUTE. He has all power—1. To determine their conditions. 2. To pardon and save them. 2. To command their service. 3. To decide their eternal lot. III. UNIVERSAL. It includes the living and the dead. IV. RIGHTEOUS. It is secured by—1. His death. 2. His resurrection. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. **But why dost thou judge . . . thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**—*The guilt of judging and contemptuousness*:—To the weak and scrupulous the apostle says, "Why judge?" To the strong and liberal, "Why despise?" I. THE SUPREMACY OF CONSCIENCE. 1. This principle is the master thought of the chapter (vers. 5, 12, 13). Nothing is to supersede personal conviction. (1) Human passions are not to bar Christian rights. For matters that do not interfere with the happiness of others do not mind the denial of your Christian character by fallible men. Feel that you owe allegiance to Christ, and in that feeling be calm. (2) There is no appeal to public authority. Uniformitarians would have thought this just the occasion for the Church to decide once for all, and so put an end to variety. But as the great apostle would not interfere, no Church has a right to rule in these matters. 2. But let us not mistake supremacy of conscience for that of the individual will. The apostle asserted the sanctity of convictions, but we must not exalt our opinions to the rank of convictions. II. THE VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE. 1. By unchristian judging. Judging is persecuting; it was the procedure of the dark ages. But consider the judgment that is not peculiar to Rome, but which belongs to human nature. Take these cases cited by the apostle—Sabbath observance, and abstinence from things pronounced worldly. How do we treat those who do not hold our views on these matters? You hear insinuations about laxity or Sabbath breaking or worldliness: then about socinianism or infidelity; then immorality. This is judging. It is not life or liberty that is assailed, but character. Look at the wrong of this. Note—(1) Its arrogance. Such judging is only to be defended on the claim of infallibility, and therefore Rome is consistent, but Protestants are not. Are those who judge free from human frailty? Or are they not generally the weakest of both sexes? (2) Its failure to procure what it aims at—uniformity of opinion. This is the ideal good which men have tried for ages to attain, but is Christendom more united than in the apostle's days? (3) It destroys free inquiry. We boast in opposition to Rome, of our free and open Bible. But do we not really say, "Here is the Bible; read it for yourself; but find these doctrines there and no others." Hence men will not hear to hear the truth. They think they have it already in the compass of a single mind, and they come to church to hear it repeated. 2. By contemptuousness. The sin of judging is the sin of the narrow minded; the sin of the liberal minded is contempt for narrowness and scorn for scruples. There is a distinction between largeness of view and largeness of heart. A narrow mind is not always a narrow heart. There are worse things than narrow views. The missionaries often hold narrow views, and yet these men give their lives to turn men to God, and shame those of larger views. Take heed how ye despise any of God's little ones, for what is largeness of view compared with devotedness of life? Good men usually cling to a superstition or a form for the sake of some deep truth with which it stands connected. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *A lesson in charity*:—Peter Cooper of New York, a man who spends a large amount of money on philanthropic objects, took a great interest in a Woman's Art School. One day he stood watching the portrait class in that institution, whilst they were drawing a likeness of the same model from different positions. One scholar took the face in profile; another had it turned a little into the shadow; a third saw more of the full face, and represented it accordingly; whilst others worked still further into the light or away from it. Of course the portraits thus taken were very different; some of them, indeed, so different, that any one unacquainted with the original might have been almost excused for thinking that they were portraits of different people. Mr. Cooper observing the scene, said, "Such a sight as this should be a lesson in charity, when

we perceive how the same person may be so different, according to the way he is looked at by various people." (*Sunday at Home.*) *Charity in judging others*:—It is a comfortable thought that the smallest and most turbid mud-puddle can contain its own picture of heaven; it shall be a symbol to me that even a human breast that may appear least spiritual in some aspects may still have the capability of reflecting an infinite heaven in its depths, and therefore of enjoying it. Let us remember this when we feel inclined to deny all spiritual life to some people, in whom, nevertheless, our Father may perhaps see the image of His face. This dull river has a deep religion of its own—so, let us trust, has the dullest human soul, though perhaps unconsciously. (*W. Hawthorne.*) *Reproof of censoriousness*:—Observe—I. THE CHARACTERS REPROVED. Those who—1. Judge others. 2. Despise others. II. THEIR REPROOF. 1. They forget that all are amenable at the judgment seat of Christ. 2. That they invade the prerogative of God. 3. That they must give account of themselves. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The judgment seat of God*:—1. I suppose "Christ" slipped into certain MSS. because Paul had been speaking of Christ, and it was thought to be natural that he should continue to use the same name. He knew that Christ is God, and when he was speaking of Him it was no deviation for him to call Him God. It was necessary, too, because he was about to quote an Old Testament passage which speaks of the sovereignty of God, which is to be confessed by all mankind. It would have been most important to draw a distinction between Christ and God if there had been any doubt as to His divinity. 2. St. Paul mentioned the future judgment, that by its influence the Roman Christians might cease the mischievous meddlesomeness of judging, when the Judge was at the door. A day is to come when men shall be judged after a better fashion than we can judge. How dare we, then, travesty God's great assize by ourselves mounting the throne. Moreover, we impudently intrude ourselves into the office and prerogative of Christ. "It is all needless, too; for both your brother and yourself will stand before the judgment seat of God, who will manage the affairs of men far better than you can." And, finally, your judgment is unprofitable: you would spend your time better if you would recollect that you will be yourselves examined by an unerring eye. This judgment will be:—I. UNIVERSAL—"all." There will come a judgment for the strong and for the weak. No elevation in piety will exclude us, and no weakness will serve as an excuse. The man of one and the man of ten talents must alike be reckoned with. What a motley throng will gather at that assize, of all nations and peoples and tongues! Persons of all ages. Kings and paupers, saints and sinners, will be arraigned. II. PERSONAL (ver. 12). If it only dealt with actions, words, and thoughts, the account would be solemn enough, but we must each one give an account of himself, of what he was as well as what he did, of what was in his heart as well as of that which came out of it in his deeds. III. DIVINE, and therefore—1. According to truth. God will make no mistakes. 2. By the supreme standard of perfect justice. 3. Most searching. 4. Impartial. 5. Final. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The final judgment*:—This is often spoken of as the most terrible event in human history. And so it will be, and the happiest too. "We must all stand," &c.; then—I. LIFE IS NOT A SET OF BROKEN ACCIDENTS AND CONFUSED OCCURRENCES. It seems to be so—act seems separated from act, and thought from thought, and thought from act, and we often know not what to make of life. But then life will appear in its completeness and its meaning be clear. This—1. Should cause us to look more into the bearings of our life. We ought not to live at haphazard, but thoughtfully. 2. Should elevate life, and redeem it both from hopelessness and vulgarity. II. WE SHALL BE INDEPENDENT OF THE MISJUDGMENTS OF MEN. There is a sense in which a concern for what our neighbours think of us may be just and proper. Nothing is more valuable than the words of the good and wise. But we ought not to be distressed in mind and hindered in our work by the unjust judgments of the world. In the long run we may get even better judgments from the world if we seek to live in the spirit of the judgment of Christ. But let those who fight against God's people remember that they grasp a blade without a handle. Comfort yourselves, then, that Christ is Judge, and will vindicate righteousness. III. WE OUGHT TO MAKE PREPARATION FOR SO SOLEMN AN EVENT. If you are invited to meet some grand personage on some special occasion and make no preparation, you will be given to feel your want of preparedness by the contempt of those who are about you. Should we, then, as men of common sense, make no preparation for the supreme event in our history. Do not prepare in a spirit of fear, but as a matter of right, and as an expression of love? We are not to get up ourselves in fine rags and gilt, but meet our Judge in the robe of character which He has fashioned and

adorned. IV. WE NEED HAVE NO UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE DECISION. We know the Judge and His method. We can therefore judge ourselves now. Everything righteous and noble will be approved; everything base and bad will be condemned. Right is right eternally; wrong is wrong for ever. Have we repented, &c.? V. TRIFLING EXCUSES WILL NOT FOR ONE MOMENT BE TOLERATED. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The final judgment*:—1. Christ Himself spake of judgment, but never after this fashion. He never spoke of Himself as put upon His trial, but always as the Judge. Here, however, Paul speaks of himself as appearing at the judgment. What is the fair inference? Clearly, that high as Paul was, Jesus Christ is far higher. God cannot be judged, but every intelligent, accountable creature will be judged. Jesus Christ was not a creature, but God manifested in humanity. 2. Religious truths frequently conceal each other. This truth of the judgment day hides from some eyes the fact of the judgment which is going on every day. You are all now upon your trial. And there are certain results of this trial that are akin to sentence. Does not the drunkard and the sensualist of every shape suffer a present punishment? Are not integrity and truthfulness generally recognised with favour? 3. By the mention of this fact, the Apostle Paul teaches the members of the Church in Rome to be liberal in the estimate they form of each other. There is, however, a false liberality. There are some that would apply these remarks to the facts and doctrines of the gospel, and to moral principles. Now hear what the same man wrote: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach to you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be accursed." I. THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT. The emphasis of the text is in the words "We shall." Judgment is no probability. But what is judgment? There is trial—the idea of really testing the character, of summing up and judging the totality of a man's life. Then there is the disclosure, the bringing out of everything. Then there is decision upon the case, and sentence. Let us consider some facts which make this appear certain. 1. There is a looking for of judgment in every man. When Adam and his wife had eaten of the fruit they hid themselves. What was this but an expression of expectancy that God would come and judge them! Is this peculiar? No. What do the fears and the remorse of the man who has done wrong say but that he expects judgment! 2. This Divine and real judgment seems needful. "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" Look at the mistakes that occur concerning men. A man is in reputation for religion and may have a heart as black as hell. Now, is this to be perpetual? No; there is a sort of necessity in God's nature to put everything right and to give to every man his real character. 3. It is indicated by present punishment and reward on a limited scale. During the storm you have often heard the thunder at the distance before the tempest has broken over your dwelling, and just so may you hear the trumpet of the future judgment in what you now experience when you have done wrong. 4. By the voice of Old Testament and New God speaks to you of this judgment. II. OUR PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS CERTAIN. There will be no escape from a final Divine trial. You may leave a pious home to get far from what you call cant, but you will not escape from this judgment. There will be no evasion, excuse, proxy. III. CHRIST WILL BE THE JUDGE, and mark what this involves. The Judge will be—1. Visible. Christ has taken His human nature to heaven. 2. Competent, and the multitude, without exception, will feel that competency. Just as you often have been conscious of the presence of greatness when you have been with some man whose intelligence very far exceeded your own, so will it be felt before the judgment seat of Christ. (*S. Martin.*) *Future judgment*:—I. THE FACT. 1. All. 2. Shall stand. 3. At the judgment seat of Christ. II. THE CERTAINTY OF IT. 1. Attested by reason and revelation. 2. Confirmed by the oath of God. III. THE ISSUE. Every one shall give an account—1. Of himself. (1) His conduct to man. (2) To God. 2. Before God Himself. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The final tribunal*:—In the establishment of this we see—I. THE HONOUR AND DIGNITY WITH WHICH THIS INVESTS INDIVIDUAL HUMAN LIVES. Look at society. A few men are eminent, but the millions lead ordinary lives. We are limited, fettered, and we are ready to say, "What is man?" Yet God is to judge him, and individually. A human court puts honour on man's nature by his very trial. A leopard leaping from his cave to tear asunder his victim is not a subject of arrest and trial. He is shot, and that is the end of it. Man has a knowledge of God and of immortal verities. Therefore he is judged. II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HUMBLEST LIFE AND OF THE HUMBLEST ACT OF ANY LIFE. Too often we gauge character and success by their conspicuousness. We note the obsequies of the great, but who notes the pauper's funeral? But the text—1. Gives a signifi-

cance to the poor man's death. 2. We are apt to measure our own lives by our larger efforts, and forget the little acts that, like drops, go to make up the continuous stream of life. It is these smaller actions that at once show and shape character. Christ represents the good as amazed at the final judgment because such little acts as the cup of water were remembered; and so the wicked. Phidias polished the back of his statues, for he said that though men saw not his work, the gods beheld it. Every deed, however small or secret, comes under the cognisance of God. To neglect to adjust our inward life to this truth and cultivate the merely outward exhibitions of character is as irrational as it would be to burnish the ornaments of an engine and build the boiler of defective metal, or decorate the outside of an edifice while its foundations and walls are insecure. III. How MAJESTIC AN ATTRIBUTE IS MAN'S CONSCIENCE. True, conscience may be mistaken; but, enlightened by the Holy Spirit it is the echo of God's voice. Its remorse is an echo of His rebuke, and its approval an echo of His benediction. We may anticipate the final tribunal. Judging ourselves now, we shall not at last be condemned. How wicked, then, it is to put out this eye, to suffocate the voice of God within us! It is moral suicide. IV. THE SECRET OF TRUE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE WORLD. If God be for us, who can be against us? Paul, Pascal, Luther, Wilberforce, &c., swung loose from entangling criticisms, undismayed by human censure in the thought of their personal responsibility to their Judge. "It is a small matter that we be judged of man's judgment"; this was their word. So may the maligned wait calmly for the final vindication. V. THE BEAUTY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SAVIOUR'S WORK. Christ does not abolish judgment; He claims it as His own and thus asserts His Divinity. No man, no angel, can assume this function. It belongs to Omniscience alone. We learn how it is accomplished—by the self-conviction of the sinner. Before Christ on earth they who accused another stood self-convicted, and went away one by one. "He told me all I ever knew," said another. It was on the Cross that atonement was completed. It is on that ground we, as believers, are saved. The lustre of the Cross is shed on the judgment throne. The Judge is our Redeemer, friend, and advocate. We can have "boldness in that day," for we are in Him. VI. THE DUTY OF ACCEPTING AND THE PRIVILEGE OF PROCLAIMING THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE SON OF GOD. Before His face we must stand. We cannot postpone the day. Nearer it comes every hour. Are you ready for it? Only in Christ can you be serene and safe, contemplating its approach. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.**—*The final subjection of mankind to God* will be—I. UNIVERSAL. II. COMPLETE. It includes—1. An acknowledgment of His supremacy. 2. Submission at His feet. 3. The confession of every tongue. II. CERTAIN. God—1. Has sworn. 2. Is true. 3. Is able to effect it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Twofold subjugation of humanity to God* (text and Exod. x. 17; Acts ix. 6). This passage is taken from Isaiah xlv. 23, and predicts the universal subjugation of mankind to the Divine will. This does not mean universal salvation, for there is a twofold subjugation—the one represented by Pharaoh and the other by Paul. I. The one is by conviction of God's terrible POWER; the other, by conviction of His LOVE. An overwhelming sense of God's great power compelled Pharaoh to "bow his knee" before the Almighty. He felt that further rebellion would be his ruin; and for a moment he yielded. Paul's subjugation sprung from a conviction of God's love in Christ. The voice said to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." This brought him down, smote his rebellious will, reduced him to subjection. So it is ever; wicked men and devils are made to bow by a sense of God's force and God's power. Good men and angels bow from a sense of His love. II. The one subjugation involves moral ANGUISH, the other moral ENJOYMENT. What a state of agony and alarm was Pharaoh in! But what joy came into Paul at the heavenly voice of Mercy! The one subjugation therefore involves heaven, the other, hell. 1. In the one, there is the sense of slavery; in the other, a sense of freedom. 2. In the one, there is a sense of overwhelming terror; in the other, a sense of hopefulness. 3. In the one, there is the sense of Divine favour; in the other, the sense of Divine antagonism. III. The one becomes a ministry of DESTRUCTION to others; the other, a ministry of SALVATION. Pharaoh, the moment the panic abated, rushes on and brings destruction on himself and his hosts. Paul begins a beneficent ministry which issues in the salvation of thousands. Conclusion: In which way wilt thou be subjugated? It is not for thee to determine whether thou shalt bow thy knee or

not: thy knee must bow, thy tongue must confess; but it is with thee to determine how thou wilt do it—by a sense of God's power or of His love, by coercion or by choice. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**—*The last account*:—I. BY WHOM RENDERED. 1. By ourselves. 2. Respecting all that we have done, enjoyed, or suffered. II. BEFORE WHOM. 1. God. 2. The searcher of hearts. 3. Who sees in secret and rewards openly. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Human accountability*:—The argument of this chapter goes to prove that Christians are not mutual judges, but fellow-servants of Christ. The truths wrapped up in these words are principles to guide us in our daily life, as well as predictions about the great day. These principles are—I. THE UNIVERSALITY of human accountability. "Every one of us." The old and young, rich and poor, ignorant and cultured, rejector of religion and professor, &c. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." II. ITS INDIVIDUALITY. "Of himself." Christianity, while in some aspects the true socialism, is also the great individualiser. It teaches the right use of the pronoun "I." It empties it of pride, but crowns it with responsibility. In the judgment, "the books will be opened," and amongst them Memory and Conscience. These will be quite sufficient to condemn. Their revealings have made kings tremble on their thrones, and will make sinners quake before the judgment seat of Christ. III. ITS SOLEMNITY. It is to God. He "with whom we have to do," is the All-wise, All-holy, All-good. And all sin is against Him, though it be also against His creatures. Conclusion: Our subject gives light—1. On our tendency to pass judgment on others. We may not judge; but we all must be judged. 2. On the intervention of sacerdotal authority. All priestism is, by the principles of our text, cleared away, that the relationship of man to God may be intense, close, vivid. 3. The erection of social standards of right and wrong. We are to guide our life, not by maxims of markets, professions, Churches, but the law of Him to whom we must give account. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Human accountability*:—I. THE ACCOUNT TO WHICH THE TEXT REFERS (ver. 10) is—1. Certain. It must be given. 2. Individual. "Every one of us." 3. Particular. Every one shall give an account "of all the deeds done in the body." 4. Near. Though the reference is to the day of judgment, death will summon us to an immediate interview with our Judge. II. THE BEING TO WHOM THIS ACCOUNT MUST BE GIVEN. God. 1. Who is omniscient, and cannot therefore be deceived (Psa. cxxxix. 1–4). 2. Who is just, and cannot therefore be biased in His decisions (chap. ii. 6–11). 3. Who is omnipotent, and able therefore to carry into full effect the sentence which He pronounces. III. THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE PROSPECT SHOULD HAVE UPON YOU. It should induce you—1. To apply immediately to Christ for His saving grace, and to devote yourselves unreservedly to His service. 2. Solemnly to think of your last account, until your souls are affected with such a strong and abiding sense of it, as shall give it an influence on your whole conduct. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Personal responsibility*:—These words assert with great precision individual responsibility. This dealing in judgment with each separate soul according to its special history makes the judgment incomparably more awful. For not only does it imply a closer act of scrutiny, but it also individualises the shame which will belong to the wicked in that day. This truth of individual accountability needs, however, to be vindicated from the misapprehensions which are apt to cloud it. I. LET US REGARD THE INDIVIDUAL IN RELATION TO HIMSELF. "Every one of us shall give account of *himself*." The exact meaning of the words is more specific: it is concerning himself, just as if a steward were called to give account of the particular properties entrusted to his management. God has laid to every man's charge the care of himself; not to each man the care of some other man; the dying flesh, but above all the never-dying soul. I do not mean that each man's care is to be a selfish one for himself alone, or that we are not called to labour for other men's souls as well as for our own. But this still springs from our solemn charge of ourselves. It must be our opportunities and powers, not the opportunities and powers of other men, of which we must make use. It is still the right use of ourselves, though it be for the good of others, for which we are responsible. II. LET US LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL IN RELATION TO OTHER MEN, and to our actions in common with other men. Man can never act alone, and least of all in this age of associated effort. We act together, and thus we gain an idea of common action in which we drown out of sight our individual responsibility. However devout a congregation may be, for instance, there will be cause to lament over some careless faces, some unbended knees, some silent tongues.

Think you that, were each of them placed singly face to face with the awfulness of God, they would dare to act in His presence if they stood alone, as they act in His house amid the general crowd of worshippers? Or, to take another case, can we doubt that the vastness of the number of unsaved souls in the world diminishes to each man's consciousness the awfulness of being an unsaved soul? In reality the number fearfully increases it, for Heaven might weep over such a spectacle as a world of lost souls. III. LET US LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL IN RELATION TO GOD AND TO THE DUTY THAT HE OWES HIM. For here another common error at once starts to view. It is the notion of some men that the individual obligation of work and toil and self-sacrifice for God is lessened, because others share the obligation with ourselves. It is our duty to do our share, we say, but why should we take more than our fair proportion of the burden? Thus we are led, instead of doing each one his best in the service of our Master, to measure out just what we think to be our own share of the common work. Whether it be money, or labour, or talent, or time, we are asked to contribute, let us do it, each one for himself and to the utmost of his opportunity. If each man did his duty all men would do their duty. IV. THERE YET REMAINS ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE MATTER, WHICH BELONGS EQUALLY TO ALL THESE THREE RELATIONS. It suggests the motive, graciously supplied in the rich harmony of the Divine dealings, which shall stimulate the effort that it sweetens. For the doctrine of individual accountability has its complement in the doctrine of individual recompense. If the obligation be personal, so will be the reward which will crown the discharge of it. (*Canon Garbett.*) *Human accountability*:—Bishop Butler was once walking with his chaplain, Dr. Forster, when he suddenly turned towards him, and, with much earnestness, said, "I was thinking, Doctor, what an awful thing it is for a human being to stand before the moral Governor of the world, to give an account of all his actions in this life." *Scrutiny of the judgment day*:—The headlight of a locomotive is terrible, if you stand near enough to catch the full glare of it. As it sweeps around the "Horse-shoe Curve" of the Alleghanies, or along the edges of the Sierra Nevadas, how far ahead, and how deep down, and how high up it flashes, and there is instantaneous revelation of mountain peak and wild beasts hieing themselves to their caverns, and cascades a thousand feet tall clinging in white terror to the precipices! But more intense, more far-reaching, more sudden, swifter, and more tremendous is the headlight of an advancing Judgment Day, under which all the most hidden affairs of life shall come to discovery and arraignment. I quote an overwhelming passage of Scripture, in which I put the whole emphasis on the word "secret": "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *God will require an account of items*:—Recollect, again, that your account will have to be particular. God will go into all the items of it. At the day of judgment you will not have to cast up a hurried account in the gross, but every item shall be read. Can you prove that? Yes. "For every idle word that man shall speak, he shall be brought into account at the day of judgment." Now, it is in the items that men go astray. "Well," says one, "if I look at my life in the bulk, I am not very much ashamed, but it is those items, those little items—they are the troublesome part of the account that one does not care to meddle with." Do you know that all yesterday was made up of littles? And the things of to-day are all little, and what you do to-morrow will all be little things. Just as the tiny shells make up the chalk hills, and the chalk hills together make up the range, so the trifling actions make up the whole account, and each of these must be pulled asunder separately. You had an hour to spare the other day—what did you do? You had a voice—how did you use it? You had a pen—you could use that—how did you employ it? Each particular shall be brought out, and there shall be demanded an account for each one. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Individual responsibility*:—How helpful is it to read that Paul, who stood so far above us all, should confess himself to be "one of us"! It was a singular mark of the apostolic character that each and all emphasised their close relation to the community in which they ministered. In this they followed His steps who said, "I am among you as one that serveth." What a rebuke to all spiritual pride and ecclesiastical assumption! Let him who is chief among you be the servant of all. And yet, whilst the apostle claimed this community, he drew the lines of individuality with no hesitating hand. "Every one of us." We have in the text—I. A SOLEMN SUMMONS, in the midst of all that is opposed to the Divine will. By this summons there are certain facts very plainly implied. 1. If "every one of us" is to give an account unto God, then the dream of the materialist is certainly false. There is a God, and with that God man has to do. The traditions

of all people, the consent of the moral sense in man everywhere endorse that which the Scripture so explicitly implies. 2. This accountability before God is an ever-present fact. Do not postpone it until death comes. It is a constant relation in which man stands. To bring the whole nature into accord with the law and character of God—this is the dictate of our sense of true accountability. 3. But beyond this life work there is a final criticism and judgment to come. This is involved in the very relations we hold to this God, and the solemn thought of such an assize is constrained by the anticipation of death itself. II. A DEFINITE LIMITATION. "Himself." 1. We are responsible in our mutual relations for the influence that we exert over one another. "No man liveth to himself," &c. But our responsibility for each other ends there. Our accountability for ourselves is more immediate, and cannot be evaded. We are not our brother's keeper in this world except for his good. Look well to thyself. Leave others to God. Thou hast enough to do with thine own vineyard. 2. But the account is not the less varied because it is so individual. Think of how many component parts you are formed, and for each one a responsibility exists before God. Therefore let other people alone, and look to your own house. III. A SUGGESTED PREPARATION. We may give an account now; we shall do it finally in a more manifest way. 1. Recognise your individuality. Look yourselves in the face. Never allow yourself to be lost in the family, the Church, or in society. You came into the world subject to this solitary responsibility; you will go out of the world in the same way. It is the condition in which the gospel of Jesus Christ comes to you. 2. Train your conscience to utter distinct commands and prohibitions to you as an individual. Take not the worldly maxims of common living in this world; take not the practice of the Church. There is no rule except that which is contained in the character and the life of the God-man. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *Personal responsibility*:—1. The revelation of a judgment to come is one of the chief guarantees of human morality, and one of the most impressive illustrations of human greatness. Are we not in danger all of us of losing the vivid sense of personal responsibility for our own life? And if the sense of personal responsibility is lost, reverence for duty is lost too. There can be no morality apart from moral freedom, and it is to this that the revelation of future judgment appeals. Nearly everything else has been determined for you, but for your moral conduct you yourself are responsible. 2. Most of us had very little freedom of choice as to the trade or the profession that we should follow; but we can work honestly or dishonestly in the trade or profession in which we are engaged. It did not lie within our choice what language we should speak, but it does lie within our choice whether we shall speak the truth or not. The limits of our physical health and vigour are determined for us by the constitution with which we were born; but it lies with ourselves whether we will be sober or drunkards. It did not lie within our choice whether we would be born in a heathen or in a Christian land, among Romanists or among Protestants; but it does lie within every man's choice whether he will honour and welcome whatever light comes to him. 3. In many of us, in these days, the sense of our personal responsibility is faint and feeble. We are awed by the vast range and irresistible action of material forces. What are we that we should assert a freedom that does not belong to the planets or to the ocean? But I decline to surrender my dignity in the presence of material immensity. The tides rise and fall by an eternal necessity, but the passions which ebb and flow in my heart I can check and control. The planets are bound by irreversible forces to the orbits in which they travel; but instead of being irresistibly swung by a force over which I have no control, I choose for myself the rough path of duty which leads to heights where I breathe the air of heaven and see its glory, or the smoother path which descends to darkness and death. I am greater than the planets and the sea: they are subject, I am sovereign; they are bound, I am free. My own conscience assures me of this, and it is confirmed by the voice of God. The living God who is above Nature declares that I, too, am above Nature, and that I must give an account of myself to Him. 4. Then the physiologist comes, and he tells me that I inherit in my very blood, in the structure of my brain, in the vigorous or feeble fibre of my nervous organisation the results of the vices and the virtues of a long line of ancestors. But though the conditions of life have been determined for me, my life itself is my own, and that has not been determined for me; the material in which I shall work has been given, the way in which I shall treat it has not been given. I may have been born with a craving for physical excitement; is that to be my excuse if I go home drunk? And to God some of the noblest forms of moral life may be found where, to your eyes and to

mine, there is the least dignity and grace. One man is placed under conditions—not of his own choice—which make it possible for him to do very little beyond getting the rough ore of goodness out of the black and gloomy mine; he has got it with the sweat of his brow, with pain and peril. To him God will say: "Well done!" Another man has the ore at his feet to start with. It is not enough for him to bring that to God; he must bring pure metal extracted from it. And the third has the metal to begin with. He fails, and fails disastrously, unless he works it into form of noble usefulness and gracious beauty. Each man will have to give account of himself to God. And God only can judge of the worth of each man's work, because God only knows the conditions under which each man's work is being carried on. Channing's schoolmaster said to one of his schoolfellows: "Why are not you a good child like William Channing?" "Ah!" said the little boy, "it is so easy for William Channing to be good." And perhaps we have looked round upon friends of ours to whom a conflict that we have to maintain is altogether unnecessary. The foes we have to fight with they never meet; the victories which we have to win for ourselves were won for them generations ago by the ancestors whose blood is in their veins. Shall we complain? God forbid! Let us do for our posterity what their ancestors have done for them; and let us take the rough conditions of our actual life, making the best of them, rejoicing in this, that we have to give account of ourselves to God. 5. This conception of the relations between man and God relieves human life of its awful gloom and confusion, and contains the promise of a Divine order. You tell me that there are great masses of men that have never had a chance of moral goodness. They have to give an account of themselves without their chance, if so it be. And this conception of our relationship to God invests with dignity the life alike of the obscurest and most illustrious of our race. The material triumphs of which we are so proud are the result of a spiritual energy that has come to us from generations which believed that man was the lord of all. And when that consciousness of sovereignty has been extinguished, we shall decline to meaner levels and to inferior forms of life. But this is not to be our destiny. We are free, and we know it; and if to this freedom there are mysterious limitations, if achievement hesitates and falters, and follows far behind purpose, the Christian gospel has its word of power and of grace for us in this great trouble. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Responsibility, unavoidable*:—Rev. John Thomas of Serampore was one day, after addressing a crowd of natives on the banks of the Ganges, accosted by a Brahmin as follows: "Sir, don't you say that the devil tempts man to sin?" "Yes," answered Mr. Thomas. "Then," said the Brahmin, "certainly the fault is the devil's: the devil, therefore, and not man, ought to suffer the punishment." Mr. Thomas, observing a boat with several men on board descending the river, replied, "Brahmin, do you see yonder boat?" "Yes." "Suppose I was to send some of my friends to destroy every person on board, and bring me all that is valuable in the boat: who ought to suffer punishment—I for instructing them, or they for doing this wicked act?" "Why," answered the Brahmin, with great emotion, "you ought all to be put to death together." "Ah, Brahmin," replied Mr. Thomas; "and if you and the devil sin together, the devil and you will be punished together."

Vers. 13–15. **Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block . . . in his brother's way.**—*Limitations of Christian liberty*:—It is limited—I. IN ITS EXTENT; by a tender regard for the weak. Love—1. Avoids offence. 2. Respects the convictions of others. 3. Denies itself. II. IN ITS OBJECT; the furtherance of the kingdom of God. 1. By guarding against reproach. 2. By esteeming spiritual blessings above all others. 3. By promoting the work of God in others. III. IN ITS RULE OF ACTION; faith. 1. Allows only what faith permits. 2. Avoids what faith does not endorse. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The voluntary limitation of Christian liberty*:—I. ITS EXTENT. It—1. Avoids offence. 2. Yields its conscious right for the sake of others. 3. Guards against the appearance of evil. II. ITS ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. The kingdom of God suffers no disadvantage. 2. The weak brother is spared. 3. Private conviction and action are not sacrificed. (*Ibid.*) *Things indifferent*:—I. WHAT THINGS ARE INDIFFERENT? Things—1. Not forbidden. 2. That have in themselves no moral value. 3. That are clearly ascertained as such by an enlightened conscience. II. WHEN DO THEY CEASE TO BE SO? 1. When they become a stumbling-block to others. 2. When they infringe the law of love. 3. When they oppose the work of Christ—when they occasion reproach. (*Ibid.*) *In guarding against offence we must take care*—1.

To preserve our personal liberty. 2. Not to violate the law of love. (*Ibid.*) *Personal responsibility* :—In the early part of his letter to the Romans the apostle expounds the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. In this latter part he applies these doctrines to the problems and duties of daily life. In the Roman Church he is confronted, as ministers of the gospel are confronted even to the present day, with two antagonistic parties, the legal and the spiritual, the conservative and the liberal, or, as he terms them, the weak and the strong. How to reconcile these two parties in the one Christian Church is the problem which engages the attention of him who has the care of all the Churches. A recognition of the Lord's authority, a desire to execute the Lord's purpose, and a confession of the Lord's goodness, characterise both parties. But while there is good on both sides, there are on both sides manifestations of evil. A spirit of uncharitableness is seen in the judgments of both, and to this the apostle directs his teaching as he urges the exhortation, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more." 1. The first argument against this habit of uncharitable criticism is found in the truth that judgment belongs unto God, man being incompetent to render it. "Why dost thou judge thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God." The Omniscient alone is competent to judge. (1) We have not sufficient knowledge of the mind of the Master to determine the standard of action. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?" My conception is my working standard. It is the Master's commission to me. His word to my brother may be different. We may move in opposite directions and yet both fulfil the purpose of one controlling mind. Let me be assured that my feet are planted on the truth, but let me beware how I deny that my brother stands upon the truth because he does not occupy the same square-foot of ground on which I stand. No man has a monopoly of truth. (2) Again, we are incompetent to judge because we have not sufficient knowledge of the mind of the fellow-servant to determine the motive with which his action is performed. "Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for the Lord hath received him." Ofttimes man can look no farther than the outward appearance. God looketh upon the heart. He weighs the motive. Yet, spite of their incompetence, how free men are to usurp this Divine prerogative of judgment! Without God's knowledge, without God's love, they are quick to condemn. Before the bar of God each is responsible for himself alone. 2. In this solemn fact the apostle finds his second argument against the habit of judging others. "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God: let us not, therefore, judge one another any more." God does not hold us responsible for our brother's action; but He does hold us responsible for our influence upon him. The large demands of the Divine Judge upon the Christian in relation to his brethren, the apostle now urges especially upon the strong. There is reason in making the application especially to the strong, for in the matters under discussion they alone have freedom of choice. The strong Christian may eat or forbear eating. He may observe the day or not observe the day. The weak, however, in his present moral condition, has no choice. To those who have the larger opportunity the truth is the more broadly applied. But we are not obliged to think that the entire doctrine of the relation of the strong to the weak is set forth in this chapter. Were that the case it might seem as if Paul exalted the weak man's conscience to a place of tyranny. This surely is not his teaching. Truth is supreme. Opinion can never usurp her throne. If the weak brother's opinion is not the truth, his position is open to attack, and in the fuller presentation of the truth it may be necessary to oppose it. Paul himself was constantly leading in such opposition. Not only may the position of the weak brother be attacked; there are times when his scruples have to be disregarded. They may always be disregarded by you when they are opposed to a clear conviction of your duty. "Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind," and he need not, he must not desist out of regard for another's conscience. But if, after sufficient and candid study, he is fully assured that it is his duty to act, he must act, however his action may grieve his weaker brother. Even in matters which may be termed indifferent, the scruples of the weak brother may deserve to be set aside. Paul himself is our example. To him circumcision is nothing. At one time, on account of the Jews, he circumcises Timothy. At another time, when certain came to spy out the Christian's liberty and to bring him into bondage, he refuses to circumcise Titus. To these he "gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue" with the Christian disciples. There are, therefore, grounds on which the position of the weak brother may be attacked and his scruples disregarded. Nevertheless,

there are grounds on which the position of the weaker brother must be respected, and his scruples receive special regard. "If because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer according to love." My act is not right simply because it does not harm me. As a child of God I must look upon the things of others. Christianity is satisfied with no standard but that of love. If this is true Christian doctrine the application in Christian ethics is clear. Justice is conformity to a standard; the Christian standard of life is the loving nature of God. I cannot therefore be just in the Christian sense unless I have love. Not what is good for me alone, nor what is good for my brother alone, but what is best for all, is to determine my action as a child of God. But the law of love is not satisfied with the attainment of anything less than the best good of all. There are many goods. They are of divers values. Freedom in eating and drinking is a good, but this is not the highest good which Christianity has to bestow. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The man who, in his zeal to establish the right to eat and drink, or the right to the free observance to a religious day, cares not how much he disturbs the peace, diminishes the joy, and undermines the righteousness of his brethren, really places the minor above the major, the subordinate above the supreme. In seeking *a* good, he misses the best good of the kingdom of God. But the strong may say in way of defence: Inasmuch as nothing is unclean of itself, may we not encourage other to imitate us in customs which are not opposed to any law of righteousness? No, says the apostle, not so long as the weak brother considers the thing unclean, or the act unrighteous. The end of Christianity is not right conduct, viewed apart from its motive, but virtuous character. Christianity has not attained its ideal when certain legal decrees have been obeyed, but only when certain moral experiences have been evoked. A merely legal system might be satisfied with formally correct conduct, but a vital religion demands a godly character. The teaching is sharp and decisive. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Whatsoever is done without consent of the moral nature, whatsoever is done contrary to what one believes to be right, is sin. This is striking doctrine. But does not our best ethics confirm this view? Do we not frequently see the unhappy results of submission to precepts which may be right, and yet are in opposition to the beliefs of the heart? In such submission the man surrenders his freedom, the birthright of moral manhood. He submits to the rule of his fellow-men. In opposition to the teaching of Christ, "Call no man master," he yields his sovereignty and lets others lay down the law of his life. Whatsoever is not of faith is of foreign dictation. It is the act of the bondman, not of the freeman. By such conformity the man benumbs his sense of obligation. It is this sense which binds him to the eternal truth. It is like the cable which holds the buoy to its moorings. The sense of obligation is the one assuring evidence that God has not forgotten us. This binds us to the eternal throne. Like the clue which Ariadne gave to Theseus, it leads through devious ways out into the world of light, of life, and of love; it leads to the throne, to the feet, to the heart of God. Lose this thread and the soul is left alone, "in wandering mazes lost." Cherish your own sense of obligation; beware how you injure another's. More fundamentally still, the performance of an act which is contrary to the soul's belief, to which the consent of the moral nature is not given, is essentially subordination of the impulse to live for others to the impulse to live for one's self. The teachings of this chapter become intelligible in proportion as we come to understand the end which Christianity seeks to attain. Christianity aims not simply to cause our actions to conform to a certain legal standard, but rather to make us partake of the nature and thus of the blessed experiences of the ever-blessed God. (*T. D. Anderson.*) *Personal responsibility*:— The discussion which we reach in this part of the Epistle to the Romans turns not on great and plain matters of righteousness and equity, on which there can be but one opinion. It is not aimed against our judging a wrong to be what it is, for how can we help condemning the violator of law? but it all has reference to daily questions where there is no positive rule for any one but such as grows up in the community and shifts with changing circumstances. The private conscience properly asks, Is this right for me? The social conscience asks, Is this right, all things considered? So the well-trained moral sense of the Christian is broad in its scope and unselfish in its utterances. Practical duties in the New Testament are seen to be the sequence of sublime truths. We see that there could not help being wide differences in temperament and attainments among such converts, and that many serious complications might arise in their attempts to walk according to the new

Way of life. It is so everywhere in modern times in the missionary fields. We can see, from our own selves, how strong the temptation would be to "take positions upon such matters where there was no, "Thus saith the Lord," and where for that very reason men grow pugnaciously sure. First of all we note that while he places himself on the side of the strong and says that nothing is unclean of itself, he does not try to change the feelings of either party for the sake of a dull and heartless uniformity of practice. He does not turn to the weak brother and say to him, Give up your absurd scruples! or belabour him with proofs that he ought to be free from the law. Nor does he say to the strong, You have no right to a freedom upon things not free to others! Give up your liberty for the common good! On the contrary, he tells him to keep his faith as to all these things and have it before God. And for the establishment of this he sets up a great landmark in morals. We are personally accountable for ourselves unto God, and are never called upon to sit in judgment upon others who are the servants of the same God and show the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. Of course we must condemn wickedness wherever we behold it. While we are our brother's keeper and owe him a debt of loving care and sympathetic influence, we are not his overseer, divinely set up to regulate every attitude of his mind and the small details of his conduct. Christian love may degenerate into officiousness. The apostle shows that we ought to cultivate a regard for another's conscience all the more if it is weak. God is speaking through it. To him that esteemeth a thing to be profane, to him it is profane. By your inconsiderate freedom, he says, you may actually destroy your brother who will stand by your side at the judgment-seat and for whom Christ died. But besides this, love is more than liberty. What is liberty? Does not all turn upon the use we make of liberty and the nature of the thing about which we are free? One observation seems proper at this point as to the use of wine. It is of the Lord that Christian sentiment should favour the weaker side everywhere, but the question may fairly arise whether the strong have any rights or any place for the use of their freedom. The words of Paul are clear that if we have faith that gives us liberty we are to hold it before God and not to create a sin for ourselves because another has found one. In the constant movements towards a better social life more and more attention is given to the poor and the oppressed, to the victims of appetite and of evil in all its forms, and more is asked of every Christian to-day in the way of personal sacrifice than ever before. But the practical guide upon a thousand matters of daily conduct, where we ask, Shall we dance? Shall we play cards? Shall we attend the theatre? Shall we visit and ride on the Lord's Day? is found within these great lessons of the apostle. He says, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. That "faith" is not the common belief of the Christian, but a regulative principle derived from the Word of God and the practices of His people. For us, then, if serious questions arise, let there be a simple rule. We can abstain. We can be safe. We can place ourselves where no act of ours can by any possibility destroy the delicate bloom of another's faith, and where we give up a trifle and have a kingdom of peace within! (*E. N. Packard.*) *Personal rights:*—Well, is there no other question? Yes, oh yes, there is another question. What is that? It is the great question as to what a man may do with his rights. Paul takes the ground that every man must assert his personal rights. Now the question is, having once shown that I can indulge in such and such pleasures without any harm to me, and with some benefit, shall I go on and indulge in them without any regard to the effect which my indulgence may have on others? "Oh no," says Paul. "There is no harm in your eating meat dedicated to an idol, but if your brother sees you do it, and, misunderstanding the whole of it, is led conscientiously into wrong, then you do not act wisely or kindly; for you use your right to break down his conscience and his right." There are two principles in regard to rights. The first is to ascertain and vindicate them, and the next is to subject them to the law of love. There are a great many things that I have a right to, till love comes and says, "Will you not forbear them for the sake of others?" I have a right to eat meat; but for me to do it under circumstances such that my whole household are led to eat it, and they are thrown into a fever, is wrong. For the sake of keeping my children well, I would abstain from eating meat. I have a right to drink wine; but if I found that my drinking wine would lead poorer men to drink whiskey, or the young men around me to drink wine, I would say to myself, "Shall I use a right of mine in such a way as to destroy my fellow-men for whom Christ died? That would not be acting wisely nor well." (*H. W. Beecher.* *Self-denial for others:*—A friend told me that he was visiting a lighthouse lately, and

said to the keeper, "Are you not afraid to live here? it is a dreadful place to be constantly in." "No," replied the man, "I am not afraid. We never think of ourselves here." "Never think of yourselves! How is that?" The reply was a good one. "We know that we are perfectly safe, and only think of having our lamps burning brightly, and keeping the reflectors clear, so that those in danger may be saved." That is what Christians ought to do. They are safe in a house built on a rock, which cannot be moved by the wildest storm, and in a spirit of holy unselfishness they should let their light gleam across the dark waves of sin, that they who are imperilled may be guided into the harbour of eternal safety. (*Sword and Trowel.*) *Selfishness*:—A man is called selfish, not for pursuing his own good, but for neglecting his neighbour's. (*Abp. Whately.*) *The sacredness of man*:—While from the beginning the kindly affections of men's nature have been largely developed, outside of their own households they have seldom felt themselves under much obligation to men, and outside their acquaintanceship and nation are felt a hundred obligations of aversion. And it is one of the tokens of the Divine inspiration of the truth that "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" has been the declaration of the Divine law from the earliest period. And there is no duty that the Apostle Paul so developed as this. Note—I. THE GROUND ON WHICH HE PUTS MEN IS THE GROUND OF THEIR SACREDNESS. 1. Christians are tempted to judge men by standards that are not the highest nor the most Christian. (1) We are tempted to put value upon men according to their social relationships. A man may be very low in the social scale, and we may be accustomed in measuring him to call him a brute, and worthless, but the man has some other value besides that which consists in his relationship to society. (2) Nay, a man's economic value may be nil. There are many who do not produce as much as they eat. They are sick or shiftless, and die useless paupers. And we are apt to speak of them with contempt as being the "dregs of society." 2. And yet, low as they are, their value may be beyond count. (1) For every man is God's creature in a sense that none of the inferior animals are. He is made after the image of God. (2) More than this, every man is made sacred by what has been done for him. In the old days the colonists were forbidden to manufacture anything for themselves. The privilege of furnishing these things to them was reserved to the Crown. Not only that, but the very timber of the country was sorted out, and wherever a valiant pine or a noble oak, fit for the masts or for the ribs of ships was found, the Broad Arrow was stamped on it. The tree was in no respect different, but when people saw the Broad Arrow they said, "That is the king's." Now it is not an arrow, it is a cross that is stamped upon every living soul. For every human being Christ died; and this is made to be the sign and token of the value that is in every man (ver. 15). (3) Again, men are to be greatly respected for their development into immortality. Although there is but very little value in acorns, when they are planted they will become trees; but what they will be when a hundred years have dealt with them no man can tell. And though men, as seeds, are comparatively insignificant, when they shall have been planted again, in a fairer clime and in a better soil, and shall have been under a higher culture, they will then unfold their real and true selves, to which they will not come in their relationship to time and society. II. IT IS UPON THE GROUND OF THE VALUE THAT INHERES IN MEN THAT WE MUST NOT PUT ANY STUMBLING-BLOCK IN THEIR WAY. It is a case in which the highest are to serve the lowest. It is being to men what mothers are to children. What father is there that does not subdue himself to the level of the cradle? Accomplishments, tastes, and liberties are commanded to serve the wants of the little one. We must use our liberty and our strength for men, not them for our strength and liberty. 1. It is right, if a man is worshipping superstitiously, to supplant the superstition by a more rational worship. If I go into a Catholic church, and there stands the font of sacred water by the door, and I perceive one and another dipping their hands in and making the sign of the cross with the utmost reverence, I do not follow their example; I have no need of it; and yet I should abuse my liberty if I were to ridicule the act, or if I were to use my liberty and my intelligence to oppress the consciences of those that were lower and less than I. To a person who performs the act it may seem sacred; and if you cast contempt upon it you may be a violator of what is sacred to him, and therefore you may put a stumbling-block in his way. Idolaters were not treated with disrespect by Christ and His apostles. When Paul stood in the midst of the radiant idols at Athens he never spoke of them in such a way as to wound the feelings of any one who believed in them. 2. It is sometimes said of men, "They do not preach all that they believe." They would be fools if

they did. You might as well say to the mother who has a medicine chest, "Give all the medicine there is in that chest," as to say to a man, "Preach all that you believe." A man preaches to build men up. Are you to reproach a man for not putting all the materials for building into every edifice that he constructs? If a man builds of brick he does not think it necessary to exhaust the whole material that the country affords. And a man that teaches is not teaching for the sake of unsettling men. There are those who pile sermon upon sermon the year round, loosening everything, and at last nothing remains. But it is said, "They are bold men." Yes; and they may do harm with their boldness. "Well, they are honest." Honesty is a good thing; but even that should be handled prudently. It is better that men should have truth than that they should have delusion and falsity; but it is not wise that the change should be made too abruptly. Where a man has on a filthy garment, it is better that he should wear it than that he should go naked. Don't take it from him until you have a better one to put in the place of it. 3. A man has a right, in the employment of his wealth, to have regard for the comfort and refinement of himself and his household. But no man has a right to such a use of wealth as shall be exclusive and selfish. A man has a right to the use of his property, but he must use it charitably. And, on the other hand, those that are poor are not to rail at rich men, but are to act according to the spirit which is contained in the gospel (vers. 2, 3). 4. There are very many pleasures which I avoid, not because I have the slightest conscience respecting the things themselves, or because I suppose they would be otherwise than beneficial to me, but because my example should be such as not to mislead, but lead aright, the young men of the community, who, in looking upon what I did, if I indulged in all those things which were harmless to me, might venture on things that I could do safely, and they could not. 5. This should be carried still further. I hold that there is no one thing that is more perilous to young men than the usages of society in the matter of intoxicating drinks. Nevertheless, if I observe that my brother, in a neighbouring church, holds a contrary view, I have no right of disputation over his conscience. I may wish that he could see as I do; I may even attempt to give him the light that I have; but if, after all, in the exercise of his own judgment and discretion, he says, "I stand in my liberty before God," I have no right to cast an imputation on him and his liberty. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **I know . . . that there is nothing unclean of itself.**—*How the same thing may be clean and unclean:*—I. NOTHING IS UNCLEAN OF ITSELF. 1. Every creature of God is good. 2. May be lawfully used. 3. When sanctified by an enlightened conscience. II. EVERYTHING BECOMES UNCLEAN. 1. When abused. 2. When used by him that esteems it unclean. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably.**—*The duty of sacrificing private enjoyment for another's benefit:*—I. THE CASE SUPPOSED. The enjoyment though lawful, is a stumbling-block to another. II. THE APOSTLE'S DECISION OF IT. It is a violation of the law of love, because selfish in itself, injurious in its effect. III. THE CONSEQUENT DUTY. Of abstinence, lest you destroy him for whom Christ died, leaving you an example of self-sacrifice. (*Ibid.*) **Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.**—*Christ's death, a man's destruction:*—I. CHRIST DIED TO SAVE ALL. "He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world." His death was a fact in the Divine government in which all are interested, a provision of Divine mercy, like the sun, the air, and the various elements of nature, from which all could derive the same supplies. II. THOUGH HE DIED TO SAVE ALL, SOME WILL BE DESTROYED. The truth has no practical influence on a man unless he studies it, and he may study it or not, rightly or not, the provision does not stream its blessings into a man, irrespective of his choice or efforts. The sun will not give its light to a man unless he open his eyes, nor will the water allay his burning thirst unless he drinks it in. "Ye will not come unto Me," &c. III. THIS DESTRUCTION MAY BE EFFECTED BY A BROTHER. One man can and often does spiritually ruin another by his suggestions, his spirit, his example. Whilst God saves man by man the devil damns man by man. Through man the spiritually restorative and destructive forces of the universe are everlastingly working. IV. THE BROTHER MAY DO THIS BY A TRIFLING THING—"meat." By urging thy ceremonial observances thou art likely to ruin him; leave him free to his own conscience. As an invisible atom can destroy animal life, a little sin can damn a soul. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. **Let not then your good be evil spoken of.**—We ought not, for we have none too much. We may through—1. Ignorance. 2. Levity of temper. 3. Moroseness. 4. Want of stability. 5. Improvidence. 6. A number of little

things which, like dust upon a diamond, obscure its lustre, though each particle is almost nothing. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Let not your good be evil spoken of*:—1. The Bible speaks much of the beauty of holiness. It represents Jesus as the altogether lovely. His beauty consists in His perfect excellence, in the absolute symmetry of His whole character. 2. Believers are epistles of Christ. They are His witnesses. It is their solemn duty to make a fair representation of what He is, and what His religion is before the world. 3. There are two ways in which professors dishonour Christ, and make a false representation of Him and His religion—when by breaking the law they give men to understand that Christ allows such transgressions, and when they cause even their good to be evil spoken of, *i.e.*, when they so act on right principles as to give those principles a bad character, or so conduct themselves as to mislead others as to the true nature of the gospel. This is done—I. WHEN MEN SO USE THEIR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AS TO INJURE THEIR BRETHREN. The distinctions between months, days, and meats had been abolished. It was right that this fact should be asserted and taught, and that Christians should act upon this liberty; but if they so used it as to destroy their brethren, they sinned against Christ, and caused their good to be evil spoken of. So now in regard to temperance, men may make such a use of truth, and so act on true principles as to do great harm. II. WHEN UNDUE STRESS IS LAID ON TRIFLES. Paul says that religion does not consist in meat and drink; and to act as though it did is to slander the gospel. This is true of fanatics of all classes, and all bigots. They belie religion, as the tattooed New Zealander or painted Indian misrepresent the human face divine. III. BY THE SANCTIMONIOUS, who make a false representation of religion and cause it to be evil spoken of when they hold it up thus caricatured before men. IV. BY THE CENSORIOUS. Not only in making non-essentials of too much importance, but also in misrepresenting the spirit of their Master. His religion does not justify their harsh judgments. V. BY THOSE WHO CARRY ANY RIGHT PRINCIPLE TO EXCESS. 1. By the Puritans in regard to the Sabbath, to things indifferent in worship, to days of religious observance. 2. By Quakers in regard to dress and conformity to the world. 3. By those who deny the Church any liberty in her organisation. In every case of this kind the human degrades the Divine. What is indifferent is made essential, and what is essential is made indifferent. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Good evil spoken of* (Missionary Sermon):—Our good is evil spoken of—I. IF WE PROPAGATE AMONG OTHERS THAT WHICH WE DO NOT RECEIVE FOR OURSELVES. Create any great system of efforts, and there will be many blindly carried away with it. Many are, therefore, induced to enrol themselves in our missionary associations. "Come, see my zeal," said the ancient king, "for the Lord of Hosts." Was not his zeal selfishness rather? But "Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord," &c. II. WHEN WE VIOLATE THAT SOLEMNITY WHICH IS APPROPRIATE TO ALL SUCH TRANSACTIONS. May it not be feared that, in some cases, too great a temper of flippancy has pervaded our assemblies, and characterised our institutions? Could a traveller, in exploring the vestiges of an ancient city, pass along its fallen theatres, its broken aqueducts, its prostrate temples, with levity? Could a philanthropist proceed through the walls of the lazaretto, or the cells of a prison, in a careless and unfeeling mood? Could a negotiator address the revolted and the insurgent with a sportive look and in a jocular tone? Let us copy His faithfulness who upbraided Capernaum, and imitate His compassion who wept over Jerusalem; remembering that we are now labouring in the same course, and should know the fellowship of the same sufferings. III. WHEN WE FORGET THAT DUE ESTIMATE WHICH WE SHOULD TAKE OF WHAT IS DISTANT AND OF WHAT IS NEAR IN THE CONDITION OF MANKIND. Cast your eyes on your native land. Tens of thousands are before you, most imbruted, most immoral. And these are your kinsmen; a thousand ties of brotherhood make them one with yourselves. Cast your thoughts upon the distant realms of idolatry. You cannot tell how great is that darkness, for there is no contrasting light; you cannot tell the dimensions of that misery, for there is no measure by which you can gauge them. And in some districts of our favoured kingdom there are more Christian pastors than these societies have scattered around the circumference of the globe. Now, our good may be evil spoken of if we adopt any invidious partiality in our judgments. There are no souls more precious than those which throng the margins of the Indus, the Ganges, and the Nile; but the souls are alike precious which throng the majestic strands of the Severn, the Humber, and the Thames. IV. IF WE FORGET THE PROPORTION WHICH SHOULD EXIST BETWEEN EFFORT AND PRAYER. There is a devotion which becomes selfishness. It wraps itself in a contemplative dream; it will make no sacrifice, engage in no exer-

tion. There is an exertion which becomes impious. It is full of noise and ostentation. Now, it is necessary that devotion and activity be blended. Our labour must be habitual, not accidental—our devotion must be habitual, and not fitful. Look at the apostles—what were their prayers? Pentecost fully come—what were their deeds? Think of angels—they do always behold the face of their God; but they are winds—they are flames of fire. Think of the Son of God, how He spent whole nights in prayer! you see Him going about doing good. Let our prayers sanctify our efforts—let our efforts authenticate our prayers; let us take heaven by violence through the means of the one, and earth by violence through the means of the other. V. WHEN WE CALL IN THE AID OF WORLDLY EXCITEMENT. Have all our institutions to say that they are unspotted from the world? Has there been no strange fire which we have offered before the Lord? Has there been no suppression of truth, no evasion of facts, no adornment of narrative? Surely, if our purpose be to captivate the world to the Saviour, we must be on our guard, lest, in attempting it, we ourselves be led captive by the world. VI. IF WE ENTERTAIN A LIGHT VIEW OF THE ETERNAL DANGER OF THE HEATHEN. Make Christianity a question of comparative advantage, of ameliorated state, a measure to give an increase of light already sufficient, a confirmation to hopes already well founded, and the missionary apparatus will soon come to neglect; men will necessarily decry it, as an unmeaning toy and a gaudy superfluity. VII. IF WE OBTRUDE PARTY OPINIONS AND SINGULARITIES. How pleasing is it that ours is a common cause, and that now, more than ever, ours is a common spirit. When the infidel and the scorner see we are moving in our different tracts, and yet are moving under a common influence and for a common purpose, we shall thus vindicate our good, and, in the absence of all that is little in sectarianism, we shall have our good compelled to be spoken well of. VIII. WHEN THERE IS ANY DISPOSITION TO DISPARAGE THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER. We have formed a heroism of principle and a dint of courage which were unknown; we can bring forth, confidently, men who have died unsbrinkingly as martyrs. Can we ever use one term of detraction towards these men? Can we ever yield to them a supercilious patronage and a grudging support? We are honoured that they will go—we are honoured that we may sustain them. Let us remember that the very life—credit—character of our missionary institutions, must depend on the men whom we entrust with this work; and when they have been thus faithful in their work, let us give to them all that cordiality of confidence which they so well deserve, and which it would be unjust to refuse. IX. WHEN WE APPLY A HARSHER RULE TO OUR CONVERTS THAN WE APPLY TO OURSELVES. The former may occasionally be carried away by error; but let us think of our own deviations at home. We should, indeed, be disheartened if ever we had to report of any of our native Churches abroad what the apostles had to report of Corinth and of Galatia. X. IF WE AT ALL ENCOURAGE THE HOPE OF AN UNSCRIPTURAL CONSUMMATION. Remember that the present dispensation is a spiritual one; that it is complete, and nothing can be added to it; that it is an unearthly one, and therefore cannot admit of secular aggrandisement; and it is a final one—it therefore allows of no ulterior revelation. What know you other than this—than that all the world should be Christians?—other than this, that the gospel shall be universally preached? This is your consummation: you desire here no other paradise but to see the earth filled with the trees of righteousness. XI. IF WE DO NOT FOLLOW UP OUR EXERTIONS AND IMPROVE OUR SUCCESS. We have made a lodgment, and God's salvation has been openly showed in the sight of the heathen; and there have been those who have gone up to occupy the breach. Shall we leave them to perish? We have sown the seed; the harvest is come—it invites the sickle. Who would not enter with ecstasy into such a field, and crowd as labourers into such a harvest? (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Our good:*—(Christian liberty.) I. IS EVIL SPOKEN OF—1. By the enemies of the truth, when they see a want of harmony in the Church. 2. By the weak, when they condemn the free conduct of their stronger brethren. 3. By the strong, when they give offence to the consciences of the weak. II. MUST BE PROTECTED. 1. Against what? (1) Reproach. (2) In consequence of—(*a*) Offence. (*b*) Misuse. 2. How? (1) By not laying too much stress on matters unessential. (2) By a supreme regard for those things that are indispensable. 3. Why? Thereby—(1) We serve Christ. (2) Win the approbation of men. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Misrepresented goodness:*—Some men seek to impress the world by their goodness when they really have no goodness. Such were the Pharisees. But the apostle has in view men who have goodness, but who do themselves injustice. We need to be careful about the manifestation of our religion, as well as about the reality of it. It is possible to be very good, and yet so to act

as to put men out of conceit with religion itself. There is a book entitled "Roses: How to grow and How to Show them." Anybody might say, "Ah! the question is, how to grow them. Bring your flower into fulness of glory, and it will show itself and win the prize." But it is just for want of this particular skill that many a clever grower has missed the prize. So it is with character. Our good to be evil spoken of. I. By SADNESS. A serious spirit is a true spirit, and one we should ever cherish. But how easy it is to turn it into sourness, and thus make a grand character repulsive! With all our solemnity there ought to be cheerfulness. A man who is all laughter counts for little, a man who is all groans counts for less; but he who lets a hopeful spirit shine through all his religion does much to recommend his faith. II. By NARROWNESS. The world often miscalls a noble self-denial strait-lacedness, and we must be prepared for it. But there is sometimes a self-denial that is really narrowness, and that damages the reputation of good men. This illiberality of mind sometimes reveals itself in an orthodoxy that prevents a man from looking calmly and boldly at religious questions, sometimes in a harsh, exclusive denominationalism; sometimes in an asceticism which makes a man intolerant of recreations; sometimes in a fear of worldly conformity. Let us beware of this suspicious, conceited, uncharitable spirit. Let us hold a theology as broad as judgment, mercy, and truth. Christ stood at the utmost remove from the pettifogging Pharisee. He was the ideal Catholic. Let it be thus with us. III. By HARDNESS. 1. You may see this in business men sometimes. A Christian trader is in all things severely conscientious. And yet nobody likes him. The reason is his conscientiousness looks very much like selfishness, and is currently reckoned as such. Now, he might be all that a smart business man needs to be, and yet be popular into the bargain. He wants to understand the by-play of life—how to soften the severe rigid laws of the business sphere with little acts of forbearance, patience, generosity. 2. And you may see this hardness in family life. It was said of the mother of one of our most distinguished women that she did her duty to her children, made sacrifices for their welfare, and yet there was no sympathy in it all. And the gifted daughter grew up feeling that the lack of warmth and love in her early training was a lifelong loss. Oh, what a grand thing is graciousness in all our spirit and conduct! Some excellent people are sadly wanting here. They do not know how to show their roses—they thrust the posy into your face and you are more scratched with the thorns than regaled by the fragrance. We often hear about "diamonds in the rough"; there are Christians after that order, but it is a serious defect to be in the rough—Christ's diamonds, like Himself, ought to be full of beauty and grace. IV. By UNSEASONABLENESS. Character is timeliness, a fine perception of what is becoming to the persons, to the place, to the hour. If we do not attend to this our mirthfulness may be reckoned levity, our strictness intolerance, our liberality weakness, our large-mindedness licence. We have need to pray constantly that "we may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom," &c.; so shall we serve the apple of gold in the basket of silver. Let us not despise this matter. Do not say, Let us get the solid thing, and never mind the rest. A jeweller works altogether with gold and gems; but it is not enough to mix these anyhow. So we, as Christians, must be careful how we arrange our precious material, for of the virtues we may make an eyesore or a picture. We must work with judgment, sympathy, courtesy, or our good will be evil spoken of. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Reputation*:—I. NOTHING IS MORE EASILY DESTROYED THAN A GOOD REPUTATION. You may be years, a life-time even, in building it up, and yet a moment, a single act, may suffice to destroy it. A breath of scandal may blast it, an indiscretion may tarnish it, a "dead fly" in the ointment may make it offensive. How sedulously should we guard it! II. NOTHING ON EARTH IS SO VALUABLE OR SO POTENT AS A GOOD NAME. Wealth beside it is dross. Office, station, fame, are nothing worth in comparison. Talent, learning, and gifts of oratory, pale and fade in the presence of it. 1. For our own sake we should sacredly guard it—for it is our crown jewel, the one potential element of usefulness we possess. 2. For society's sake we should do nothing, omit nothing, that will tend to obscure it. For Christ's sake and the Church's sake, we are bound to guard it as we would guard life itself: to wound it is to wound Christ in the house of His friends, and bring reproach upon His Church. Oh, it is these tarnished reputations, these soiled garments, these discredited names, in the household of faith, that so weaken the testimony of the Church and fill the mouths of scoffers and infidels. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The importance of a good man taking care of his reputation*:—Character and reputation are not convertible terms. 1. A bad man may have a good reputation.

He may have the art of so concealing the reigning elements of his character as to give to his compeers a false impression. Hence, in all circles there are counterfeits that pass for true coin. The miser in heart passes for a philanthropist; the sensualist in heart for a man of chastity. 2. A good man may have a bad reputation. Genuine saints have often been regarded as great sinners. Against this the text is a warning. I. THERE IS A DANGER IN THIS, arising—1. From some things in society. (1) Its envy. All men instinctively feel that goodness is an excellency, and those who have it not naturally envy those who possess it. The ugly envy beauty, the poor wealth, the obscure fame, the depraved excellence. The delight of envy is ever to mal-represent its object. (2) Its self-complacency. All men desire to be on good terms with themselves, and to be regarded by society as worthy of honour. But the virtues of the good flashing on the lives of the corrupt tend to destroy this. A bad man in the presence of a good man must feel self-condemned. (3) Its stupidity. The great bulk of society are so dull in relation to spiritual virtues that moral distinctions are disregarded by them, and they often confound good with evil. 2. From some things in the good man himself. The more goodness a man has in him, the less suspicious he is, the more confiding, and the more regardless of conventional proprieties. He is natural, and like all natural objects shows himself as he is. He is likely to care no more for what men think of him than trees for the opinion of the birds, or flowers for the opinion of spectators. Great goodness is constantly making conventional mistakes and trampling artificial properties underfoot. II. THERE IS AN EVIL IN THIS. A man's power to do good depends greatly upon the faith that society has in his goodness. If society suspects his genuineness or disinterestedness, he may preach like Paul, but he will accomplish but little good. Hence it has often happened that truly good men and powerful preachers have, by disregarding certain recognised proprieties of society, destroyed their usefulness for ever. Conclusion: Hence, because of this danger and evil, let us walk "circumspectly," not as fools, but as wise; let us avoid the very appearance of evil, knowing that the loss of reputation tends to disqualify us for usefulness. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *On the imprudent way of discharging sacred duties*:—Perhaps there never was a time since the world began in which so much was done for the cause of God and of truth, as at the present. Yet it becomes us to rejoice with trembling, and to act with care. In proportion to our zeal, is the enemy's malignity; while we act, the world watches, and connects the cause with the demeanour and temper of those who have espoused it. Sacred duties may be discharged in such a way as that they may be evil spoken of, and neutralised completely in their influence and effect. Take the case of—I. SOCIAL PRAYER. Our good may be evil spoken of—1. When the prayer-meeting is left without some wise and judicious leader. 2. When they are converted into anything but what they profess to be—meetings for prayer—when the time is much occupied in exhortation, or discussion. 3. When the language employed in prayer is pompous and inflated. 4. When undue familiarity with God is used in prayer. 5. When prayers are spun out to an unreasonable and wearisome length. Whitfield once said to a good man who had fallen into this error, "Sir, you first prayed me into a good frame, and then you prayed me out of it." 6. When much time is occupied in prayer with such petitions as are only applicable to the case of the leader. II. THE VISITATION OF THE SICK. This duty is improperly discharged. 1. When the conversation is confined entirely, or chiefly, to the disease under which the patient labours. 2. When an indiscriminate offer is made of the consolations of the gospel, which belong to believers only. 3. When special reference is not had to the peculiar circumstances of the case in prayer. 4. When there is harshness or severity in the manner of address. III. DOMESTIC RELIGION AND INSTRUCTION. 1. Where there are no stated periods for the observance of family religion and instruction, but it is left to convenience, or caprice—to inclination, or to chance. 2. When the reading and explanation of the Scriptures do not form a great part of domestic instruction. 3. When the duty is hurried over with carelessness and haste. 4. When there are no inquiries made, as to their increase in the knowledge and understanding of Divine things. IV. ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN RELIGIOUS AND BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS. Such as Bible associations and Sunday Schools. Conclusion: Observe some general principles, the observance of which are of importance in efforts to do good. 1. Look well to your motives. If they are wrong, your conduct cannot be acceptable to God, nor is it likely to do your Christian profession credit before men. 2. See that your spirit and temper are always suitable to the character you sustain, and the objects which you have in view. 3. Do as much good as you possibly can in

private. 4. Never talk much *in* what you do, or *of* what you do. Let your works, and not your words, praise you in the gate—and rather imitate the deep and silent river, that pursues its noiseless way, and is only known by the fertility and luxuriance it diffuses in its course—than the impetuous brook, that attracts the eye by its clamour, only to behold its shallowness. 5. Persevere in all you undertake, and then your activity will not be attributed to the mere impulse of the moment, but look more like the result of conviction and principle. 6. Let there be a cheerful alacrity in all you do, that it may appear to spring from a willing mind, and be esteemed rather your relaxation than your work. 7. Avoid the introduction of your own particular religious tenets. 8. Never do evil that good may come. 9. Seek to do good, abstracted from all the evil which may be connected with it. 10. Never refrain from doing good, for fear of its being evil spoken of. 11. Refer all that is good in what you do to God, and all that is evil to yourselves. 12. Cherish an abiding sense of your own helplessness, and ever rely on the power of God for strength, the Spirit of God for direction, and the work of Christ for acceptance. 13. Keep your great account in view—and the Lord grant you may find mercy of the Lord in that day. (*T. Raffles, LL.D.*)

Vers. 17, 18. **For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink.**—*God's kingdom:*—I. THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. 1. The import of the term. Christ's spiritual kingdom established on earth—His dominion over His redeemed people, having its seat in the soul, and extending over the entire life. This is a kingdom totally diverse from all others—one not in word or mere outward form, but in soul-subduing, life-transforming power, one that ultimately brings every thought into harmony with Christ's holy mind and will. 2. Its peculiar characteristics. (1) Negatively. It is "not meat or drink," *i.e.*, it does not consist in the observance of distinctions between different kinds of food and drink, or in any merely external forms. (2) Positively. It is—(*a*) Holy conformity to God—"righteousness." (*b*) A mild and gentle demeanour—"peace." (*c*) Spiritual gladness of heart—"joy." (*d*) The presence and power of the Holy Spirit as producing all these. II. THE CHARACTER OF THE TRUE SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF CHRIST (ver. 18). Observe—1. The indispensable requisites of Christ's service. In order to serve Christ, we must possess and manifest righteousness, and peace and joy, through the power of the Spirit of God. For these things there is, there can be, no substitute. Without that, however great your knowledge and profession and zeal may be, your service is a vain oblation. 2. In what respect Christ is served by these things. (1) His authority as a Master is acknowledged. Christ has expressly enjoined these things on all His followers. (*a*) "Be ye therefore perfect." (*b*) "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." (*c*) "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (2) His power as a Saviour is made manifest. These are not the natural product of the human heart. The Lord Jesus is their alone Fountain-spring. (3) His example as a forerunner is imitated. Was not His an example of righteousness, peace, and joy? (4) Witness is borne to the nature and design of His gospel. Serving Christ in these things, we declare plainly to the world, in a way they can far better understand than by any verbal statement, what Christ has come to do in and for man! III. THE BLESSED RESULT OF THAT SERVICE. There will be—1. Divine acceptance. The ground of a guilty sinner's acceptance before God is exclusively Christ's finished work; but our text speaks not of that acceptance, but of the believer's acceptance of his Heavenly Father. God's complacency and delight in a holy life. 2. Human approval. Such a life as that delineated in our text cannot but commend itself even to the world. It is, however, only men of God who can, in the fullest sense of the word, appreciate it. (*P. Morison.*) *The kingdom of God* consists in—1. Righteousness in respect to God. 2. Peace with respect to others. 3. Joy in respect to yourself. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The kingdom of God:*—A peasant boy was asked, "What is the kingdom of God?" He paused, and with an expression of seriousness and devotion which I shall never forget, placing his hand on his bosom, he said, "It is something here!" and then raising his eyes, he added, "and something up yonder!" (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *The constitution of the kingdom of God:*—I. NOT—1. Abstinence from earthly pleasure. 2. Observance of external forms. 3. The adoption of a religious deportment. 4. Zeal for orthodoxy. II. BUT—1. Righteousness in faith and life. 2. Peace with God and man. 3. Joy in sorrow and reproach. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Distinguishing marks of the kingdom of God:*—Every kingdom is renowned for some dis-

tinctive feature. Rome was conspicuous for its warlike propensities. The Grecian States were celebrated for their love of the fine arts. France is eminent for its taste. The American States are famous for their enterprise. But the distinguishing mark of the kingdom of God is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." *The inward and spiritual character of the kingdom of God:*—I. IN ITS PRIVILEGES. As some painters can produce a striking likeness by a few clear though rapid strokes of the pencil, so is it with this beautiful sketch of the new man. 1. The first lineament is righteousness. By this must be meant an entire justification and freedom from every charge and condemnation which sin might urge, and which God's broken commands might pass upon the Christian. This is the choicest mercy in the catalogue of mercies. It is—(1) An enriching mercy, entitling to every good. (2) A most voluminous mercy, in which there is more than can be counted or imagined. 2. Peace is another lineament. Pardoning love hath subdued enmity against God. Peace hath been made by the blood of the Cross. This is one of the most gracious, as it is one of the most blessed, fruits of the Spirit. 3. Joy. It is the privilege of God's children to rejoice, as the distinguished objects of His adopting love. And, surely, when the Spirit bears witness with the Christian's spirit that he is a child of God, he hath the elements and materials for a holy joy, which the world, with all its pleasures, can never give, and which, with all its enmity, it is impotent to take away. II. IN ITS DUTIES. 1. It is righteousness in the Holy Ghost. Not only is the satisfaction of Christ's perfect merit imputed to the soul, but the work of his sanctification by the Holy Ghost, making the believer one with Him, is commenced within the heart. Then will conscience be made of every duty towards God and man. Faith is in the soul, as lightning in the air, which purifies; as fire in the metal, which refines. The heart, which heretofore was the thoroughfare of Satan, becomes the enclosure of God. 2. Peace also is a duty to the subjects of the Great Salem; and as wars and fightings come of the lusts of men, so will the disciples of Jesus be self-denying men, in order that they may dwell in peace with Him and with each other. 3. And how shall the Christian manifest his joy as a duty? Even by the holy delight which he takes in that service which is perfect freedom. (*R. P. Buddicom, M.A.*) *The spirituality of the kingdom of God:*—These words do not infer that we may eat and drink as we please; the very opposite is implied, namely, that whether we eat or drink, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost should determine our spirit and conduct. The doctrine is, that the kingdom of God is not founded on things outward, or any artificial arrangement of these; but on the absolute difference between right and wrong, happiness and misery; and that, accordingly, its design is to establish virtuous dispositions and holy joys. This doctrine is manifestly in direct antagonism to the tendency at Rome to indulge in disputation about the obligation of existing customs, and needs to be taught in the present day. There is a very general disregard of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and of the sufficiency of its truths to meet the wants of man. To make the tree good, that its fruit may be good, is a process far too slow and undemonstrative for this enterprising age. Accordingly, we are overwhelmed with "improvements," "reforms," "schemes," "societies," and "movements," to effect a speedy and decided change. NOTE—I. THE DESIGN OF THE KINGDOM—viz., the diffusion of righteousness, peace, and joy. 1. Societies are formed with a leading object in view. Zeal for that object is the distinguishing mark of the members of each society. Diversity of taste and opinion is tolerated so long as it does not interfere with the interests to be promoted. There are religious communities of whose institutions distinctions of meat and drink form an essential part. Such is the general character of Hindooism and Mohammedanism. Such was the general character of Pharisaism. John the Baptist adopted similar means of distinction; he came neither eating nor drinking, nor clothing himself like other men. But Christ, instead of building up such walls of partition, removed them, and strove, by the example of loving, familiar intercourse, to overcome deep-rooted antipathies. Henceforward, "righteousness, peace, and joy," are to be the distinguishing tokens of His subjects—not any style of living or appearance peculiar to them as members of a community. 2. Tried by this test, Romanism, and all imitations of it, must stand condemned; but let us apply it to ourselves as members of a Church claiming to be scriptural. We belong to different grades of society, and have different tastes and habits, Hence there is no small risk of uncharitable judgments. Simple tastes and manners to some appear little short of barbarous, and refined tastes and manners to others voluptuous and worldly. How uncalled for these insinuations! To any disposed

to make much of outward distinctions, we must ask—(1) What of righteousness? Is not the first thing desirable—a heart right with God? (2) What of peace? Is not peace Christ's great legacy to His disciples? and peacemaking the duty He has blessed, as peculiarly that of the children of God? (3) What of joy? Is it not the will of God that we should rise above anxiety and discontent, to grateful, hopeful joy? Murmuring about ourselves or our fellow-Christians is neither right nor profitable. (4) What of Divine grace as the source of all spiritual excellence? God the Holy Ghost is not to be limited by man's prescription of meats and drinks, days and times, dress and postures. II. THE FITNESS OF THE DESIGN. 1. It accords with the extent of the kingdom. God, as the rightful sovereign of all men everywhere, commands them to return to their allegiance. The kingdom must therefore include men of all nations. How great the diversity of conditions of existence! And in His wisdom and love God has provided a system adapted to all these conditions. A religion eminently spiritual and practical, having very few and simple ordinances of worship, Christianity belongs specially to no clime, grade, or class. 2. It accords with the number and variety of the enemies to be overcome. Confessedly there is a great deal of irreligion and vice in the world; and no religion is worthy of the name that does not engage its adherents to a course of resolute opposition to these evils. But there is a great deal of sin and misery where these evils are neither seen nor heard. Seemly forms of religion and correct moral deportment have not been sufficient to satisfy the heart and purify the conscience. Churches have been rent, homes made desolate, and hearts broken, by men "touching the righteousness which is of the law blameless." We do not need more fasts, zeal for traditions and customs; we need a religion that will strike at the root of all the evil in our nature. This religion we find in Christianity, which obliges us to follow after righteousness, peace, and joy. 3. It accords with the attributes of God; for there is blasphemy in the very supposition that the Divine Being can be satisfied with a religion chiefly ceremonial or outwardly correct. He is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. 4. It accords with the character of Christ. How strange that His name should have been given to such systems as have borne it! So far from patronising externalism, He exposed Himself to the wrath of the Ritualists of that day; so far from affecting peculiarity of living, He exposed Himself to the calumny that He was a gluttonous man and a winebibber. Everywhere and always He proclaimed the necessity of a righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees. Were He this day amongst us, no word of sympathy would be heard from Him with those who compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and only succeed in perverting his better nature. His sympathy would be with those who assert their freedom from the commandments of men, and who joyfully own their obligation to love and obey their "Father which is in heaven." 5. It accords with the destiny of all true subjects of the kingdom. There must be a meetness, as well as a title, belonging to all the heirs of glory. A training of the soul in righteousness, peace, and joy, we can well believe to bring about a meetness for the society of the spirits of the just made perfect; but we are at a loss to conceive how a round of forms and ceremonies, or a careful conformity to usages and example, in matters wholly of this world and of this body, can constitute any such preparation. (*W. Limont.*) *The kingdom of God is a soul-kingdom*:—Why was it called a kingdom at all? Well, since a man's disposition is the fountain from which all his enjoyments that are worth having spring in this world, the condition of the soul becomes a kingdom in the sense that it represents to men the idea of felicity. The old notions were that a king was about the happiest man on earth. Hence the phrase, "Happy as a king." Therefore in the description of the disposition, which is the soul-kingdom, it is called a king's dominion, or a king-dom. But there is a more important reason—namely, that a king in his kingdom dominates, controls, governs. It is the disposition of men, their character, that controls. Their enjoyment, all their life, depends upon what they are in themselves, and inside of themselves. If a man's soul is one that works itself out in righteousness, in peace, in joy in the Holy Ghost, that is the dominating influence which controls the whole life. Now I aver that men are happy in the exact proportion in which their dispositions are qualified to make happiness. The enjoyment of men is in the ratio in which they have a right inward condition. A man who has right feelings and right dispositions, either finds happiness or makes it. It will happen to a man who is all right in himself. He either finds or makes life a blessing. A man who is in good health, who has a right temperament, all of whose dispositions are noble, and who is

hopeful, courageous, and cheerful, loving God and loving men, thanks nobody for making him happy; he is happy of himself. The human soul was just as much made to produce happiness as a music-box was made to produce music. If it be in a right and normal condition, harmonised with God, with the spirit-world, for which we are being trained, and with men, then it is happy. The soul must needs produce its own happiness out of the harmony of its own condition; but men do not believe in this. You will find young men saying, "If I were as rich as Vanderbilt, would not I enjoy myself?" Do you enjoy yourself now? "No—oh, no." Then you would not then. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The essentials of Christianity:*—1. A NEGATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. "Meat and drink" includes the carnal and sensational in every shape and form. True religion is not—1. Ceremonial observances. Godliness is at a low ebb when great importance is attached to external rites. Ceremonialism is the respirator worn by a Church when its lungs are too weak to breathe the bracing atmosphere of revealed truth. Consumption has set in, and in time it will die of exhaustion, and be decently buried in the grave of formality. This was the case with the Jewish Church. The temple services were carried on with regularity and gorgeousness, while the soul of religion was gone. 2. The gratification of the appetites. Pagan converts ran to the other extreme—religion to them was a matter of cookery, confectionery, and stimulants. Previous to their conversion they had been accustomed to associate worship with gluttony, drunkenness, and licentiousness of the lowest type. Their countrymen indulged in the wildest revelries while celebrating the festivities of Bacchus and Venus. What wonder, then, that such should come into the Church, expecting it to furnish them with fresh opportunities to pamper their carnal appetites? They even turned the Lord's Supper into a carousal. 3. Æsthetic idealism. Many minds have been so "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" by what is called higher criticism, as to lose all relish for doing, and they spend their time in dreaming. In this state of mind they devise for themselves an ideal Christ, no more like the real Christ of the gospels than the sensitive plant that grows in the hothouse to the hardy oak whose giant arms defy the storm. To the idealist the Bible is a poetical perfumery to regale the jaded senses, and not the voice of God, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The house of prayer is a floral hall, where the roll of music soothes the feelings, and the dim light plays softly on the eye, and fashion displays the contents of its costly wardrobes; and not the house of God, where sincerity agonises and devotion sheds tears of penitence and joy. II. A POSITIVE DESCRIPTION OF TRUE RELIGION. It consists in—1. Rightness of motive—"Righteousness." One of the old schoolmen has said that "manners make the man." That is true as far as society is concerned; but motives make the man in the sight of God; external accomplishments go for nothing if the moving springs of character are crooked and unrighteous. But how are they whose motives are wrong and character corrupt to be made right? For it is written, "There is none righteous, no not one." "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." But, thank God, there is a way of escape—"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," &c. 2. Tranquillity of mind—"peace"—(1) With God. The old enmity against the Divine character and government is slain, the hostile parties become reconciled, and the peace which passeth all understanding fills the believer's mind—"For He is our peace, who hath made both one." Tranquillity of mind is simply impossible until this reconciliation is effected. Who can be free from fear whilst the sentence of condemnation, like the sword of Damocles, hangs over his head? (2) With ourselves. Conscience gives up accusing, the passions are kept under restraint, and the little kingdom within, once in a state of insurrection, becomes quiet and subdued and loyal to the Prince of Peace. But distinguish between a state of indifference and a state of peace. The former resembles the oppressive stillness of the atmosphere before the storm, and the latter the bright sunshine and verdant soil after the storm. Many are lulled to sleep in false security, like the drunkard who slept on the beach fancying himself at home; the advancing tide rudely awoke him to a sense of his danger, but in trying to escape he only went deeper into the water and was swept away by the current. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them," &c. 3. Jubilation of heart—"joy in the Holy Ghost." (1) Righteousness is the lowest stage in Christian experience; peace is the middle state; joy is the crowning state. Righteousness is the foundation of the temple safe and sound; peace is the superstructure, roofed in, affording

shelter to the weary, heavy-laden soul; joy is the tower, with a peal of bells giving forth a clear musical expression of the incalculable advantages of a holy life. Or, to change the figure, righteousness is the "root of the matter," strong and healthy; peace is the flower, fine and fragrant; joy is the fruit, ripe and delicious. (2) Many Christians remain throughout life in a state of righteousness—are, indeed, "alive unto God through Christ our Lord"—but their spiritual life is of the lowest type. Others have advanced a step higher, and have attained to a state of peace. Sovereigns, when first minted, are rung on a sounding-iron, and those that do not give out a clear sound are reckoned "dumb," and are sent back to be melted again. The "dumb blanks" are good gold, but as they lack the ringing sound, they are not allowed to pass into the press-room to receive the last impression of the die. Even so those Christians who have reached a state of peace and never advance further; they are good gold, nevertheless they are "dumb blanks," and have need of being re-melted, so as to reach that jubilant state of feeling which breaks out into exultation. (3) The inspirer of this joy is the Holy Ghost. There is another kind of joy produced by stimulants; it rattles on the tongue, flashes in the eye, leaps in the heart, and breaks out into all kinds of riotous comicalities. All this boisterous gaiety leaves the heart sad and sorrowful, and it ends in gloom and despair. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful," &c. This joy in the Holy Ghost is—(*a*) Demonstrative in its character. The outpouring of the Divine Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a most exciting scene; and during seasons of great awakening this has been repeated. (*b*) Permanent. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." To possess it is to possess the most precious of treasures, the sweetest of pleasures, and the richest of feasts; it is a constant summer in the soul, and a heaven in miniature. (*W. A. Griffiths.*) *True religion*:—I. NEGATIVELY. Does not consist—1. In anything of a mere external kind. 2. In orthodox opinions or right modes of worship. 3. In a system of observance that is either constrained by fear or is employed as a sort of compromise to ward off the Divine displeasure, or made a ground of claim in the way of merit to the Divine favour. 4. In mere temporary feeling, be those feelings of what kind they may. II. POSITIVELY. It does consist in—1. Righteousness. (1) Justifying. (2) Internal. (3) Practical. 2. Peace. (1) As opposed to hostility. (2) As opposed to condemnation. (3) Internal tranquillity. 3. Joy. (1) Of faith. (2) Of love. As implying—(*a*) Gratitude. (*b*) Complacency. (3) Of hope. (*Josiah Hill.*) *Moral goodness, or true religion* is—I. THE REIGN OF GOD IN THE SOUL. The reign—1. Of reality, in contradistinction to that of appearance. 2. Of spirit, in contradistinction to that of matter. 3. Of love, in contradistinction to that of selfishness. 4. Of the absolute, in contradistinction to the reign of the contingent and fleeting. II. A SPIRITUAL SERVICE RENDERED TO CHRIST (ver. 18). Not in meat, drink, and mere ceremonies, but in spiritual exercises. "Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." To serve Christ is the grand end of being; to serve Christ is to serve in the highest sense your own interests, the good of the universe, and the will of God. III. THE HIGHEST GLORY OF MAN. It ensures two things—1. The favour of God. "Acceptable to God." To please God—what is higher than this? To have His smile, to enjoy His friendship and fellowship. 2. The favour of men. "Approved of men." Christly goodness commands the involuntary homage of all consciences. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **But righteousness.**—Righteousness of life as the fruit of righteousness by faith. Righteousness practised as the effect of righteousness imparted. Righteousness before man as the evidence of righteousness before God. Believers are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. i. 11). Death to sin and life to righteousness fruits of Christ's death. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The kingdom of God righteousness:* I. IT IS BASED UPON RIGHTEOUSNESS. If we trace earthly kingdoms up to their origin this will scarcely be affirmed of any of them. Whatever may be said about its present procedure, what existing throne has not been erected on the ruin of human rights and liberties? But God reigns by right. We belong to Him as His creatures and His children. II. ITS MONARCH IS RIGHTEOUS. Many potentates are manifestly unrighteous, and of the very best it can only be affirmed that on the whole they rule righteously. Compassed by infirmity, with the best intentions, they are often betrayed into deeds which charity is compelled to cover. But that astounding fiction when otherwise applied, "the king can do no wrong," is absolutely and ever true in regard to God. III. ITS LAWS ARE RIGHTEOUS. Of none other can this be said. The best system has some bad laws—legislation, part of which presses inequitably on some portion of the community, and which is

endured because of the righteousness of the rest. But God's laws are all good, and good to all alike. IV. IT AIMS AT THE PRODUCTION OF RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER. The best earthly governments are content if the people are contented and law-abiding, *i.e.*, if their subjects are materially prosperous and do not break the law. But the members of God's kingdom are urged to keep His laws with a view to their own moral perfection and the ultimate moral perfection of the world. Hence the kingdom of the future is to be one wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the people thereof are to be all righteous. (*J. W. Burn.*) **Peace.**—*The kingdom of God a kingdom of peace* :—This is one of its notable characteristics as pourtrayed in the Bible. I. ITS CHIEF IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE. II. ITS RULE WAS INAUGURATED BY THE PROCLAMATION OF PEACE. "Peace on earth." III. ITS MEASURES ARE PACIFIC. Its only wars are against the enemies of peace. IV. ITS SUBJECTS ARE PEACEABLE. Disturbance here is disloyalty and treason. V. ITS UNIVERSAL ESTABLISHMENT WILL SECURE WORLD-WIDE PEACE. Arbitration, treaties, alliances, &c., will only effect partial and temporary peace. (*Ibid.*) **And joy in the Holy Ghost.**—*The kingdom of God a kingdom of joy* :—I. IT WAS HERALDED AS SUCH. "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." II. AS SUCH IT PROMOTES THE JOY OF ITS SUBJECTS. "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." III. ITS SUBJECTS THEREFORE ARE COMMANDED TO BE JOYFUL. "Rejoice evermore." (*Ibid.*) *Joy in the Holy Ghost* :—1. Not natural, but spiritual. 2. Not imaginary, but real. 3. Not dependent on external circumstances, but upon the revelations of the Spirit to faith. 4. Not transitory, but permanent. 5. Not extinguished in death, but perfected in heaven. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Joy* :—Jesus is the bringer of spiritual spring into the soul. When He comes the time of the singing of birds comes with Him. He is the Sun of Righteousness who turns January into May. Really, we ought to understand that God allows every child of His to make his own almanac. We can have warm weather, and flowers and fruits and bird-songs all the year through if we only live in the rays of Christ's countenance. The sorest sorrows of life are of our own making. We shut out God's larks from our hearts, and bring in the bats and hooting owls of miserable unbelief. These birds of evil omen disappear when the dayspring on high visits our souls. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) **For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.**—*The ideal character and service* :—I. THE IDEAL CHARACTER. 1. Righteousness. This is characteristic of the man who is right—(1) With God. (*a*) Through justifying faith. (*b*) By a sanctified experience. (2) With man through a dutiful fulfilment of the obligations of every human relationship. (3) With both in thought, resolve, word, deed. 2. Peace. This marks the man who—(1) Has made his peace with God. (2) Is at peace with man. (3) Has a peaceful mind. 3. Joy. This—(1) Flows from the other two. (2) Wells up from a grateful heart. (3) Streams over in a glad and beneficent life. II. THE IDEAL SERVICE. 1. In these things we serve Christ. Christ's work is to make us righteous, &c. "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." When we work out what He works in we are workers together with Him and so serve Him. What shall we say about the man who professes to be the servant of Christ, and is unrighteous, quarrelsome, or morose? These characteristics defeat Christ's end in the world, and bring dishonour on his Master's name and cause. 2. In these things we are—(1) Acceptable to God. Because—(*a*) They are conformable to His own nature. He is "the righteous Father," "the God of Peace," "the blessed God." (*b*) They accomplish His design in creation, providence, and grace. (2) Approved of men, even when unacceptable in the case of bad men. The natural conscience is compelled even when depraved to silently applaud what is righteous, &c. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Men's approbation desirable* :—1. For their own sakes. 2. For the sake of the Master whom we serve. 3. For our own comfort and influence. To please God the surest way to be approved of men. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Christianity approved* :—It would not be a fair thing to test a philosophy, or a body of political, or scientific truth, by the conduct and character of the men that professed it; but it is a perfectly fair thing, under certain conditions and in certain limits, to test a system of practical morality, which professes to do certain things with people's character and conduct, by its professors. It is just as fair, when a creed comes before our notice which assumes to influence men's conduct, to say, "Well! I should like to see it working," as it is for any of you mill-owners to say, when a man comes to you with a fine invention upon paper, "Have you got a working model of it? Has it ever been tried? What have been the results that have been secured by it?" Or as it would be to say to anybody that claimed to have got

a "medicine that will cure consumption," to say, "Have you any cases? Can you quote any cures?" So when we Christians stand up and say, "We have a faith which is able to deaden men's minds to the world; which is able to make them unselfish; which is able to lift them up above cares and sorrows; which is able to take men and transform their whole nature, and put new desires and hopes and joys into them," it is quite fair for the world to say, "Have you? Does it? Does it do so with you? Can you produce your lives as working models of Christianity?" (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Vers. 19, 20. **Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.**—*Things which make for peace*:—I. WHAT THESE THINGS ARE. 1. Righteousness. 2. Humility. 3. Love. 4. Faith. II. WE MUST FOLLOW THEM. 1. Earnestly. 2. Prayerfully. 3. With steady faith in our ultimate attainment of them. III. THE RESULT. Eternal life in heaven with God and Christ. (*J. H. Tarson.*) *The things which make for peace*:—1. A peaceable temper. 2. Peaceable measures. 3. Peaceable methods. *Things to be sought after*:—I. THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE. 1. Essentials in which we all agree. 2. Objects which we all desire. 3. Blessings in which all can share. II. THINGS THAT EDIFY. 1. Knowledge. 2. Faith. 3. Love. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) The endeavours of the true Christian for the *welfare of his brethren*:—I. WHEREIN THEY CONSIST. Endeavours after—1. Peace. 2. Edification. II. WHAT ARE THE COMMON HINDRANCES? Offences which—1. Destroy mutual confidence. 2. Injure weak consciences. III. HOW ARE THEY TO BE OVERCOME. 1. By avoiding the occasions of offence. 2. By encouraging in others the growth of faith. 3. By abstaining from everything that might lead another to act in opposition to his own conscience. (*Ibid.*) **For meat destroy not the work of God.**—*Thy weak brother*:—I. Weak as he is, is A WORK OF GOD. II. MAY EASILY BE DESTROYED; for—1. Though all things are pure—2. They may become a cause of offence—3. Especially to him that is weak. III. THEREFORE ABSTAIN. 1. The enjoyment is little. 2. The consequence dreadful to contemplate. 3. The sacrifice noble. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 21. **It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.**—*It is good not to drink wine*:—Many object to total abstinence because it is not insisted on in the New Testament in so many words. True; but Paul appeals to our honour, conscience, brotherly feelings, and that to the Christian ought to be equivalent to a command. I. ABSTINENCE EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL. "We that are strong," &c. (chap. xv. 1). This principle is recognised in the State. Laws are framed, not for the rich and powerful, but the poor, the oppressed, "the submerged tenth." So in the home—the infant, the feeble, the invalid have the first claim. So in the Church—the sinner, the weakling should be our supreme care. Unlike the world saying, "Let the devil take the hindmost," or Cain asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Paul declares, "If meat make my brother," &c. He practised what he preached. Illustrated by his taking the vow solely for the sake of his weaker brethren. Christ also taught self-abnegation, and enforced it by His example. If we were in personal peril every one would admit we should abstain. Our neighbour is, and Christ said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Christ gave His life a ransom for many. We are therefore treading in His footsteps when we sacrifice our opinions and our tastes for the sake of our brother who is in danger of stumbling. II. IT FULFILS THE GOLDEN PRINCIPLE THAT UNDERLIES THE TEXT. 1. The case is desperate. "Diseases desperate grown by desperate appliance are relieved." The surgeon cuts off a limb that he may save a life. The fireman pulls down a house that the devouring flames may not consume a city. Even if drink were one of "the good creatures of God," it is Christlike to give it up for the sake of those it is destroying body and soul. 2. We are free from a terrible responsibility. Meroz was cursed for its neutrality. Let us not share its fate by aiding the foe or holding aloof in the battle that is raging between the Church and the drink traffic. 3. "None of us liveth to himself," &c. By taking decided temperance views no one can quote our example for a moderation that may lead to fatal excess. 4. Our usefulness will be increased. We can better help the drunkard back to sobriety and Christ when we support him by our practice. 5. We shall be rewarded. It may cost a struggle to surrender the convictions and habits of a lifetime. But if abstinence be right we are simply confessing that we are wiser to-day than we were yesterday. Having done it for Christ's sake, we may safely leave ourselves in His hands. (*W. Wakinshaw.*)

Christian abstinence:—I. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF OUR TEXT is that it is the duty of every Christian scrupulously to avoid all those things which have a tendency to lead others to sin. This principle I would seek to maintain because—1. Its philosophy is sound. Mankind are imitative animals. What others do, rather than what God says, is the constant inquiry. This gives to example its mighty influence. It is surely most rational that Christians, who possess powerful influence by their example, should inquire, whether in their meats or their drinks, their dress or their manners, they are likely to lead others to evil. 2. Its philanthropy is obvious. Cain proudly asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and betrayed the apathy of his murderous heart when he asked the question. We are taught to love our neighbour. And how can I do that better than by scrupulously avoiding everything which has a tendency to lead my friend, the members of my family, to sin. 3. Its piety is unquestionable. The whole life of the Son of God was an exemplification of the principle before us. II. THE PECULIAR APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE TO THE PRESENT SUBJECT. We ask you to abstain—1. Not from wholesome food, but from poisonous drink. St. Paul laid it down as an axiom, that the Christian disciple should forego that which was healthful, and pleasant, for the sake of his weak brethren; but we ask you to give up that which is baneful, for which you can say nothing but that it affords you a temporary gratification, and may lead on to habits that may corrupt the mind and destroy the body. 2. Not from that which may trouble a tender conscience, but from that which will debase moral character. The Jewish converts were scrupulous concerning the use of certain meats and drinks, and lest they should be tempted to eat, and thus bring guilt on their conscience, the apostle persuades them, out of kindness to their brethren, to abstain. But we are asking you to regard moral character, for you are likely by moderate use of ardent spirits to form the habit that pollutes the soul of man. 3. From that which, if innocent to yourselves, may be ruinous to others. As the Gentiles could eat and drink with a safe conscience, so you may use ardent spirits so diluted and so seldom, that you may escape the mischief; but what about others—your children and servants, *e.g.*? Conclusion: To strengthen the argument I appeal to you—1. On behalf of yourselves. 2. For the sake of your country. Drunkenness is the source of disease, poverty, and immorality. 3. For the sake of our Churches. Many strong men have been wounded by the hateful practice. 4. For the sake of missions. The use of ardent spirits has been a fearful hindrance. (*J. Blackburn.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God.**—*Duties in regard to things indifferent*:—Some things are unlawful in their own nature, and can never be right. Others are wrong because forbidden, and only as long as the prohibition continues, and only to the parties concerned. Others are wrong on the ground of expediency, and therefore are sometimes wrong and sometimes right. It is not always easy to discriminate these classes. I. THERE ARE, however, CERTAIN CRITERIA BY WHICH WE CAN DISTINGUISH THE NATURALLY WRONG FROM THE NATURALLY INDIFFERENT. 1. One of these is to be found in our moral constitution. We can see intuitively that malice, envy, pride, &c., are in their nature wrong. They are evil, not because they are forbidden, nor because of their injurious tendency, but they are essentially evil. 2. The Scriptures condemn such things as are in their nature evil, not for one people, nor for a limited period, but for all men always. II. FOR THINGS INDIFFERENT IN THEIR NATURE THE SCRIPTURES LAY DOWN THE FOLLOWING RULES. 1. If prohibited for any special reason, they are unlawful while that prohibition lasts. 2. When the prohibition is removed, they are right or wrong according to circumstances. (1) They are wrong when their use or enjoyment would do harm to others. (2) They are right when no such evil is to be apprehended. (3) That principle is never to be sacrificed to expediency, *i.e.*, when doing or not doing anything would imply the denial of an important truth. All these principles are illustrated by the apostle's conduct and teaching. These were circumcision, observance of Jewish holy days, and eating meats prohibited by the Mosaic law, or which had been offered to idols. Paul taught—(*a*) That there was no harm in doing or neglecting them. If a man chose to circumcise his son, or to keep a holy day, or to abstain from certain meats, he was free to do so. (*b*) That he must not make his judgment a rule of duty to others. He must not condemn those who thought or acted differently (ver. 4). (*c*) But if any of these things became a source of evil, caused the weak to offend, then the law of love forbids our indulging in them, or availing ourselves of our Christian liberty. (*d*) But if any of

these things were urged as a matter of duty, or a condition of salvation, then it became a sin to make them necessary. Paul, therefore, although he circumcised Timothy, refused to allow Titus to be circumcised. It is difficult to determine whether compliance with the prejudices of others is right or wrong. Our Lord disregarded Jewish prejudices in regard to the Sabbath. In other cases He complied in order to avoid giving offence. III. THERE ARE CERTAIN PRINCIPLES IMPORTANT TO HAVE FIXED AS GUIDES OF CONDUCT. 1. Nothing is right or wrong which is not commanded or forbidden in Scripture. 2. We must stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not allow any rule of duty to be imposed on us. 3. In the use of this liberty, and while asserting and maintaining it, we should not so use it as to do harm to our neighbours. 4. Nothing indifferent can be a proper ground of Church discipline or a condition of Church fellowship. These principles are often violated, as in the course pursued by many on slavery, temperance, tobacco, dress, Church ceremonies, &c. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) **Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.**—*The management and offices of conscience:*—There is a great difference of opinion among good men respecting many things in religion. They are not altogether agreed respecting moral duties. There is one point, however, in which we are all agreed—which is, the necessity of every man's following the dictates of his own conscience. The man that violates his own conscience stands condemned in his own mind; whilst "He is happy that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." I. THE OFFICES OF CONSCIENCE. It is given us as—1. A secret monitor. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." It testifies beforehand respecting the quality of the act proposed, and operates as a stimulus if the act be good, and as a check if the act be evil. 2. An authoritative judge. It is God's vicegerent in the soul. Sometimes conscience exercises this authority immediately, as in the cases of Adam and David. At other times it delays its verdict until some occasion give reason for speaking plainly the truth, as in the case of Joseph's brethren. Sometimes it delivers judgment, and so produces humiliation, as in the case of Peter; at other times it will drive a man to despondency, as in the case of Judas. II. OUR DUTY TO OUR CONSCIENCES. We ought—1. To get our consciences well informed. Conscience prescribes no rules, but gives testimony to a rule before existing. Nor does any man ever commit sin by following its dictates. St. Paul sinned, of course; but not because he followed the dictates of his conscience, but on account of his not having his conscience well informed. He did it "ignorantly, through unbelief." We must always look to God to guide us by His Word and Spirit. Nor should we hastily imagine that our views are correct; we must be jealous of ourselves lest Satan deceive us; "Take care that the light that is in you be not darkness," &c. 2. To consult it on all occasions. To act first, and afterwards to make inquiries, is a certain way to involve ourselves in guilt. To do anything without a careful inquiry into the quality of the action, is presumptuous. Nor is the testimony of conscience always easily obtained; sometimes, indeed, it speaks instantaneously; but generally it requires time to make a fair estimate of the circumstances; and then, if they have respect to God only, we should consider the example of Christ; or if it be in respect to man, we should change places with the person concerned. If we doubt concerning the lawfulness of anything, we are self-condemned if we perform it, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." We should pause in such a case, and deliberate, until we see our way clearly—and determine not to proceed in anything until we are fully persuaded in our own minds. 3. To keep it upright and tender. Conscience may easily be warped, and silenced too, so that it will give no testimony until awakened by some flagrant enormity. III. THE HAPPINESS OF CONFORMITY TO CONSCIENCE. 1. Peace. 2. Confidence. 3. The favour of God. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *The danger of contracting unallowable habits:*—I. THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THE CAUTION IN THE TEXT IS BUILT. 1. There are some things which are in themselves indifferent, but are sinful by accident. (1) When they are indulged to excess; when we spend too much time about them; or indulge them to a degree that is injurious to the health of body or peace of mind. (2) Indifferent things may become unlawful by being unseasonable. Not only the beauty and success, but the very lawfulness of an action often depends upon opportunity. (3) Another way whereby an indifferent action may become sinful is its giving offence to others. 2. There are other kinds of actions which some men inadvertently carry into common practice that are not only circumstantially but essentially evil in themselves. And the great danger of contracting any habits of this kind lies here, that they

wear off a sense of the evil of them. II. IN WHAT MANNER THIS HAPPINESS IS TO BE ATTAINED. 1. Let us see in what manner bad habits are originally contracted. (1) Sometimes by implicitly following the examples of others; especially their superiors; especially if these have been distinguished for their wisdom and piety. (2) Another thing that often draws men unawares into a sinful course of actions is precipitancy or inattention to the nature and consequences of them. Before we indulge in any kind of temper or conduct that is like to become a habit, we should ask ourselves three questions. (*a*) What is it? is it in its own nature good, bad, or indifferent? (*b*) Whither does it tend? what influence will it have on the temper of my mind or the health of my body? (*c*) Where will it end? how will it appear in the review? and what will be the certain consequence if it settle into a habit? (3) Men are often betrayed into an unlawful conduct by venturing boldly on the very verge of vice or going to the utmost bounds of what is lawful. The precise limits of virtue and vice are indiscernible; or, rather, the passage from the one to the other is through so easy and gradual a shade that men oftentimes insensibly slide out of the former into the latter, and are got far into the regions of vice before they are aware. And the danger of this appears still greater when we consider the nearer approach we make to a sinful object, the stronger is its attraction. (4) Another common source of wrong conduct, and what frequently betrays men into bad habits, is the undue influence of the appetites and passions, in opposition to the dictates of conscience and reason. (5) Another thing that deceives some unwary minds into a wrong course of conduct is the false names that are given to sinful actions, whereby the evil of them is concealed and their deformity disguised. (6) The most common reason that men so generally condemn themselves in the things which they allow, is because they forget to form their judgment by the principles and their lives by the rules of Christianity. 2. How they are to be conquered. (1) The difficulty of the attempt. The reason that men so seldom succeed in their attempt to break off a bad habit is because they do not set about it in good earnest or in a right way. (2) If we would succeed in it we must often renew and reinforce our resolutions to persevere. (*a*) As all bad habits are contracted by a frequent repetition of bad actions, so they are conquered by a frequent repetition of the opposite good ones. (*b*) Temptations are more weakened by declining than opposing them. (*c*) To suppress the first motions and avoid the remote occasions of sin is the easiest way to conquer it. (*d*) Let us especially beware of indolence, self-confidence, in a time of prosperity. For when we are least apprehensive of danger it is then oftentimes the nearest. III. ILLUSTRATE THE TRUTH OF THE PROPOSITION CONTAINED IN THE TEXT, AND SHOW WHEREIN THE HAPPINESS HERE MENTIONED DOTH CONSIST. This happiness may refer both to the present and future world. 1. With regard to the present world the man who condemns not himself in the thing which he alloweth is happy in two respects especially. (1) This gives him the best evidence he can have of his security. One who takes so much care to please God must have the fear of Him before his eyes and the love of Him in his heart. (2) This constant care to keep our heart and conduct conformable to the Word of God will inspire us with great freedom and comfort of mind when we have access to Him in prayer. And what more comprehensive happiness can we conceive than this? 2. This happiness reaches beyond the bounds of time, and will attend us in the world of spirits, where we shall be happy beyond all that words can paint or thought conceive. Conclusion: 1. How well is Christianity adapted to promote the happiness of civil society! If it does not permit us, even in matters of indifference, to do anything that would unnecessarily offend our neighbour, this implies our duty to cultivate the greatest tenderness and good-will towards him. 2. We see that, considering the condition of our natures as frail beings and our connection with creatures as imperfect as ourselves, we are under an indispensable necessity of exercising continual circumspection and frequent self-denial and patience in order to keep our conscience clear. 3. Let us take care, then, what habits we contract, and diligently examine those we have already contracted. (*J. Mason, M.A.*) *Better be sure than sorry*:—"Better be sure than sorry!" said a garden-worker, when his employer expressed a doubt whether it was necessary to cover a certain vegetation to protect it from frost. "Better be sure than sorry!" A man who is not sure is very likely to be sorry. He who takes things on trust will be quite likely to be cheated and disappointed at last. The business man who treads in uncertain paths, who is not sure of his course, is very likely to be sorry he has taken it. Keep on the safe side. Do not give yourself the benefit of every doubt. Be lenient to others' faults, but

strict regarding your own. If there be an act which in your own mind is doubtful or questionable in its character, take the course of wisdom and prudence. It would be a terrible thing to be mistaken in the final day; it is better to be sure here than to be sorry at the judgment-seat of Christ. (*Christian Journal.*) **And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith.**—*Doubtful actions*:—1. Doubt of its rectitude makes the action doubtful. 2. Doubtful actions bring condemnation. 3. Condemnation implies sin. 4. The sin lies in the want of faith. 5. Therefore all doubtful actions should be avoided. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Doubtful things*:—Resolved, that I will never do anything about the lawfulness of which I am doubtful, unless I am equally doubtful whether it be lawful to omit the doing of it. (*Jon. Edwards.*) **For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**—I. How THIS IS OFTEN MISAPPLIED. 1. When all the virtues of the heathen—2. The morality of the unconverted—3. The proprieties of civilised life—are denounced as polished vice. II. How IT OUGHT TO BE APPLIED. 1. To Christian believers. 2. As a rule for the regulation of all doubtful actions. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*:—I. IN ORDER FOR WORKS TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THEY MUST—1. Be done by His grace. 2. Spring from a principle of faith. II. THE SPIRIT WHICH LEADS A MAN TO RELY ON HIS UNASSISTED EFFORTS AS RENDERING HIM MEET TO RECEIVE GRACE IS SIN, because it involves a denial of—1. Christ's atonement. 2. Human infirmity. 3. The need of the Holy Spirit's help. Lessons: 1. For reproof. 2. Correction. 3. Instruction in righteousness. (*W. Webster, M.A.*) *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*:—I. EXPLAIN THE PROPOSITION. Some actions are doubtful; in this case compliance is sinful, because it discovers—1. A contempt of God's authority and favour. 2. Light views of the evil of sin. 3. A great want of self-denial and resolution. 4. Some prevailing bad principle or motive of action. 5. And leads to greater irregularities. II. SOME PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS. 1. How aggravated the guilt of presumptuous sin. 2. We should show a tender regard for others that we do not lead them into sin. 3. In all doubtful cases it is best to keep on the safe side. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XV.

VERS. 1-3. **We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves.**—*The weak and the strong*:—This noble aphorism contains the highest philosophy and the purest religion. We have here—I. THE PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION. How much has this come to the fore! We have Life, Fire, and Co-operative "Associations." Men begin to see the advantages of these things, and we should not forget that it was Christianity which gave the key-note to their existence. But Paul goes further. He would have the whole world one vast co-operative association—men and women associating in all things, and remembering that they are members of one great family, and acting as such. II. THE LAW OF ASSISTANCE. This would be a poor world if we were not to lend a helping hand one to another; the strong man is to bear the infirmities of the weak. He is to do so by advice, by bestowing alms, by giving encouragement, by kindly help. How highly does our Lord praise those who helped others (see parable of Good Samaritan), and Himself set us the example. III. THE LAW OF EQUALISATION. The inhabitants of this world are diverse; they differ in character, appearance, and position. The law of our text teaches the rich to help the poor, the strong the weak, and so adjust the inequalities of life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The duty of the strong to the weak*:—The context suggests—1. That conscientiousness has respect often to very unimportant matters. Some Christians in Rome had a conscientious belief concerning diet. There have always been men in the Church who have made a conscience of trifles. 2. That the conscientiousness of one man is no rule for the conduct of another. Because one man in the Church exalts trifles, whilst respecting his sincerity, I am not bound to follow his example. 3. That conscientiousness directed to unimportant matters indicates great weakness of character. Men who attach importance to trifles Paul regards as "weak" men. Now what is the duty of strong men to such? Not to despise and denounce them; to force them to renounce their trivialities nor to grant them a mere toleration; but to bear their

infirmities. This is a duty—I. NOT VERY PLEASANT TO SELF. The language seems to imply that it would be more pleasant to detach one's self altogether from such. Nothing is more irritating to strong men than the twaddlings of little souls. But Paul says, notwithstanding the disagreeableness of it, you must come down to their little world, and be loving and magnanimous. Don't kick at their toys, but show them something better. The most painful thing is that they regard themselves as strong, and that in proportion to their very feebleness is their insolence. If they confessed their weakness there would be some pleasure in "bearing their infirmities." II. TRULY GRATIFYING TO THE WEAK (ver. 2). 1. The weak man, by this treatment, is gratified by the reception of "good." The breath of a nobler spirit upon him has dispersed in some measure the fumes about his soul, broadened his horizon, and touched him into a fresher life. He is pleased because his moral circulation is quickened, and he feels himself a stronger man. 2. The "good" he has received is through his "edification." Not through flattering his prejudices, but by indoctrinating his soul with higher truths. III. PRE-EMINENTLY CHRISTLIKE (ver. 3). To "bear the infirmities" of others Christ sacrificed Himself. How Christ bore with His disciples! (*Ibid.*) *The duty of the strong to the weak*:—Christians are a band of pilgrims from the city of Destruction to the Jerusalem above. Though none are in perfect health—none without some burden, yet some are comparatively healthy, strong and unencumbered; others are weak and sickly, and very heavy laden. The former class are not to form themselves into a separate band, and push forward, regardless of what may become of their less fortunate brethren, leaving them to follow as they may. No, they are to remain what the Lord of the pilgrims made them, one society—a band of brothers. The strong and unencumbered are to help forward the weak and burdened. They are not, indeed, in order that the whole company may appear alike, to pretend that they also are weak and heavy laden; still less, if possible, are they voluntarily to reduce themselves in these respects to a level with their brethren; but they are patiently to submit to such inconveniences as arise out of their connection with such companions, and while using every means to have their diseases cured, and their strength increased, and their burdens removed or lessened, they must not at present attempt to make them move faster than they are able, as that would be likely to produce stumbling and falling. How happy would it have been, how happy would it be, if all the weak were treated by the strong as Feeblemind in the "Pilgrim's Progress," says he was treated by his brethren: "Indeed, I have found much relief from pilgrims, though none was willing to go so softly as I am forced to do; yet still as they came on, they bid me be of good cheer, and said that it was the will of the Lord that comfort should be given to the feeble minded, and so went on their own pace." (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The strong to bear with the weak*:—1. There are three stages of development in human life and society. (1) That in which men regulate their life by rules. Such things you may do, and such things you may not do. (2) The higher life of principle, when men open up a consideration of the reasons of the why you shall do so or not do so. (3) The higher development is reached when to rules and principles is added intuition, the flash by which men discover right and wrong by their harmony or their discord with their own moral faculties. 2. As men go up along the scale, they change gradually; and men that during all the early part of their life have been subject to rules, begin to substitute their own intelligence for them. A little child is told, "No, you must not go there." When, however, the child comes to be fourteen or fifteen years of age, we no longer say, "You shall not do this or that thing"; but "You must study the peace of the family"; or, "You must see to it that you do nothing to interfere with health." Instead of having practical rules, he begins to have principles by which to guide himself. Note—I. THE DANGERS INCIDENT TO THIS DEVELOPMENT. 1. Christians who are on the lower plane—where they act from rules—are strongly inclined to believe that those who go higher and act from principles are acting from lawlessness, because they are not acting from considerations once in force. Hence, religious development may seem deterioration. A conscientious idolator, *e.g.*, cannot dissociate religion from the use of superstitious observances; and if a native near to such an one forsakes the god of his father, and turns to Jehovah, the convert may seem as if he was abandoning all religion. He is abandoning the only religion that this heathen man knows anything about. And I can understand how to an honest Romanist, when one neither will tell his beads, nor respect holy hours, nor accept the voice of the priest, it should seem as if he abandoned all religion. 2. On the other hand, while there are dangers of this kind to those who are left behind, there are many dangers

incident to those who go up; and it was to those especially that the apostle wrote. And this is not so strange after all. (1) We know that sudden changes, *e.g.*, from barbarism to civilisation do not prove beneficial to adults. If you take a Chinaman, twenty-five or thirty years old, and bring him into New York, he becomes a kind of neuter. He is neither a good Chinaman nor a good American. As a tree transplanted, and shorn of roots below, and of branches above, is slow to regain itself, and perhaps never will make its old top again, so it is with human transplantation. (2) Among civilised men sudden violent changes, *e.g.*, from great poverty to great wealth, are not beneficial. (3) Sudden and violent moral changes carry their dangers, too. There are men who have trained their consciences all their life long to believe that right or wrong consisted in the performance of certain duties. But by and by it was made known to them that being a Christian depends on love, and not on a certain routine; and that the law is the law of freedom. And this is a new liberty; and new liberty stands very close on to old license. And men who begin to feel their freedom are like birds that have been long in a cage, and do not know what they can do with their wings, and fly to where they are quickly seized by the hawk. With this sense of intoxication comes a certain contempt for the old state. When a bean comes up it brings up its first two leaves with it—great thick covers, full of nutriment, to supply the stem until it begins to develop other leaves, and to supply itself. Now suppose the bean, looking down, should say contemptuously, "What a great clumsy stiff leaf that is down there! See how fine, how delicate the blossoms are that I am having up here"—why the whole of this up here came from that down there. And yet, how many persons, as they are developing into a higher religious life, feel, as the first-fruits of their spiritual liberty, contempt for their past selves, and for other people who are in that state from which they have just emerged! Then comes almost spontaneously the air of superiority; and then the judging men, not by comparing their conduct with their views of duty, but by comparing their conduct with your views of duty—which is the unfairest thing you can do to a man. In other words, dictation and despotism are very apt to go, with arrogant natures, from a lower stage to a higher one. II. THE APOSTLE'S PRESCRIPTION FOR THIS STATE. Superiority, he tells us, gives no right to arrogate authority. Because I am an architect, or a statesman, or in any direction God has given me eminent gifts, and culture to develop them, I have no right of authority over others. Leadership does not go with these relative superiorities; but responsibility does. "We, then, that are strong ought . . . not to please ourselves"—which is generally considered the supreme business of a man! When a man has acquired money and education, he makes it his business to render himself happy. He fills his mansion with luxuries, that he may not be mixed up with the noisy affairs of life. But, says the apostle, ye that are strong have no right to do any such thing. You ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. All human trouble ought to roll itself on to the broadest, not on the feeblest, shoulders. Rich men are to bear the infirmities of the poor. If a rough and coarse man meets a fine man, and the question between them is as to which shall give preference to the other, the man that is highest up is to be the servant of the man that is lowest down. Everywhere this is the law. "Let every one please his neighbour." What! are we to be mere pleasure-mongers? No; "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification'—please him in that sense which shall make a better man of him. As a watchmaker never can see a watch that is out of order that he does not feel instinctively impelled to take hold of it and put it in order, so I feel like putting my hand on a man that is too small, and making him large. Paul says that you must not do it rudely, authoritatively, but that you must please him. And there is more—"For even Christ pleased not Himself," &c. Well, that is a hard task; and therefore the apostle adds, "Now the God of patience," &c. 1. If this seems impossible to any of you, if it even seems romantic and fanciful, I reply that you see it every day. Not in business or in politics. But go where father and mother have a little commonwealth of their own, and where the children are, and see if the wisest and the strongest and the best are not absolutely the servants of the poorest and the weakest. Now, if you can do it in the family, you can do it out of the family. 2. If this be so, we see the application of it to those who are set free, by larger thinking, from the narrow dogmas of the past. What is the evidence of your superiority? Every change of latitude, as you pass towards the equator from the poles, is marked, not by the thermometer, but by the garden and the orchard; and I know that I am going toward the equator, not so much by what the navigator tells me as by what the sun tells me. The evidence of

going up in the moral scale is not that you dissent from your old dogmas, and have rejected your ordinances, and given wide berth to your Churches. If you have gone higher up, let us see that development in you of a true Christian life which shall show that you are higher. What use is your freedom of thought, if with that freedom you do not get half as many virtues as men who have not the freedom of thought? 3. Those who have risen above others are not at liberty to divide themselves from those with whom they are not in sympathy. To bring the matter right home, you are frugal, and your brother is a spendthrift. You take the air of superiority, and talk about him, and say, "William is a sorry dog. He never could keep anything." And the implication of it is, "I am different." But the apostle says, "Are you superior to him because you are frugal? Then you are to bear with his spendthriftuess." I put on you the responsibility of taking care of him. You are to bear with him; and you are to do it not for your own pleasure, nor for his mere pleasure, but for his pleasure to edification, that Christ may save his soul. Here is a man that says of his neighbour, "He is an exacting, arrogant, brute creature." Yes, but Christ died for him, as He died for you; that hard man is your brother; and you are to seek his pleasure to edification. If there is either that ought to serve the other, it is the good man. That is what you do. Good men pay the taxes of bad men. Patriotic men pay the war bills of unpatriotic men. The good bear up the bad, and are their subjects. 4. There is an application, also, to the various sects. A Church is nothing but a multitude of families. All you want is, that those that are purest, those that are "orthodox," shall bear with those that are not orthodox. You must go down and serve those that have a poor worship. The higher must serve the lower. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The conduct of the strong towards the weak*:—I. DEFINED. 1. We must bear with their infirmities. 2. This will require the sacrifice of our own will to please others. 3. But the end is their edification. II. ENFORCED. 1. By the example of Christ. 2. Who sacrificed Himself. 3. And bore our infirmities. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Bearing the infirmities of the weak*:—Not very long ago a valued friend requested me to visit a young woman, lodging in an alley in Holborn, who was dying of the most painful of all diseases. The small room was delicately clean and neat; and on the little table stood a jar adorned with a few country flowers, the offering of an early friend. By the bedside stood a pale young woman, with a gentle and sympathising countenance, smoothing the sufferer's pillow. It was scarcely whiter than her face; the mouth and chin of which were covered by a cambric handkerchief, to veil the ravages which her terrible disease had made. After a few inquiries of the nurse, I spoke a little to the sufferer; and then remembering that it must seem so easy for one in comparative health to speak to her of the goodness of God, but how much harder it must be for her to believe it, lying there, hour after hour, in anguish, which suffered her scarcely to sleep by night or by day, increasing during the thirteen months past, and leaving no hope of alleviation in the future but by death, I thought it best to tell her all that was passing in my mind. And then I added, "If you can believe that the blessed Saviour, who, when He was on earth, healed all manner of disease with a touch or a word, and who has the same healing power now, yet withholds it from you, does so from some infinitely wise and loving reason, it would do me good to know it. If it be so, will you just lift up your finger in assent?" She raised her pale, transparent hand, and waved it over her head with an expression in her sunken eyes which almost glorified her face. I could not help saying to her, when I could command my voice enough to speak, "I believe that one wave of your hand gives more honour to your Saviour in the sight of all the angels of heaven, than whole years of any little services which He might permit me to render Him, in comparative health and ease; because your faith is so much more severely tried." It seemed a new and delightful thought to her, that patience having its perfect work, would glorify her Saviour. She had just meekly borne, because it was His will. The tears gathered in her eyes, and she made sign for her slate, and wrote upon it, "This makes me so happy. How wonderful and how kind, if He will make glory for Himself out of such a poor creature as me!" Soon after she added, "He has taught me to say of Him, My Beloved is mine, and I am His. He has forgiven all my sins. He loves me freely. He fills me with peace and joy in believing." When her companion came downstairs, I asked her if she tried to go out for a little fresh air sometimes, and had any one to relieve her occasionally of the nursing by night. She said, "I take a turn in the alley to get a little fresh air now and then; but I should not like to leave her for many minutes, nor to be sleeping much, while she is suffering." "Is she your sister?" I inquired. "No,

ma'am, we are no relations," was her answer; "we were fellow-servants together at an hotel in the West End. And once, when I was ill, she nursed me very kindly; so when this terrible illness came on her, I could not let her leave her place alone to go among strangers—for she's an orphan; so I left with her." "And may I venture to ask, how are you both supported?" "She had saved a good bit, which lasted some time; and now I have still some left of my own savings whilst I was a housemaid." "A housemaid! a queen!" I thought to myself, and could have laid down my hand for her to walk over, and felt it honoured by her touch. That woman of a royal heart sent me through London that day feeling the whole world better, because I had met with such an instance of disinterested, self-sacrificing love. One word revealed its inner secret. "We are as good as sisters," she said; "we both know that our Saviour loves us, and we love Him, and want to love Him better." (*English Hearts and English Hands.*) *Bearing the infirmities of the weak*:—1. In the grouping of nature dissimilar things are brought together, and by serving each other's wants and furnishing the complement to each other's beauty, present a whole more perfect than the sum of all the parts. The several kingdoms of nature are not like our political empires, enclosed with jealous boundaries. They form an indissoluble economy; the mineral subduing itself with a basis for the organic, the vegetable supporting the animal, the vital culminating in the spiritual; weak things clinging to the strong, as moss to the oak's trunk, and the insect to its leaf; death acting as the purveyor of life and life playing the sexton to death. Mutual service in endless gradation is clearly the world's great law. 2. In the natural grouping of human life the same rule is found. A family is a combination of opposites; the woman depending on the man, whose very strength, however, exists only by her weakness; the child hanging on the parent, whose power were no blessing were it not compelled to stoop in gentleness; the brother protecting the sister, whose affections would have but half their wealth, were they not brought to lean upon him in trustful pride; and even among seeming equals, the impetuous quieted by the thoughtful, and the timid finding shelter with the brave. 3. This principle distinguishes natural society from artificial association. The assortment of civilisation unites all elements that are alike and separates the unlike. Instead of throwing men into harmonious gronps it analyses them into distinct classes. Life is passed in the presence not of unequals but of equals. Only those who of the same sect, rank, or party and are found in the same society. Not that this is entirely evil. To live among our equals teaches self-reliance and self-restraint, and enforces a respect for other's rights, and a vigilant guardianship of our own. But while it invigorates the energies of purpose it is apt to blight the higher graces of the mind; and in confirming the moralities of the will to impair the devoutness of the affections. A man among his equals is like a schoolboy at his play, whose eager voice, disputatious claim, defiance of wrong, and derision of the feeble, betray that self-will is wide awake and pity lulled to sleep. But see the same child in his home, and the deferential look, the hand of generous help, show how with beings above and beneath him he can forget himself in gentle thoughts and quiet reference. And so it is with us all. The world is not given to us as a playground or a school alone, where we may learn to fight our way upon our own level; but as a domestic system, surrounding us with weaker souls for our hand to succour, and stronger ones for our hearts to serve. 4. The faith of Christ throws together the unlike ingredients which civilisation had sifted out from one another. Every true Church represents the unity which the world had dissolved. The moment a man becomes a disciple his exclusive self-reliance vanishes. He trusts another than himself; he loves a better spirit than his own; and while living in what is human aspires to what is Divine. And in this new opening of a world above him a fresh light comes down upon the world beneath him. Aspiration and pity rush into his heart from opposite directions. If there were no ranks of souls within our view; if all were upon a platform of republican equality, no royalty of goodness and no slavery of sin; if nothing great subdued us to allegiance, and nothing sad and shameful roused us to compassion, I believe that all Divine truth would remain inaccessible and our existence be reduced to that of intelligent and amiable animals. 5. A great Roman poet and philosopher was fond of defining religion as a reverence for *inferior* beings: and if this does not express its nature it designates one of its effects. True there could be no reverence for lower natures were there not to begin with the recognition of a Supreme Mind; but from that moment we certainly look on all beneath with a different eye. It becomes an object, not of pity and protection only, but of sacred respect; and our sympathy,

which had been that of a humane fellow-creature, is converted into the deferential help of a devout worker of God's will. And so the loving service of the weak and wanting is an essential part of the discipline of the Christian life. Some habitual association with the poor, the dependent, the sorrowful, is an indispensable source of the highest elements of character. If we are faithful to the obligations which such contact with infirmity must bring, it will make us descend into healthful depths of sorrowful affection which else we should never reach. Yea, and if we are unfaithful to our trust; if sorrows fall on some poor dependent charge, from which it was our broken purpose to shield his head, still it is good that we have known him. Had we hurt a superior, we should have expected punishment; had we offended an equal, we should have looked for his displeasure; and these things once endured the crisis would have been past. But to have injured the weak, who must be dumb before us, and look up with only the lines of grief which we have traced, this strikes an awful anguish into our hearts. For the weak, the child, the outcast, they that have none to help them, raise up an Infinite Protector on their side, and by their very wretchedness sustain the faith of justice ever on the throne. (*J. Martineau, LL.D.*) *The survival of the weak*:—The text is a curt statement of one of those revolutionary principles which lean back upon the example and teaching of Christ. No rule of living is more familiar than that we must be ready to deny ourselves in a lesser to gain some greater good. But the rule of the text, in many quarters, came upon the world as an utter novelty. In some languages the very word "unselfishness" is wanting, and philanthropy in its deeper channels is unknown, even among the most cultivated classes who know not Christ. I. THIS IS NOT LAW IN THE BRUTE CREATION. 1. Beneath man all life is engaged in a fierce struggle for existence. Each is bent on his own profit. The strong look out for themselves. The weak go to the wall. If the fittest do not always survive, the most cunning and the strongest do. The infirm are preyed upon or left mercilessly to perish. 2. An exception is found in the generous instinct of motherhood, but for which most animal races would become extinct. Another exception is afforded by the domestic animals. The dog will risk his life in his master's service, and die of a broken heart when he is dead. But once left to roam, these animals also seem to abandon themselves to the brute principle of utter selfishness. II. THE LAW OF THE BRUTE CREATION PREDOMINATES LARGELY AMONG MEN WHERE THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL IS NOT FELT. 1. Human life is also a struggle for existence. Man, too, like the brute, is forced to be continually at work to keep off hunger, disease, and death. In the rush for fame and success the strong trample upon the feeling of the weak and increase their own strength by preying upon their infirmities. 2. Out of this root have come all despotisms, servitudes, and inhumanities. It is the human way to enforce the brutal principle of surviving by the sufferings and humiliations of the weak. Wars have for the most part grown out of the determination to exalt one's self by the losses of another. If a nation was weak, a stronger one would do in about the same way what the fierce king of the forest does with the passing gazelle. All slavery was for the most part in the first instance the outcome of the principle which the text tears to shreds. It is not so long ago that tortures were applied to the weak on rack and in cell, which could yield no profit except to the morbid appetite of the strong. 3. The spirit is not extinct. The refinement of the methods by which strength makes merchandise of the weaknesses of the infirm may cover up the brutality of the instinct, but does not change it. III. THE GOSPEL HAS ANNOUNCED ANOTHER LAW OF LIFE FOR MAN. Here love and not force is supreme. Here no man liveth unto himself. 1. The struggle for self-existence goes on. The effort to survive is pressed. "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." "Work out your own salvation." "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," &c. The obligation to help ourselves loses none of its emphasis. But with self-care is coupled concern for others, and those two draw the chariot of a regenerated life to the highest attainment and to the approval of God. The Christian law summons each to afford to others the most opportunity for the development of their faculties. 2. The world utters often a motto which is good as far as it goes. It is a great advance upon brutehood—"Live and let live." But behind this half-truth selfishness may hide itself. "Live and help others to live" is the motto of the gospel. "Look out for Number One" is a favourite maxim of the street, which, pushed alone, is the brutal principle in full sway. "Do good unto all men" is a maxim coming from a different atmosphere. 3. A chief test of Christian civilisation is the consideration with which the strong regard the infirmities of the weak. The home for the aged, the hospital, the refuge, &c., are the glory of

our civilisation, as the brothels, the gambling dens, the saloons, &c., are its disgrace, but not its despair; for so long as the Cross lifts high its spectacle of mercy, the principle that the "strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak" will go among men like a stream of waters, pure as crystal. Our literature bears witness to the infusion of this human principle. The "Song of the Shirt" has a large circle of sympathetic readers. Lowell's "Sir Launfal" and a thousand other poems have their interest from the Christly spirit of regard for the weaknesses of others which they magnify. We read, as indicative of a great heart, the incident of Luther, who, instead of joining in the chase, caught the hunted hare and hid it under his cloak, because the chase reminded him of the way in which Satan hunts for souls. And we step aside from his widely known deeds to the incident in Mr. Lincoln's life when, on his way with other lawyers to the court, he stopped to replace two young birds who had been blown out of their nest, saying, "I could not have slept if I had not restored those little birds to their mother." It was a most noble thing, when Naples was suffering from the ravages of cholera, for King Humbert to turn aside from the races, where he had made appointment to be, and to hasten to the relief of his people. For the motto, "The fittest survive," the gospel substitutes the watchword, "The lost must be saved." IV. IN CHRIST WE HAVE THE FULL EMBODIMENT OF THE LOFTY RULE. Who had better right to please Himself than the Son of God? But of Him it is said, "Even Christ pleased not Himself." He humbled Himself unto the death of the Cross, that He might bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. (*P. S. Schaff, D.D.*) *Bearing the infirmities of the weak*:—A reporter called to a little bootblack near the City Hall to give him a shine. The little fellow came rather slowly for one of that lively guild, and planted his box down under the reporter's foot. Before he could get his brushes out another large boy ran up, and calmly pushing the little one aside, said: "Here, you go sit down, Jimmy." The reporter at once became indignant at what he took to be a piece of outrageous bullying, and sharply told the new-comer to clear out. "Oh, dat's all right, boss," was the reply; "I'm only going to do it fur him. You see he's been sick in the hospital for mor'n a month, and can't do much work yet, so us boys all turn in and give him a lift when we can. Savy?" "Is that so, Jimmy," asked the reporter, turning to the smaller boy. "Yes, sir," wearily replied the boy; and, as he looked up, the pallid, pinched face could be discerned even through the grime that covered it. "He does it fur me, if you'll let him." "Certainly, go ahead!" and as the bootblack plied the brush the reporter plied him with questions. "You say all the boys help him in this way?" "Yes, sir. When they ain't got no job themselves, and Jimmy gets one, they turns in and helps him, 'cause he ain't very strong yet, ye see." "What percentage do you charge him on a job?" "Hey?" queried the youngster. "I don't know what you mean." "I mean, what part of the money do you give Jimmy, and how much do you keep out of it?" "You bet your life I don't keep none. I ain't no such sneak as that." "So you give it all to him, do you?" "Yes, I do. All the boys give up what they gets on his job. I'd like to catch any fellow sneaking it on a sick boy—I would." The shine being completed, the reporter handed the urchin a quarter, saying, "I guess you're a pretty good fellow, so you keep ten cents and give the rest to Jimmy." "Can't do it, sir; it's his customer. Here, Jim!" He threw him the coin, and was off like a shot after a customer for himself, a veritable rough diamond. In this big city there are many such lads with warm and generous hearts under their ragged coats. (*N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.*) *Imperfections; why permitted*:—Imperfections have been Divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be effort, and the law of human judgment mercy. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *Self-pleasing*:—I. WHENCE DOES IT ARISE? From the secret feeling in man that—1. His own views are the most correct. 2. His own plans the best. 3. His own words the wisest. 4. His own doings the most excellent. In a word, that he is superior to all others. II. WHAT ARE ITS EXHIBITIONS? 1. A harsh judgment of others. 2. Self-adulation. 3. Forwardness. III. HOW MUST IT BE OVERCOME? 1. By bearing the infirmities of the weak. 2. By endeavouring to please others for their good. 3. By a believing contemplation of the character of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Against self-pleasing*:—I. WE OUGHT NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES. "We," *i.e.*, strong Christians. Among Christians there are the strong and the weak, and always will be. You notice that the apostle has no corresponding exhortation to the weak, one reason for which may be that very few are willing to regard themselves as such. 1. As to self-pleasing, it never is good. (1) In its first and lowest form it is pure animality. The tiger pleases himself when he seizes the fawn; and the fox when he carries the

fowl away to his den. 'Tis no sin in either; it is their instinct and necessity. And if a man will do the like he has no pre-eminence above the beast. (2) It is of the essence of sin which in one form is just the enormous exaggeration of the self. It is the little unit trying to take itself out of all relations and beyond laws. It is the plant repudiating the soil that feeds it, insulting the air and light on which it lives. It is the figure one presenting itself as an epitome of the whole science of numbers. If self-pleasing were to get into the heart of the physical world there would be no growth; for growth is secured by one part allowing nourishment to flow through it to another, and in the joint combination of all organs to provide for the nourishment of the whole. And it is in such a world that man stands up and says, "I live to please myself"—man who was made to show the greatness of service, made in the image of the God who serves all. (3) It always tends to meanness of character. It is clean against magnanimity, patriotism, and the charities of life. (4) It tends to corruption, just as anything must rot when it ceases to give and take; just as stagnant water becomes unfit for use. (5) It always inflicts injury and misery upon others. (6) It is so enormously difficult to the self that is always seeking to be pleased, as to be ultimately quite impossible of realisation. More, and yet more, must be had of this, and that, until more is not to be had. 2. So much for self-pleasing in general. But here is a peculiar form of it—the Christian form of an unchristian thing. (1) The beginning of Christianity in a human soul and life is the death of self begun. But the process of dying is a lingering one—it is a crucifixion. Many and many a time self says, "I will not die." (2) Christian people, then, ought to be constantly on their guard against this thing. There is no one whom it will not beset. The vivacious will have it presented to them in forms of excitement, which will draw them away from the duties of daily life and of Christian service. The modest and retiring will think that it can injure no one that they should take their rest. In fact, all the vices are but different dresses which the old self puts on as it goes up and down the world murmuring, "We ought to please ourselves!" Please the higher self and welcome—your conscience, love, the powers of the Christian life—and then, not you alone, but angels and God Himself will be pleased. But as to pleasing that other self, all danger and all soul-death lie that way. "Let that man be crucified." Put fresh nails into the hands and the feet. (3) But "the strong"—why should they, at least, not please themselves? "The strong" here are the advanced men in the Christian community, the men of higher intelligence and clearer faith who have come out into an ampler liberty. Surely it were better that such men should have their way. Strength is a beautiful thing both in the region of thought and of action. Yes, but it is beautiful no longer when it becomes intolerant of anything that is not as strong as itself. So, then, we who are strong ought not to drive when we find we cannot lead; nor wax impatient of delays which are inevitable; nor lose temper—for that will show that we ourselves are growing weaker; nor even to think ungenerous thoughts, but rather seek to settle our strength in this—in the universal charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and then, as the result, achieveth all things. II. IF NOT OURSELVES, THEN WHOM? Our "neighbour." 1. "Every one of us!" Not one can be exempted. 'Tis no use to plead peculiarity in temperament or circumstance. You have a neighbour, and you must please him. 2. But here comes a difficulty. If the neighbour is to be pleased by me why should not he please in return? If there be an obligation it must surely be mutual. And so we shall end in self-pleasing after all. Besides, how do I know that to please him will profit him? He may be self-willed, or luxurious, or cowardly; and if I please him I may very likely nourish in him these bad qualities. But here is the safeguard, "I am to please my neighbour for his good to edification." It is not that one is to yield to another simply because he wishes it. That would be childishness, and would produce very bad fruit. And there is no room for concession in matters of vital importance. It would be a cruel kindness to a fellow-Christian to yield to him in any matter affecting saving truth or duty. The whole question is about things less than vital. This way may seem best to me; may be best for me. Yet it may not be the best for all. Or it may be abstractly the best for all, and yet it is not to be forced on them. 3. For good to edification. Why, what is that but pleasing the new, the better self in the man, just as I seek to please it in my own breast? III. WAS NOT THIS JUST THE BEHAVIOUR OF CHRIST HIMSELF? "Even Christ," "who was with God," "who was God," pleased not Himself by retaining that condition, when a great need arose, and when, by a change in His state, He could supply the need. "He was rich, and for our sakes He became poor,"

&c. And when He was here He never spared Himself. He never chose the easier way. Shall I then please myself, and say that I am following Him? Shall I not rather gaze anew at this great sight—a holy, happy being denying Himself, and suffering for others through life and death? (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The warning against selfishness*:—Selfishness is—I. AN UGLY THING. One thing that helps to make our bodies look beautiful is when the different parts are all of a proper size or shape. But suppose we should see a boy or girl with a head as big as a bushel, and with feet as large as an elephant's! And when we give way to wrong feelings one part of the soul becomes larger than it ought to be. There is nothing that makes a person look so ugly as selfishness. 1. Anne Dawson was a little girl, lying in bed with a fever. In the same room was her brother, busily engaged in making a boat. The noise was very distressing, and his sister begged him to stop. But he still went on. Presently she said, "Robbie dear, please get me a glass of cold water? My throat is very dry, and my head aches terribly." But Robbie paid no attention till she asked a second time, when he called out sharply: "Wait awhile, Anne, I am too busy now." Again his sister pleaded for a drink. Then he hastily poured out some water from a pitcher which had been standing all day in the sun. "Oh! not that water, brother," said Anne, in a gentle tone, "please bring me some fresh and cool from the spring." "Don't bother me so, Anne. You see how busy I am. I'm sure this water is good enough." And the selfish boy went on. "Oh, my poor head!" said Anne, as she sipped a little of the warm water, and then lay back on her pillow. That was her last movement. She died that night. For thousands of gold and silver I would not have had Robert's feelings when he stood by the grave of his sister and thought of all this. We cannot imagine anything more ugly than this makes him appear. 2. But sometimes we can understand a thing better by contrasting it with its opposite. Some time ago an accident occurred in a coal mine. Two boys managed to get hold of a chain, and had the hope of being saved if they could hold on till help came. Very soon a man was lowered down, and he first came to a boy named Daniel Harding, who said: "Don't mind me. I can hold on a little longer; but there is Joe Brown just below nearly exhausted. Save him first." Joe Brown was saved, and so was his unselfish friend. How beautiful his unselfishness makes him appear! II. A DISAGREEABLE THING. When the things about us mind the laws which God has made to govern them, then they are all agreeable. The light is pleasant to see; the wind is pleasant to hear; and the fragrance of flowers is pleasant to smell, just because the sun, wind, and flowers act according to the laws which God has made for them. And God's law for us is, that "we ought not to please ourselves." If we mind this law it will make us unselfish, and then we shall always be agreeable. But if we do not mind this law, this will make us disagreeable. 1. A Christian lady talking to her class, said, "When I was a little girl, my grandma, who was dangerously ill when I was playing with my doll, asked me to bring her a glass of water. I did not mind her at first, but when she called me again, I carried the water to her in a very unkind way. She said, 'Thank you, my dear child; but it would have given me so much more pleasure if you had only brought the water willingly.' She never asked me to do anything for her again, for soon after she died. It is forty years ago to-day since this took place; and yet there is a sore spot in my heart which it left there, and which I must carry with me as long as I live." 2. And now we may take some illustrations in the way of contrast. Two little girls nestling together in bed one night were talking about their Aunt Bessie, who happened to be passing at that moment. So she listened and heard Minnie say, "Do you know what it is that makes my Aunt Bessie's forehead so smooth?" "Why, yes, she isn't old enough to have wrinkles." "Oh! she is, though; but her forehead is smooth because she is so unselfish, and never frets. I always like to hear her read the Bible, for she lives just like the Bible. She's just as sweet, and kind, and unselfish as it tells us to be. And this is what makes Aunt Bessie so pleasant." Our next story is about Turner, the great landscape painter, who was a member of the committee which arranges about hanging up the pictures in the Royal Academy. On one occasion when they were just finishing their work, Turner's attention was called to a picture by an unknown artist who had no friend in the Academy to watch over his interest. "That is an excellent picture," said Mr. Turner. "It must be hung up somewhere for exhibition." "That is impossible," said the other members of the committee. "There is no room left." Whereupon the generous artist deliberately took down one of his own pictures, and put the painting

of this unknown artist in its place. In what an interesting light his unselfishness presents him to our view! III. A SINFUL THING. When we commit sin in most other ways we only break one of God's commandments at a time. But when we give way to selfishness we break six of God's commandments all at once. How? Well, when Jesus was explaining the ten commandments, He said that the substance of the six on the second table was, that we should love our neighbours as ourselves. But, if we are selfish we cannot love our neighbours. Selfishness is the root out of which any sin may grow. It is like carrying powder about us in a place where sparks are flying all the time. A dreadful explosion may take place at any moment. Many years ago there lived in Egypt an old man named Amin. A great famine came upon the land just as it once did in the days of Joseph. Amin had a great store of wheat in his granaries. When bread began to get scarce his neighbours came to him to buy grain. But he refused, saying that he was going to keep his stock till all the rest of the grain in the land was gone, because then he would be able to get a higher price for it. Many died of starvation, and yet this selfish man still kept his stores locked up. At last the hungry people were willing to give him any price he asked, and then with a cruel, selfish smile he took the iron key of his great granary. He opened the door and went in. But in a moment all his hopes of great gain faded away like a dream. Worms had entered and destroyed all his grain. Hungry as the people were they yet raised a great shout of gladness for what happened to that wretched man. They saw that it was God's judgment which had come down upon him for his selfishness, and that it served him right. But such was the effect of his disappointment upon the old man himself, that he fell down dead at the door of the granary. His selfishness killed him. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The strong helping the weak*:—Coleridge tells of a midshipman in his fourteenth year going into action for the first time, knees tottering, courage failing, and a fit of fainting hastening on, when Sir Alexander Ball saw him, touched him, and said, "Courage, my dear boy! you will recover in a minute or so. I was just the same when I first went out in this way." It was as if an angel spoke to him. "From that moment I was as the oldest of the boat's crew." You can help one another, and you should for your own sake. *Bearing the infirmities of the weak*:—We must not, however, despise them, not in heart, word, or carriage. We must rather deny ourselves than offend them. We must support them, bear them as pillars bear the house, as the shoulders a burden, as the walls the vine, as parents their children, as the oak the ivy; and this because they are brethren. (*P. Henry.*)

Vers. 2, 3. **Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.**—*The character of Christian courtesy*:—The great aim of the gospel is to raise our views and desires above this life, and furnish us with pure and powerful principles in the direction of our words and actions, far above the will of fallen man. But while it invites us to lay up our treasure in heaven, it instructs us in everything that may best contribute to bless the life of man on earth. I. THE DUTY HERE ENJOINED. 1. You are not to make the pleasing of men the reason or rule of your conduct in any case, for the sake of their praise, or of any reward from them. That would, indeed, be to please them rather than God, and instead of God. But you are to study, if possible, to please your neighbour as a duty which God requires, and which you must continue to do whether men praise you for it or not. 2. This pleasing our neighbour is not, in any respect, to be placed in opposition to the pleasing of God, or to be followed in anything that would be displeasing in His sight. We are not allowed to put their good, or their good-will, in place of the glory of God, but only in place of our own gratification; "not to please ourselves, but every one to please his neighbour." 3. We are called to sacrifice our own pleasure to his, whenever our doing so would tend to his good, or to the edification of others; but, when it would not be for good, we must refuse to please any of our fellow-creatures, however much it might expose us to their dislike. 4. Keeping these points in view, you will be better able to guard against two very opposite errors on this subject, which require to be considered. (1) There is a pleasing of others which many study merely as an art, and to which young persons are trained by certain forms, as a branch of their education. This is only a seeming preference of others, which is far from real humility. This is a preference of others also only in trifles, while they would refuse to do much for the real good of those whom they seem so desirous to please. It is in itself, in short, as far as it is the invention of men, a mere tissue of hypocrisy, which the children of this world cast around them,

rather for the purpose of hiding their selfish and malignant feelings than of expressing their benevolent dispositions. (2) There is a disposition in some persons, on the other hand, not only to neglect the pleasing of others as an art, but also to despise it as a duty. They think it sufficient that they give no just cause of offence to any one; but take little care to guard against the appearance of disregarding them. They will do much for men's real welfare, but will show no indulgence to their weaknesses. The clearer your knowledge, the sounder your judgment, the stronger your faith, the more may be expected from you, in bearing the infirmities, and even the censures of others, in denying yourselves in many things for their sake, and in doing whatever you lawfully may to please them for their good. II. THE REASON ASSIGNED FOR THIS DUTY. "Even Christ pleased not Himself." 1. Observe the force of the expression, "even Christ." The act of submission was lower, the degree of the sacrifice was greater in His case, than it ever possibly can be in ours; how shall we refuse to serve those with whom we must rank in His sight as fellow-creatures? 2. But let us contemplate more particularly the character of our Lord in the respect here specified by the apostle, namely, that "He pleased not Himself." In one sense, indeed, it may be said that He always pleased Himself, inasmuch as He never had one wish or feeling that was contrary to what He knew to be right, and conducive to the good of others. But let us consider with how much reason He might have insisted that others should please and honour Him in every iota, instead of His yielding any point to satisfy their prejudices or serve their infirmities. (*J. Brewster.*) *Pleasing our neighbour for good*:—The gospel does not come down in its requirements to the level of our imperfections. Its plan of perfection is no treadmill. It is ever ahead of us. I. WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR? 1. He that dwells near me. 2. He that is my countryman. 3. He that is my fellow-man. 4. He that is a follower of Christ. II. THE SOCIAL DUTY HERE COMMENDED AND COMMANDED. 1. Sympathy. 2. Tenderness. 3. Esteem. 4. To be more ready to speak good of him than evil. III. THE OBJECT TO BE HELD IN VIEW. 1. To please him for his good. 2. To please him for his edification, that his character may be built up in truth and righteousness. IV. SOME REASONS FOR THIS. 1. The example of Christ. He pleased not Himself, but gave Himself for us all. 2. The imitation of Christ. Be ye followers of Me. V. REFLECTIONS. 1. In this Epistle we have eleven chapters devoted to the exposition of doctrines, and five to some chief social duties. 2. Were we to realise these social duties, earth would become a place more like heaven, and make it sweeter and easier for us all to live. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *On pleasing men*:—Some men seek to build up their fellow-men remotely, *e.g.*, by education, political economy, the application of natural laws. But, except as the administrators of such forces, they have no personal relation to the work. They have no sympathy for individuals. Their pleasure is left out of the question. Then there are others who seek to do good, but without any idea of the relation of this good to the character to be formed in men. There are persons that relieve suffering without asking how the relief can build up the sufferer into permanent goodness. There are others who seek to give the most transient pleasure without any concern either for good or for edification. They please men without any consideration of whether the means which they employ are right or wrong. 2. Now, the apostle joins all three together. You are to please men; and you are to please them so that you shall do them good. But all this in such a way as to effect a permanent building of character. One man may go through a farm only to glean flowers and fruit, to find pleasure there, and to give pleasure transiently. Another may find pleasure, to be sure, and he may also here and there strive to do a little good. He may destroy some vermin, pluck up some weeds, and plant and rear a few flowers. A third may unite all these things with a comprehensive culture that shall deepen the soil, augment its crops, and develop its resources of beauty, pleasure, and profit at the same time. This is the right way, and we are to cultivate each other in the same way. I. MEN ARE BENEFITED SIMPLY BY BEING PLEASED. Of course men would not be profited by having only pleasure in this world. That is provided for, however. Men need trouble, and they will have it. But men need pleasing as well. And the art of pleasing is an important element in moral culture. For when men are in a state of pleasedness they are more inclined to good influences than when they are not pleased. Dr. Kane said that there was no nautical skill that was so important, while wintering in the North, as one man among the crew that could play the fiddle. Why? Because it is indispensable, under such circumstances, that the men should be kept in a cheerful state of mind. And this same element of cheerfulness is necessary in all the various situations in life. It may be

better to strike at deeper results; but it is not best to despise those which be near the surface. It may be that a miner, by sinking a shaft, will find more gold in the veins; but it is not best for him to despise the specks of gold that are thrown up with the soil in the process. II. THE HABIT OF PLEASING MEN IS QUITE AS INDISPENSABLE FOR OUR OWN SAKE AS FOR THEIRS. It keeps the mind and heart on the side of benevolence. It gradually frames your character into the Divine. And a man may be earnest and conscientious; and yet, if he carries himself in such a way that the pleasing of others is no part of his daily conduct, he cannot be thought to be a perfect man. III. THE HUMAN MIND HAS BEEN ENDOWED WITH FACULTIES WHOSE VERY END SEEMS TO BE THE MINISTRATION OF PLEASURE. People seem to think that God must be a great utilitarian, and that He always makes things for uses. But wherever you see that God has walked in the world, you see that He has had an eye to beauty. There is something on the globe besides what men can eat, drink, and wear. God made the earth beautiful that the higher feelings might be fed. We are organised for something more than the mere practical duties of life. 1. The human mind is made to act with cheerfulness. You know the difference between a rusty and a polished piece of iron. The rusty piece reflects nothing. Polish it, and how every one delights to look at it! Now, the difference between polished and rusty iron is the difference between cheerfulness and no cheerfulness. A cheerful doctor gives his medicine the moment he steps inside the room. Those sepulchral doctors—I wonder that anybody gets well under their care. A clergyman whose face glows with health, hope, and cheer has looked consolation into his friend before he has spoken a word. But a minister, whose face says, "Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound," I marvel how he should be twice sent for, unless it might be on the ground of the benefits of affliction! And in all relations of life the same is true. 2. The tendency to please is still more powerful where cheerfulness is joined to good-nature. I sometimes preach better under the influence of the flowers that stand on the desk before me. They do not know that they are helping me, whether I do or not. There are persons that are pleasant when they come into your presence, that are pleasant while they stay, and their memory is sweet when they are gone. There are other persons whom you know to be good, and who you feel assured want to do you good, but whose presence is painful to you. 3. When God put wit and humour into the human soul, He put them there to be to the soul what the hearth is to the family, whose burning wood snaps and sends up sparks, and throws light into all parts of the room, and chases darkness, and imparts pleasure to all within the reach of its influence. But such is the heathenism of public opinion, that where a man uses his conscience to urge truth, and his reason to enforce it, people think that is all right; but that where a man uses mirthfulness to illustrate it and make it acceptable, people think it is not right. 4. The same is true of imagination. You cannot conceive that the imagination should be given a man except for pleasure. The imagination is what vines and mosses are that cover hard places, and beautify things that are not lovely in their own nature. IV. WE NOW SEE THE MISTAKE OF MAKING MORAL QUALITIES UNPLEASING, as though it was a necessity that they should be so. Men seeing that cheerfulness, fancy, &c., are concomitants of unlawful pleasure, suppose them to be wicked, and steer away from them because they see bad men employ them. But because Cleopatra wore roses, must a virtuous woman not wear one? Because orgies are carried on with music, is music defiled? Things are not defiled because they are used for bad purposes. There is an impression that moral attributes have a certain hard and rugged nature of their own, and that they are genuine in proportion as they are unlovely. Many persons want a man to speak the truth very much as a bull-dog speaks. But throughout the New Testament moral qualities are enjoined to be exercised graciously and attractively. "Let your light so shine," &c. Hence bluntness, coarseness, are not to be preferred. A disagreeable piety is impious by so much as it is disagreeable. Virtue is lovely, and you are not to slander it by acting as though to be pious was necessarily to be void of everything that is pleasure-giving. V. THIS VIEW WILL PRESENT A MUCH HIGHER IDEA OF GOOD MANNERS THAN IS OFTEN PRESENTED. We are usually taught good manners, because they are important to our making our way in the world; but good manners stand on a Christian ground. A man is bound so to conduct himself in all the thousand usages of society, as that his presence shall be a pleasant and not a disagreeable thing, or a burden to his fellow-men. There are persons in society who diffuse an element of comfort and joy wherever they go. We say of some persons, "They are well-bred." VI. THIS VIEW WILL GIVE A

MORAL SANCTION TO ALL THOSE MINOR USAGES OF SOCIETY WHICH TEND TO MAKE MEN MORE PLEASANT. Many persons say, "What is the use of salutations? Why should I raise my hat to a lady, or say 'Good morning' when we meet, or 'Good-bye' when we part?" Well, for my part, I think that even good folks, without such little ceremonies, are like grapes packed for market without leaves between them. They will crush, and come in mashed. Even good folks need to have little courtesies between them to keep them from attrition. And to take society and divest it of all these little civilities, would be to deteriorate it and carry it toward the savage state. And if you think that these things are of no use, it is because you never put your heart into them. When you want to manage men, do as bee-keepers do. Here are two. One goes to the hive, thrusts his hand rudely into the midst of them, and very soon he has his bees all over him, and he moves himself very rapidly! Another man gets a bowl of sugar and water and washes his hands all over, and goes with the utmost quietness and serenity, and opens the hive and puts his hand in gently, and the bees find everything sweet, and they will not sting him or fly away. And people say, "Wonderful! that man has a real magnetic power with bees." So he has, when he has sugar and water on his hands. Now, when you want to manage men, wash your hands with sugar and water! Conclusion: If you carry these thoughts home, I think you will find there a great sphere for the reformation of minor morals. In the family the law of pleasing ought to extend from the highest to the lowest. You are bound to please your children, and your children each other; and you are bound to please your servants, if you expect them to please you. Some men are pleasant in the household, and nowhere else. But the opposite is apt to be the case. We expend all our politeness in places where it will be profitable—where it will bring silver and gold. My friends, our kindness should begin at home. It should not stay there; but there it should begin, and there it should be nourished. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *On pleasing all men:*—1. Undoubtedly this duty is incumbent on all—"every man"; neighbour, too, means every other man. Only as Paul says elsewhere, "If it be possible as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men," so we are to please all men if possible. But strictly speaking it is not; but if we use our utmost diligence, let the event be what it may, we have done our duty. 2. The apostle limits this direction, otherwise it would be attended with mischievous consequences. We are to please them for their good; not barely for the sake of pleasing them or ourselves, much less to their hurt; nor for their temporal good merely, but for their edification, so as to conduce to their spiritual and eternal good. We may do this—I. BY REMOVING HINDRANCES. We must avoid everything which tends to displease wise and good men. 1. Now cruelty, hatred, malice, &c., are displeasing, and so is that temper so prevalent in common life—ill-nature. We must, then, avoid these, and whatever resembles them, as sourness, sternness, sullenness on the one hand; peevishness and fretfulness on the other. 2. Next to these nothing is more disgustful than pride and haughtiness issuing in an assuming, arrogant, overbearing behaviour. Even great learning and shining talents will not make amends for this. 3. Almost as disgustful is a passionate temper and behaviour. Hence passionate men have seldom many friends. 4. We must "put away all lying." Addison said, "Of all vices this has never found an apologist"; but he wrote before Lord Chesterfield, whose apology for it is the best that could be made for so bad a cause. As lying can never be commendable, so neither can it be pleasing. 5. But is not flattery a species of lying, and has it not been regarded in all ages as a means of pleasing? Yes, flattery is pleasing for a while, but when the mask drops off we are pleased no longer. If a man continues to flatter after his insincerity is discovered it is disgusting. 6. Dissimulation is displeasing, and guile, subtlety, cunning, and the whole art of deceiving. Even those who practise it most are not pleased with it in others, nor fond of conversing with those who practise it on themselves. II. BY USING THE MEANS THAT DIRECTLY TEND TO THIS END. Only remember that there are those whom we cannot expect to please. It is now as when our Lord said, "The men of this generation are like unto children sitting in the market-place," &c. But leaving these froward ones to themselves, we may hope to please others in the following way. 1. Let love not visit you as a transient guest, but be the constant temper of your soul. Let it pant in your heart, sparkle in your eyes, shine on all your actions, and speak with your tongue. 2. Study to be lowly in heart. "Be clothed with humility." Reject the favourite maxim of the old heathen, "The more you value yourself the more others will value you." Not so. Both God and man "resist the proud." 3. Pray that you

may be meek. Labour to be of a calm, dispassionate temper; gentle to all men, pitiful, generous. 4. Be courteous to all, high or low, good or bad. Addison's definition of politeness is "a constant desire of pleasing all men, appearing through the whole conversation." I have seen as real courtesy in an Irish cabin as could be found in St. James's or the Louvre. 5. What is the root of that desire to please which we call courtesy? The same apostle that teaches it teaches us to honour all men, and the Master teaches us to love all men. Join all these together, and what will be the effect? When a poor wretch cries to me for an alms, I look and see him covered in rags. But through these I see an immortal spirit redeemed by Christ's blood. The courtesy, therefore, which I feel and show toward him is a mixture of the honour and love which I bear to the offspring of God, the purchase of Christ, the candidate for immortality. 6. Take all proper opportunities of declaring to others the affection you really feel for them. This may be done in such a manner as is not liable to the imputation of flattery; and experience shows that honest men are pleased by this. 7. Speak to all men the very truth in your heart. In all company and on all occasions be a man of veracity. "In simplicity and godly sincerity," &c.—"an Israelite indeed." 8. To sum up all: if you would please men, please God. (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *Pleasing others*:—1. How far may we do this? 2. What should be our motive? 3. What are the best means of doing it? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Pleasing others*:—There is such a thing as pleasing another by flattery, and encouraging him in his prejudices. Hence the restrictive phrase "for his good." We are not to be men-pleasers (1 Cor. x. 33; Gal. i. 10), unworthy trimmers, and religious weathercocks. Nor are we to try to gain popularity by pandering to the weakness or follies of others. We are, however, to lay ourselves out to please our neighbour in the manner indicated. No one ever succeeds in an undertaking unless he make it a matter of business. We must be professionals, not amateurs, in the holy practice of advancing the spiritual interests of others. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The duty of pleasing others* is—I. FOUNDED IN THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. II. LIMITED BY WHAT TENDS TO EDIFICATION. III. FULFILLED by—1. Bearing with their infirmities. 2. Acknowledging their excellencies. 3. Seeking their good. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ not pleasing Himself: Christian and social tolerance*:—I. THE RULE OF FORBEARANCE AS LAID DOWN BY THE APOSTLE. 1. There were two classes in the Roman Church who refused liberty to others. There were the men of despotic conscience, and the men of despotic intellect; and, that we may cover the whole ground of character, we may add there are men of despotic will. To one or other of these classes belongs almost every case of undue interference with Christian and social liberty. In all these cases there may be much that is good, but there is a subtle form of self-gratification at the root of it, a mistaken self-assertion, which does not leave room for other natures to develop themselves in freedom. 2. It may be asked if, in no case, we are warranted to interfere with our fellow-men. Most certainly we cannot remain indifferent to what they do and are, if we have any regard for God's truth and their welfare. But we should be very sure that it is regard to God's truth and another's welfare that actuates us, and not the mere wilfulness that seeks its own way. We have to learn that, within the limits of what is not positively wrong, every one has the right to be himself. It is frequently very hard to allow this, especially when there are close relationships. Husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, find it most difficult of all to make allowance for each other's variety of nature, and to remain side by side without undue interference with one another's peculiarities. 3. It is here that the further principle of this passage comes in, that we are not merely to refrain from constraining others into our way, but, as far as we can, we are to meet them in theirs. If there be a separation of taste, instead of compelling them to surrender, we are to forbear, and if the thing be harmless for us, and it will gratify them, we are to take part in their pursuits. But is there no limit to this surrender? Yes. We are to please our neighbour "for his good to edification." This is the end, and the end prescribes the limit. Such a principle saves Christian compliance from sycophancy or characterlessness. But within two limits—the indulgence of our fellow-men in sin, and the compromise of our own true nature—there is ample scope for the exercise of endless charity and compliance. The tree that has its firm-fixed root and upright stem has also its spreading branches and thousand waving twigs, which yield to the breeze and salute the gentlest movement of the surrounding air. How beautiful strength is, when it thus melts away at its extremities into kindliness and courtesy! II. THIS FORBEARANCE IS ILLUSTRATED BY CHRIST'S EXAMPLE (ver. 3).

1. The quotation is from Psa. lxix., in which the speaker is David; but the apostle takes the words as completed in Christ, which this manner of dealing with the Psalms gives us a light to read the Psalms in. Wherever a man is uttering a breathing of the Divine life, it is not merely Christ that he is implicitly looking forward to, but it is Christ that is breathing and speaking in him. 2. To prove the disinterested forbearance of Christ, he cites a passage that shows his self-devotion to God. Right action toward man flows naturally from right feeling toward God. If self-pleasing has been sacrificed on the Divine altar, it has received its death-blow in every other form. We have to show that this was a characteristic of Christ in His intercourse with men—forbearance and freedom. He presented the Divine will, and pressed it on men as the rule of all life, but He refrained carefully from crushing their nature in its free development. (1) We see this in the variety of character which His earthly life drew around it. His disciples represent the extremes of temperament. He is careful never to stamp on them a hard uniformity, but leaves them to their own natural development, and aids them in it. Then, outside this circle, we have groups of all possible colours. How different from founders of human systems, who cannot be satisfied unless their formulas are repeated, and their minutest features reflected, by all their scholars. (2) Christ not merely refrained from interfering with free growth Himself, but He interposed to defend others when they were interfered with. What a lesson there is to contending, narrow-minded religionists, in Luke ix. 49! What an admonition to those who would impose their own way of work upon every other, when Martha's complaint is so gently but firmly met! (John xii. 7). (3) Turn now from His earthly life to the work He carries on by His Spirit, which is to enter into each nature by itself, and unfold it from its own germ and centre. It is for wise reasons that a visible Head is removed from the Christian Church. We can perceive how the disciples started up into stronger, broader men, under this new influence, and how their characters struck out on all sides into more marked individuality. How different are the apostles and the epistles of the same apostle, caused by the variety of development in the churches to which they were addressed! And Christ is still teaching us to look with an approving eye on every honest effort to do good and to take pleasure in the wide variety of human character and Christian grace. III. SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT WOULD RESULT FROM ACTING ON THIS PRINCIPLE. 1. If, in Christian or social intercourse, we wish to deliver any man from what we think error, we must do so by putting him in the way of convincing himself. To beat him down by unreasoning opposition, or even by an irresistible argument, may please us, but is not likely to gain him. To respect a man's freedom, never to press him so hard as to humiliate him, to give him the clue that may help him to guide himself to the right, is according to the Divine model, and would aid us in serving at the same time both our fellow-men and the truth. 2. Take the family circle. Authority must exist, but when authority makes itself felt at every turn, freedom is gone, and influence vanishes with it. Constitutional government here, as elsewhere, is the great thing to be aimed at—that is, firm law on certain great essentials, but freedom within this to grow up according to taste and temperament. If we wish those we are influencing to become valuable for anything, it must be by permitting them to be themselves. They will do very little if they turn out dead transcripts of us. 3. In pursuing such a course we shall best succeed in elevating and broadening our own nature. If we could bring all around us into our own mould, we should only have narrowed ourselves in the process of constraining others. But, if we enter into sympathy with their pursuits, we not merely grow in unselfishness, but add something to our intellectual nature which was not there before. Conclusion: In all this work there are needed two great qualities, love and wisdom. Neither will suffice alone. Love in its earnestness is often too narrow, and wisdom in its breadth may be too cold. They are the light and heat of the moral world which must go together. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Making others happy*:—1. A man's soul is like a garden belonging to an old neglected mansion. It is full of excellent things running to waste. Now a garden has no right to be dilapidated. It is made on purpose to confer pleasure and profit. So the soul of man is full of good dispositions and kind impulses; but besides these it is full of the stinging nettles of pride, and vanities flaunting coarse colours. A soul's power to produce pleasure or pain in another is very great. We are commanded, therefore, to produce pleasure. It is not left optional with us whether men shall be made happier by our going among them. And not occasionally by a gleam and a smile. It is to enter into the whole carriage of our lives. 2. This is neither a small nor an unimportant business. The making

others happy is one of the best manifestations of the Christian disposition, and the closest imitation of Christ's example. Our duty as Christians is not simply to go out after men outside of morality. All about us society is full of men whose lives average but very little sweetness. And it is for us to seek to make them happier. Some men move through life as a band of music, flinging out pleasure to every one, far and near. Some men fill the air with their sweetness as orchards, in October days, fill the air with the perfume of ripe fruit. Some women cling to their own houses like the honeysuckle over the door, yet, like it, fill all the region with the subtle fragrance of their goodness. How great a bounty and a blessing is it so to hold the royal gifts of the soul that they shall be music to some, and fragrance to others, and life to all! It would be no unworthy thing to live for to fill the atmosphere with a brightness which others cannot create for themselves. 3. Men neglect frequently these very simple and very obvious truths, because there is still a remnant of asceticism among good men. "Oh," say they, "make men better, and then their happiness will take care of itself." But much of men's selfishness and sin springs from their own unhappiness. And whatever shall take that away will tend to make them better. Again, men say, "My business is to be honest, and just, and not to make people laugh." Yet you have no business to be just and honest in such a way that those who stand next to you shall be less happy by your way of being so. No one has a better right to be a hedgehog than a hedgehog; but is he a good neighbour? A thistle belongs to the ordained economy of nature; and yet is it the model of a man? How many men there are who, rude of speech, go thrusting here, and piercing there, and treading down sensitiveness on every side, with no other excuse except this: "Well, I believe in a straight, out-and-out kind of man. Jack Blunt is my model!" Undoubtedly, and a very bad model very well imitated, too! 4. We are not at liberty to please by pandering to the bad elements in men's characters. We must move upon the right feelings in men, and not stir up the wrong ones, nor the evil ones. In order to this there must be a discipline in ourselves. In the free intercourse of human life you carry to men the faculties that are active in you, and tend to excite in them precisely the same feelings. If you are irritable, you tend to produce irritation. If you are proud, you tend to excite the resistance of pride. And these feelings never, in you nor in any other person, ministered to cheer. They are sand in the teeth. No man can be happy himself, or promote happiness in other men, until he has learned to put to sleep these malign faculties every day. The whole machinery of life, then, needs a great deal of oiling in you in order that you may minister to the wants of others. 5. We are not simply to carry happiness to those that are around about us. In the olden time it was thought that we should love our friends and hate our enemies. In the modern time it has been thought that we should love our own denomination, and hate those that are heretical. Therefore there has been felt to be a solemn duty incumbent on the Catholic to hate Protestants, and there has been felt to be a corresponding duty on the other side. Now, it is my business as a Protestant Christian man so to treat all Catholics that I shall please them, for their good, to edification. For a thousand years the experiment has been tried of bombarding men into love and faith; and with what luck? Is it not time to see if we cannot please men into unity; if we cannot drop the things that are disagreeable, and insist upon the things that are pleasing, for good, to edification? As it is in religious matters, so should it be in civil. There are times when men must stand in politics for principles, and at such times men cannot avoid giving pain. But this furnishes no criterion for the average of cases. Ordinarily, men who come together knowing that they are on different sides in philosophy, or in politics, or in business, if they be Christian men, should bear in mind that they are to "please one another for good to edification," and not irritate and chafe and hurt each other. 6. If these views are correct, then there is a new element of personal piety that should enter into the conception of every one. We ask men whether they are willing to leave off every known sin, &c., but how seldom do we question men as to beneficence of disposition! When, then, we are bringing men into the kingdom of God we should inspire them with heroic enterprise in doing good; but there are thousands of men who are attempting to do good, who never had it enter their minds that they were to make happiness. If I were to carry home this subject to the household, are there not many families that would bear some reformation? On the other hand, how many households are there that call themselves Christians, and have a right to, because all day long each one is shining on the others; because each one is removing obstructions, taking away attritions, smoothing asperities, and seeking to

make all amiable and all happy? When, after the long, loathsome voyage, I entered the channel, and saw, dim upon the horizon, the blue line of shore, and smelled the strange odour in the air, I said to the captain, "What is this smell?" "Bless your heart!" said he, "it is the land-smell." All the smells of the sea put together were never so sweet as that. There are persons so lovely that you cannot go near to them without perceiving that they exhale gladness and cheer and happiness. Blessed are such! I believe in revivals; but I have never known any revivals that did not need to have other revivals in them. I have known men revived from intemperance and from wickedness, who went into churches and into neighbourhoods where they set themselves up on their orthodoxy and their propriety, and carried themselves so unsocially, so offensively, that they exerted no happiness-producing power. No person has drunk in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ who does not make other persons happier when he comes to them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Making sunshine in shady places:*—1. Life is a big bundle of littles, intended to be tied together by love. Life's joy depends on what cords bind you and what hand ties them. Bound together we must be, either by cords of silk or by iron fetters. How much our happiness is placed in the power of others! The thoughts, looks, words, and actions of others can in a moment fill us with joy or sorrow. The sensorium of our life seems sometimes like a great and beautiful spider's web, in which every thread is sensitive, we at the centre giving out and receiving back again a thousand pulsations of joy and sorrow. To change the figure, our hearts are a telephonic centre, from which we send out varied messages, and get them back, too. Messages of tenderness and of scorn, of healing and mischief. Who of us can live to ourselves? 2. How much we each have it in our power to make others happy! Surely here is a realm of Christian duty little regarded by us, and I fear less practised. How many persons in this age of keen competition, when life is a race, have pondered Christ's words about loving their neighbour as themselves? Even in family and social life how many need to ponder the sin of being constant misery-makers! If one person kills another in passion, we call that murder. But if a hard, selfish nature frets another and a loving nature to death, what do we call that? We find in our text—I. A CENTRE. No man can please his neighbour who does not please himself. We cannot give what we have not got. Without a fixed centre there can be no circle. Now, if a Christian man is to please himself, he needs that three features shall be prominent in his experience. 1. Let him make up his mind as to what is life's true idea, and lovingly pursue it. Much of our joy in life depends on what we expect. If I expect a large gift and get a little one, or nothing, I am vexed and disappointed; but if I expect little and get much, then I am easily pleased. If I have made up my mind that the world is a workshop to make men; that God and men are the workers, circumstances the tools; each day an opportunity for new effort and new knowledge; failure only a revelation of the ideal and another chance for progress; if I have settled that love is life's one great end and prize, then, with a noble discontent, which rests ever and yet never, I may be happy in myself. 2. But this happiness will only be secure as my motive is right and my helper is ever near. To live to push myself to the front, or even to please men, will never give full pleasure to the heart. He who commands and inspires me must himself be perfect, or his imperfection will in turn become mine. Christ must be the keynote of life's song and the singer's inspiration. To please Him is to lead self to its highest ideal and aspiration and joy. Would we please self, our motto must be, "For me to live is Christ." Self lost in Christ is life's full gain. 3. Yet one thing more is needed. Every day and hour brings me a heap of failures. What am I to do with these? Carry them hourly to Christ for His loving forgiveness, which deepens penitence, heartens trust, and inspires to new and nobler service. II. THE CIRCUMFERENCE of our text is—that no man can truly please himself unless he seeks to please his neighbour. 1. Selfish joy is a paradox. A great thinker has said, "No man has a right to all his rights"; the measure in which he determines to have them is the measure of his meanness—the measure of his willinghood to forego them is the measure of his manhood and nobleness. Where to-day men are too selfish to labour for the common weal, politics become degraded, the national conscience debased, and the poor trampled upon. 2. But what language can fully describe the holy gladness of being permitted to help and bless one's fellow-men? What a royal gift it is to carry sunshine about with you; to be like the flowers, making people happy without knowing it; to light your neighbour's candle by your own, thus losing nothing and giving much. If we could doom each man to live and labour merely for himself, then, whatever has lent any virtue to work, whatever

has prompted courage and self-sacrifice, the very beauty of home life itself, must perish. I am told if you play a flute beneath a great church bell, too large for you to stir, and listen close till the right note flows forth a silver rivulet of melody, that mass of metal will respond with a myriad waves of sound in low, soft unison. So, if a man will live like Christ lived—not to please himself—then not only will he most truly please himself, but a thousand hearts will vibrate to the melody of that man's self-sacrificing love. III. THE CONCLUSION of our text is—that no man can either truly please his neighbour or himself who does not seek to please both for a worthy reason. We must seek to please for the permanent building up of character. 1. All can please if they only try. True, some have dispositions naturally winsome and agreeable, and others as naturally acid and disagreeable; but, not the less, every man has this command laid upon him. 2. Merely to give pleasure may, unless guarded, be a snare. We may seek to please only to find opportunity for display, or to secure men's applause. We may want the partnership of others in gaiety or dissipation, and we may please them only for the sake of keeping us company. These methods, and many others, pull men down and never build them up. Our work is to build men up for good and for God. 3. All our life would be lifted to a level of nobility if our pleasure were to seek to do men good in a glad spirit. It was a noble resolve of the blacksmith who said, whatever others do, "I have resolved not to undersell but excel my neighbours." Yet all secondary efforts to either please or bless men, however laudable they may be—and they are—yet concerts, entertainments, lectures, all of them will bring us much disappointment; but the one work which will give us largest pleasure and noblest fruit is to sing to men the old, old story of Jesus and His love. 4. Nothing is more important than that men who do seek to build up others for good should do it in a pleasing way. I have no patience with good people representing God or His service in any unlovely light. Scolding seldom builds men much higher; silence is best when we cannot praise. To tell men what God has done for them, and wants to do for and in them, and to show them how glad and restful His service makes us—this is the best service we can render the truth and our fellow-men. Conclusion: Love is the great river that flows through and sweetens human life. Let us each one take care what we put into that river of love. Some carelessly throw in the broken potsherds of strife and ill-will. Some poison the stream with the miserable ambition of getting rich at any cost. Others foul the stream with grossnesses and impurity. Every man should feel that he is responsible for the fulness, and purity, and beauty of life's river of love. (*R. H. Lovell.*) *Christian courtesy*:—1. The apostle makes a special application of this principle to the conduct of the strong towards the weak. Taken by itself, it is the injunction of the comprehensive duty of courtesy. The etymology and frequent usage of the word would confine it to what is outward, *i.e.*, polished manners. Court, courtier, courtesy, are nearly allied. But the word has a higher meaning. To court is to endeavour to please; courtesy is the desire and effort to please arising from a good motive and directed to a right end. The sycophant desires to please, but not for edification. He acts from a selfish motive for a selfish object. Every Christian, so far as his Christianity moulds and controls his character, is courteous. 2. The sum of Christian wisdom is to be Christlike (ver. 3). Nothing can exceed the courtesy of Christ and His condescension, kindness, and tenderness to the humble, poor, suffering, and penitent. "Woman, hath no man condemned thee?" &c. Many of the earlier Christians wished to expunge that paragraph. But no purer, brighter ray shines upon the life of our Lord than that which fell upon Him when He uttered these words. I. COURTESY HAS A NEGATIVE SIDE. It is manifested by avoiding to give pain—1. By impressing others with their inferiority, their position, knowledge, talents, force in argument, liberality. The strong among the Romans despised the narrowness and weakness of their scrupulous brethren. 2. By in any way hurting their feelings. II. THE POSITIVE OF THIS VIRTUE is the endeavour to please, to heal wounded feelings, to inspire confidence and affection. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Edification*:—I. ITS NECESSITY. All need it. 1. Some have yet to be built. Children, *e.g.*, have unformed characters which require to be formed. 2. Some are built awry. Many young men have characters malformed, and the task is to get them into form. 3. Some have tumbled down. There are those whose character is a wreck, and the work in their case is one of reformation. II. ITS MEANS. The builder must conform to law. The great principles on which successful building depends must be "pleased." Outrage the laws of gravitation, proportion, &c., and the builder will labour in vain. 1. For the want of "pleasing" them—(1) Some are never built at all. With the best of

intentions, abundant materials, and assiduous efforts, a builder may erect a heap instead of an edifice. How much advice, instruction, &c., are expended on a child, only to be thrown away because expended in a repulsive form! (2) Others are pulled down. When a man has gone wrong, instead of trying to put him straight in the proper way, his "friends" often take him to pieces. (3) When character has been ruined, instead of collecting and re-building the ruins, how often is it that they are scattered beyond recovery! Harsh censures, cutting sarcasms, so-called "plain truths" never yet succeeded in reforming a broken character. 2. In each case the one thing needful is to give pleasure. Put a child, a youth, a man in good humour, give him hope, persuade him that duty is delightful, and the work of construction or reconstruction is almost half accomplished. The application is—1. To parents. 2. To preachers. 3. To teachers. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Edification:*—In the process of building a material edifice four things are necessary. They are equally essential in the edification of character. I. A STABLE FOUNDATION—Christ, the Rock of Ages. II. SOUND MATERIALS—faith, hope, love, zeal, &c. III. THE COMBINATION OF UTILITY AND GRACE IN THE STRUCTURE. The Christian is to be beautiful as well as useful. IV. PERFECTION AT THE FINISH. The Christian is to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus. (*Ibid.*) *Edification and pleasure:*—When Handel's oratorio of the "Messiah" had won the admiration of many of the great, Lord Kinnoul took occasion to pay him some compliments on the noble entertainment which he had lately given the town. "My lord," said Handel, "I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wish to make them better." It is to be feared that many speech-makers at public meetings could not say as much; and yet how dare any of us waste the time of our fellow immortals in mere amusing talk! If we have nothing to speak to edification, how much better to hold our tongue! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Seeking to edify:*—A fine example of a word fitly spoken is found in Dr. Bushnell's biography. An intelligent but not religious young lady, after spending a social evening with the good doctor's family, was escorted home by her courteous host. On their way the brilliant starlight led them to talk of astronomy. The doctor spoke of the law of harmony which held each little star in its appointed place, and then turning to the bright-minded girl, with a winning smile, he said, "Sarah, I want to see you in your place." This was all he said that was personal, but the thought thrilled her young soul as if it had dropped upon her from the skies. Its effect was to win her to discipleship. "A word spoken in season, how good it is!"

Ver. 3. **For even Christ pleased not Himself.**—*The self-denial of Christ:*—I. ITS EXEMPLIFICATION. 1. He had the right to please Himself. 2. He ceded it. (1) Seeking not His own ease. (2) Bearing the reproach of others. 3. For the benefit of mankind. II. ITS DESIGN. 1. For faith. 2. For imitation. 3. For motive. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Imitation of Christ* makes a trifle the highest virtue. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Self-forgetfulness:*—Amongst the Roman Christians there was a great strife about a very small matter. Might a Christian eat meat, or must he live on herbs? And we may be certain that there would be the loud assertion of individual rights, and everywhere self would be very conspicuous. It must have grieved the apostle to be compelled to take part in any such strife. He must have been conscious of a deep descent when he came down from the heights of chap. viii. into the arena where professed Christians were engaged in such a dispute. But he brought the power of the Cross to bear upon it, and instantly lifted it into a higher region. He showed the contending men that in connection with their very differences there were glorious possibilities of maintaining Christ's own spirit and growing up into Christ's own likeness (vers. 1–3). Note—I. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. The motto of selfish human nature is "Every man for himself, and God for us all"; and there are some of us who would change the latter part of the motto, and whose joy would be greater if they could believe that God is a great deal more for them than He is for others. The spirit of Christ was the very reverse of this. With Him thoughts of others were first, thoughts of self were last. He came into this world of which He had been the Creator, and of which He was the rightful ruler, "not to be ministered unto," &c. Wherever He was found He was there for the good of others. 1. Look at His miracles. Who can fail to discern there a care for others that never sleeps? In connection with this it is very significant that our Lord's first temptation was to work His first miracle for His own relief. A little while afterwards the Jews were in the wilderness. They had not fasted forty hours, and we do not read that any of them complained of hunger. But Christ made a

feast for five thousand who would not turn one stone into bread for Himself. He that came to minister, &c., must not strike the wrong keynote of His life by making His first miracle a miracle for His own personal relief. In our Lord's triumph over the next temptation you can see the same thoughtful love for the good of others. He could have cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, and no doubt it would have brought Him great applause, but whose tears would it have wiped away? So He kept His Divine resources in all their virgin freshness and fulness till presently the lepers crossed His path and He could cleanse them. We remember where the glory first broke forth. He who the other day would not turn stones into bread to appease His own hunger turned the water into wine to relieve His friends from embarrassment. Put the first temptation and the first miracle side by side, and how there flames out this ever blessed truth, "Even Christ pleased not Himself." 2. After His first journey of mercy He went back again to Nazareth. He had gone to Capernaum, &c., and had conferred many blessings; but He returned as poor as He had left it. The people had heard what He had done: He knew what was in their hearts. He said, "Ye will say to Me, Physician, heal Thyself." Why did not He who had done so much for others better His own circumstances? We must not be astonished at their incredulity. Here was a new thing in the earth. Here was a man unspeakably rich in resources, unspeakably lavish in His gifts; and He lived and died in deepest poverty. 3. As in life, so in death Christ pleased not Himself. When His burden of woe was becoming so heavy that His heart was like to break, the soldiers led by Judas went to seize Him; He put forth His power and they fell to the ground. He soon made it manifest that the deed of gentle violence had not been wrought for His own deliverance, but for the deliverance of others. "Take Me and let My disciples go their way." The daughters of Jerusalem dropped their tears upon His way of grief. He bade them stay their tears, not because He spurned their sympathy, but because He would have them keep their energies for their own sorrow. How many more instances there are in that crucifixion that one might cite to the same purport! The cup of sorrows was held up to Him. Many and diverse were the elements in that cup. Judas put into it all the poison of his treachery, Peter the bitterness of his denial, the people the foul stream of their ingratitude, the soldiers their cruelty, the priests and Pharisees their deadly malignity, Herod his mockery, Pilate his unrighteousness, and the crowd, aided by the malefactor, their brutal and blasphemous revilings. And there were other bitter elements there, the reality and terribleness of which are testified to by Scripture. Yet He drank that cup that sinners might live. II. THE DUTY OF THE DISCIPLE. Lay stress on the word "even." 1. Surely if any one could have done it wisely, and safely, and beneficially, He could have done it. He had no thought but what was wise, no will but what was good, no fear but what was sinless, no desire but what was honourable, and yet He hesitated not to take His thoughts, desires, and will, and bind them with cords for sacrifice, and lay them upon the altar. If Christ could deny Himself, what passion of ours is too noble, what pleasure too precious, what desire too honourable, what prejudice and possession too precious to be fastened to the Cross for ever, if the will of God and the claims of brotherly kindness and charity demand the sacrifice? 2. A Christ without self-denying love could not have saved the world. A church without self-denying love cannot carry on the work of Christ. (1) And if our selfishness give birth to uselessness He will visit it with the punishment of perpetual uselessness. The man that did not use his talent, that did not employ his power for doing good, was punished in part by having the capacity for doing good taken away. (2) On the other hand, if our generous love give birth to usefulness, our usefulness shall be rewarded by greater capacity and wider sphere for service. The man that had turned his talent into six talents, he was not welcomed into rest, he was welcomed into wider work. (*C. Vince.*)

Ver. 4. **For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.**—*The Holy Scriptures*:—I. WHAT WERE THE SCRIPTURES GIVEN US FOR? 1. "Our learning." They are God's gift of light to a dark world when it had lost its way and was groping for the wall like the blind. (1) As an intellectual boon alone we should prize them. They answer man's inquiries as to the origin and history of the world, &c., in a way which meets the anticipations of a reasoning and reflective mind. (2) For our learning also on great moral subjects; how, *e.g.*, it comes that there are found in man such strange contrarieties of good and evil; and how, even while hedged in by influences which bind him to the present world,

he is conscious of unextinguishable aspirations after a higher and unseen life. (3) For our learning, as respects God Himself. "The world by wisdom knew not God." My mind pants for information about Him in the relations of parent, benefactor, judge. But all this must come from Himself alone. Neither nature, nor reason, nor observation, nor conscience could ever have helped us to it. 2. That through the patience and comfort which these Scriptures afford to the troubled soul we might have hope. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God; that is, of the glory which shall be revealed hereafter—the mighty developments of the world unseen. And this hope comes to us, is strengthened and kept alive by patience and comfort of the Word. The Word is our hope, especially in all times of affliction. Over and over again, in the 119th Psalm, does David back up his petitions for all good with the argument, "according to Thy Word," and he well knew his warrant. The Scriptures were given for that very end. II. THE FEELINGS WITH WHICH WE SHOULD APPROACH THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES. 1. Deep reverence. God will have His name hallowed, for it is holy; but His Word He seems to make holier still—"Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name." We are to receive it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God. 2. Diligence, earnest effort, a high appreciation of its worth. "I rejoice at Thy Word as one that findeth great spoil," says David. As in prayer, we have not, because we ask not; so in our Scripture reading, it is to be feared, we find not because we seek not. Is there any human science in which proficiency would ever be obtained if its first principles were to be studied with no more of concentration and of thought than most men give to the study of the Bible? If we will not be at the pains to learn, we can have no claim either to the comfort or the hope. 3. Strong faith, large expectations, a deep persuasion of the sufficiency of Scripture for all its ordained and appointed ends. A book is commonly nothing more than just an assemblage of words which move not, neither do they speak; but the Word of God has all the properties of the most active and powerful agents in the universe. It is a spirit, and can breathe; it is a fire, and can consume; it is a hammer, and can crush; it is a sword, and can cleave; it is a rain, and can soften; it is leaven, and can spread; it has a vitality which can be claimed by nothing else. The only limit which can be put to its power is that imposed by our own unbelief. If not restrained by this, every promise becomes endorsed with a yea and amen. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Inspiration*:—The connection between the different parts of the text is this: First, the apostle lays down a Christian's duty (vers. 1, 2). After that he brings forward, as the sanction of that duty, the spirit of the life of Christ (ver. 3). Next he adds an illustration of that principle by a quotation from Psalm lxix. Lastly, he explains and defends that application (ver. 4). So we have the principle upon which the apostles used the Old Testament, and we are enabled to understand their view of inspiration. This is the deepest question of our day. In the text we find two principles. I. THAT SCRIPTURE IS OF UNIVERSAL APPLICATION. 1. This passage quoted was evidently spoken by David of himself. Nevertheless, Paul applies it to Christ. Nay, more, he uses it as belonging to all Christians (ver. 4). "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation." Had the Psalm applied only to David, then it would have been of private interpretation; instead of which, it belongs to humanity. Take, again, the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. That seemed limited to Jerusalem; but had it ended there, then you would have had a prophecy of private—*i.e.*, peculiar, limited—interpretation: whereas our Redeemer's principle was this: that this doom pronounced on Jerusalem was but a specimen of God's judgments. The judgment coming of the Son of Man takes place wherever there is evil grown ripe, whenever corruption is complete. 2. Promises and threatenings are made to individuals, because they are in a particular state of character; but they belong to all who are in that state, for "God is no respecter of persons." (1) Take an instance of the state of blessing. There was blessing pronounced to Abraham; but the whole argument in this Epistle is, that it was made, not to his person, but to his faith. "They who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." (2) Take the case of threatening. Jonah went through Nineveh, proclaiming its destruction; but that prophecy was true only while it remained in its evil state; and therefore, as they repented, and their state was thus changed, the prophecy was left unfulfilled. In 1 Cor. x. the apostle tells of the state of the Jews in the wilderness, and shows that whosoever shall imitate them, the same judgments must fall upon them. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples." "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." (3) Take a case, applied not to nations,

but to individuals. Hebrews xiii. quotes from the Old Testament, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"; and the apostle's inference is, that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper," &c. Now this was a promise made to Jacob; but the apostle does not hesitate to appropriate it to all Christians; for it was made, not to Jacob as a person, but to the state in which Jacob was; to all who, like Jacob, are wanderers and pilgrims in the world. The promises made to the meek belong to meekness; the promises made to the humble belong to humility. 3. And this it is which makes this Bible *our* Book. The teachers, the psalmists, the prophets, and the lawgivers of this despised nation spoke out truths that have struck the key-note of the heart of man; and this not because they were of Jewish, but just because they were of universal application. The orator holds a thousand men for half an hour breathless; but this Word of God has held a thousand nations for thrice a thousand years spell-bound; held them by an abiding power, even the universality of its truth; and we feel it to be no more a collection of books, but *the* Book. II. THAT ALL SCRIPTURE BEARS TOWARDS JESUS CHRIST. 1. St. Paul quotes these Jewish words as fulfilled in Christ. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." We must often have been perplexed at the way in which the apostles quote passages in reference to Christ, which originally had no reference to Him. In our text, *e.g.*, David speaks only of himself; and yet St. Paul refers it to Christ. Promises belong to persons only so far as they are what they are taken to be; and, consequently, all unlimited promises made to individuals can only be true of One in whom that is fulfilled which was unfulfilled in them. Take the magnificent destinies Balaam promised to the people whom he was called to curse. Those promises have never been fulfilled, nor does it seem likely that they ever will be fulfilled in their literal sense. To whom, then, are they made? To Israel? Yes; so far as they developed God's own conception. Balaam says, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Is this the character of Israel, an idolatrous and rebellious nation? Jesus is that pure and spotless One. Christ is perfectly all that every saint was partially. Consequently St. Paul would not read the Psalm he quotes as spoken only of David. The promises are to the Christ within David; therefore they are applied to the Christ when He comes. 2. Now, let us extract from that this application. Scripture is full of Christ. From Genesis to Revelation everything breathes of Him—not every letter of every sentence, but the spirit of every chapter. Get the habit of referring all to Christ. How did He feel?—think?—act? So then must I feel, and think, and act. Observe how Christ was a living reality in St. Paul's mind. "Should I please myself?" "For even Christ pleased not Himself." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Scripture the birthright of all:*—I. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE UNIVERSAL STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES. 1. There are different modes in which God might be pleased to reveal Himself to mankind. (1) In creation God hath disclosed His power, wisdom, and love. This is an open volume, which all men may read. (2) God has revealed Himself in Providence. And here, too, the revelation is plainly intended for all. This Book, so far as it goes, is unsealed. 2. Observe at this point, however, that neither volume discloses what it is most essential for a human being, such as man actually is, to be informed of. And therefore it was quite to be expected beforehand that God should make some clear revelation of His will and design respecting our race. This revelation we have in His Word. (1) Now, would it not be an anomalous thing if, unlike the other and less perfect disclosures, this were to be stamped with exclusiveness? (2) If the Scriptures were intended for only partial perusal, we might surely expect that this limitation would be clearly defined in the Scriptures themselves. (*a*) The Scriptures have been in use from the earliest times by the people, as well as by the priesthood (Deut. xvii. 18; xxxi. 11, &c.). (*b*) The people were commended for studying them, and sometimes rebuked for the neglect of them. How repeatedly Christ, in addressing the people, presupposes them to have read the records of inspiration! "Have ye not read?" or, "Have ye never read?" The New Testament Scriptures contain not one single intimation to any other effect than that they were to be universally studied. In the Acts we find the Bereans commended for the study of them. When St. Paul "charges" the Thessalonians, "by the Lord, that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren," and tells the Colossians, "when this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea." The Revelation opens with, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." II. THE OBJECTIONS

THAT ARE ALLEGED AGAINST THE UNIVERSAL STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES. 1. The best that Rome has to allege is, "the evil which has in some instances arisen, and may again arise, from the indiscreet use of God's Word." We freely admit that many have drawn from the Scriptures doctrines opposed to God's truth, and pernicious to man's welfare. But what if some few have perverted a blessing into a curse? Is that any reason for withholding the blessing from others? Who made the Romish Church the guardian to step in and prevent the Scriptures from working injury? We know that in support of this objection the Romanists will appeal to the assertion of St. Peter, that in Paul's Epistles "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." But this proves that in Peter's time the Scriptures were in free use, or how could the abuse of them have arisen? But if they are "unlearned and unstable" persons who wrest the Scriptures, surely it were a strange mode of rectifying the mischief to keep them still in a state of ignorance. And the apostle does not throw out the shadow of a hint that the Scriptures were not to be used. 2. But the objection referred to is not the real secret of Romish opposition to the free use of the Bible. That Church dares not let her doctrines and her practices be brought to the standard of Scripture. She knows that if people are allowed to read the Holy Scriptures otherwise than by the permission of, and under colour of the interpretation of the priest, they will find the doctrine of justification stated very differently from the way in which it is put forth in her teaching. They will find far less made of outward means, and a vast deal more of the inward and spiritual grace; far less of human, and a vast deal more of a Saviour's merits. (*Bp. R. Bickersteth.*) *Dispositions for reading the Scripture:*—The book of nature obscured by the Fall. Philosophy from it could not find out God. The Scriptures given to reveal Him. Let us consider—I. THE GRAND DESIGN OF THE SCRIPTURE. 1. For the communication of knowledge of—(1) God. (2) Ourselves. (3) The invisible world. 2. For our comfort in every state of mind and condition of life. 3. For our hope. The hope of eternal life, founded on true faith as a solid foundation. Knowledge, consolation, and hope constitute the things for which we should look. II. THE DISPOSITIONS WITH WHICH WE SHOULD READ THEM. 1. Attention. (1) The mind should be free from vain and worldly thoughts and disordered passions. (2) The most convenient seasons should be chosen to answer this end. (3) To secure attention, we should consider it is God who speaks. (4) Read with deliberation. (5) Not read too long a time. Historical books an exception. 2. Frequently, regularly, and diligently, they should be read. This will—(1) Give familiarity. (2) Enable us to meditate on them. (3) Increase our relish for them. (4) Enlarge and confirm our knowledge. Thus, as we take food for nourishment every day, so shall the soul receive its proper aliment which will nourish it unto life eternal. 3. With judgment and discrimination. (1) Distinguish what is God's Word. Malachi quotes a speech of the wicked, "It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinances?" St. Paul quotes the Epicureans, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Job's friends were wrong, and "God was wroth with them because they had not spoken the thing that was right." (2) Put no forced construction on any part that will contradict other portions. As—"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart." "Christ has delivered us from the law." "No man liveth and sinneth not." "By the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified." "God cannot tempt any man" to evil. "We are under the law to Christ." "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." Faith must produce the fruit of good works. (3) Consider the speaker; the characters spoken to; the occasion; the allusion; the end; the connection; the meaning in similar passages. Instance of mistake, St. Paul's advice against marriage in 1 Cor. vii., whereas he only speaks in reference to a peculiar time of persecution (ver. 26). (4) Above all, the improvement must be observed. "These things are written that ye might believe." Also St. James, "If any man be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man," &c. 4. We must read them with faith and submission. (1) Receive them as if we saw everything with our eyes, or heard God speak. (2) Avoid vain reasonings, needless curiosity, and rash inquiries, which often terminate in doubt and infidelity. (3) We must receive precepts and promises, commands and threatenings, however contrary to our passions. 5. We must read them with piety and prayer. (1) Pious intention, a love of truth, a disposition to believe and obey. "An honest and good heart, which hears the word and keeps it, and brings forth fruit with patience." (2) Prayer before reading, accompanying it, and ending. This disposition will

make us attentive, diligent, discriminating, thoughtful, and faithful. (*D. Macafee.*)
That we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.—*The twofold genealogy of hope* :—There is a river in Switzerland fed by two uniting streams, bearing the same name, one of them called the "white," one of them the "grey," or dark. One comes down from the glaciers, and bears the half-melted snow in its white ripple; the other flows through a lovely valley, and is discoloured by its earth. They unite in one common current. So in these two verses (4 and 13) we have two streams, a white and a black, and they both blend together and flow out into a common hope. So both halves of the possible human experience are meant to end in the same blessed result. I. We have, first of all, THE HOPE THAT IS THE CHILD OF THE NIGHT, and born in the dark. "Whatsoever things," says the apostle, "were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience"—or rather the brave perseverance—"and consolation"—or rather, perhaps, encouragement—"of the Scriptures might have hope." The written word is conceived for the source of patient endurance which acts as well as suffers. This grace Scripture works in us through the encouragement which it ministers in manifold ways, and the result of both is hope. So, you see, our sorrows and difficulties are not connected with, nor do they issue in, bright hopefulness, except by reason of this connecting link. We cannot pass from the black frowning cliffs on one side of the gorge to the sunny tablelands on the other without a bridge—and the bridge for a poor soul from the blackness of sorrow to the smiling pastures of hope, with all their half-open blossoms, is builded in that book, which tells us the meaning and purpose of them all, and is full of the histories of those who have overcome, have hoped and not been ashamed. Scripture is given, among other reasons, that it may encourage us, and so may produce in us this great grace of active patience, if we may call it so. The first thing to notice, then, is how Scripture gives encouragement—for such, rather than consolation, is the meaning of the word. It seeks to make us strong and brave to face and to master our sorrows, and to infuse into us a high-hearted courage. It would be a poor aim to comfort only; but to encourage—to make strong in heart, resolved in will, and incapable of being crushed in spirit by any sorrows—that is a purpose worthy of the Book, and of the God who speaks through it. This purpose, we may say, is effected by Scripture in two ways. It encourages us by its records, and by its revelation of principles. Who can tell how many struggling souls have taken heart again as they pondered over the sweet stories of sorrow subdued which stud its pages, like stars in its firmament? We are all enough of children to be more affected by the living examples than by dissertations however true. But Scripture has another method of ministering encouragement to our often fainting heart. It cuts down through all the complications of human affairs, and lays bare the innermost motive power. It not only shows us in its narratives the working of sorrow and the power of faith, but it distinctly lays down the source and the purpose, the whence and the whither of all suffering. They all come from my Father, and they all come for my good. With that double certitude clear before us, we can face anything. The slings and arrows that strike are no more flung blindly by an "outrageous fortune," but each bear an inscription, like the fabled bolts, which tells what hand drew the bow, and they come with His love. Then, further, the courage thus born of the Scriptures produces another grand thing—patience, or rather perseverance. It is something to endure, and even while the heart is breaking, to submit unmurmuring; but, transcendent as it is, it is but half of the lesson which we have to learn and to put in practice. For if all our sorrows have a disciplinary purpose, we shall not have received them aright unless we have tried to make that purpose effectual by appropriating whatsoever spiritual teaching they each have for us. Nor does our duty stop there. It is that dogged persistence in plain duty, that tenacious continuance in our course, which is here set forth as the result of the encouragement which Scripture gives. Many of us have all our strength exhausted in mere endurance, and have let obvious duties slip from our hands, as if we had done all that we could do when we had forced ourselves to submit. Submission would come easier if you took up some of those neglected duties, and you would be stronger for patience if you used more of your strength for service. Take the encouragement which Scripture gives, that it may animate you to bate no jot of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer right onward. And let the Scripture directly minister to you perseverance as well as indirectly supply it through the encouragement which it gives. It teaches us a solemn scorn of ills. It summons us to diligence by the visions of the prize, and glimpses of the dread fate of the slothful, by all that is blessed in hope and terrible in foreboding,

by appeals to an enlightened self-regard, and by authoritative commands to conscience, by the pattern of the Master, and by the tender motives of love to Him to which He Himself has given voice. All these call on us to be followers of them who, through faith and perseverance, inherit the promises. But we have yet another step to take. These two, the encouragement and perseverance produced by the right use of Scripture, will lead to hope. The lion once slain houses a swarm of bees, who lay up honey in its carcase. If we can look back and say, "Thou hast been with me in six troubles," it is good logic to look forward and say, "and in seven Thou wilt not forsake me." II. So much then for the genealogy of one form of the Christian hope. But we have also A HOPE THAT IS BORN OF THE DAY, the child of sunshine and gladness. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope." So then "the darkness and the light are both alike" to our hope, in so far as each may become the occasion for its exercise. We have seen that the bridge by which sorrow led to hope was perseverance and courage; in this second analysis of the origin of hope, joy and peace are the bridge by which faith passes over into it. Paul has found, and if we only put it to the proof we shall also find, that the simple exercise of simple faith fills the soul with "all joy and peace." Gladness in all its variety, and in full measure, calm repose in every kind, and abundant in its still depth, will pour into my heart as water does into a vessel, on condition of my taking away the barrier and opening my heart through faith. "Trust and thou shalt be glad." In the measure of thy trust shall be the measure of thy joy and peace. Notice, further, how indissolubly connected the present exercise of faith is with the present experience of joy and peace. It is only while we are looking to Jesus that we can expect to have joy and peace. There is no flashing light on the surface of the mirror, but when it is turned full to the sun. Any interruption in the electric current is registered accurately by an interruption in the continuous line, perforated on the telegraph-ribbon; and so every diversion of heart and faith from Jesus Christ is recorded by the fading of the sunshine out of the heart, and the silencing of all the song-birds. Always believe and you will always be glad and calm. Observe, again, how accurately the apostle defines for us the conditions on which Christian experience would be joyful and tranquil. It is "in believing," not in certain other exercises of mind, that these blessings are to be realised. And the forgetfulness of that plain fact leads to many good people's religion being very much more gloomy and disturbed than God meant it to be. For a large part of it consists in sadly proving their spiritual state, and gazing at their failures and imperfections. There is nothing cheerful and tranquillising in grubbing among the evils of your own heart, and it is quite possible to do that too much and too exclusively. Then, the second step in this tracing of the origin of the hope which has the brighter source, is the consideration that the joy and peace which spring from faith, in their turn produce that confident anticipation of future and progressive good. Herein lies the distinguishing blessedness of the Christian joy and peace, and that they carry in themselves the pledge of their own eternity. It is not true of this gladness that "Hereof cometh in the end despondency and madness," but its destiny is to "remain" as long as the soul in which it unfolds shall exist, and "to be full" as long as the source from which it flows does not run dry. So that the more we experience the present blessedness, which faith in Christ brings us, the more shall we be sure that nothing in the future, either in or beyond time, can put an end to it; and hence a hope that looks with confident eyes across the gorge of death to the "shining tablelands" on the other side, and is as calm as certitude, shall be ours. I saw, not long since, in a wood a mass of blue wild hyacinths, that looked like a little bit of heaven dropped down upon earth. You and I may have such a tiny bit of heaven itself lying amidst all the tangle of our lives, if only we put our trust in Christ, and so get into our hearts some little portion of that joy that is unspeakable, and that peace that passeth understanding. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Patience, comfort, and hope from the Scriptures*:—1. This is the text from which old Hugh Latimer was wont to preach continually in his latter days. Certainly it gave him plenty of sea room. 2. The apostle declares that the Old Testament Scriptures are meant to teach New Testament believers. Things written aforetime were written for our time. The Old Testament is not outworn; apostles learned from it. Nor has its authority ceased; it still teaches with certainty. Nor has its Divine power departed; for it works the graces of the Spirit in those who receive it—patience, comfort, hope. 3. In this verse the Holy Ghost sets His seal upon the Old Testament, and for ever enters His protest against all undervaluing of that

sacred volume. 4. The Holy Scriptures produce and ripen the noblest graces. Let us carefully consider—I. THE PATIENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES. 1. Such as they inculcate. Patience—(1) Under every appointment of the Divine will. (2) Under human persecution and satanic opposition. (3) Under brotherly burdens (Gal. vi. 2). (4) In waiting for Divine promises to be fulfilled. 2. Such as they exhibit in examples. (1) Job under divers afflictions triumphantly patient. (2) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob patiently waiting as sojourners with God, embracing the covenant promise in a strange land. (3) Joseph patiently forgiving the unkindness of his brethren, and bearing the false accusation of his master. (4) David, in many trials and under many reproaches, patiently waiting for the crown, and refusing to injure his persecutor. (5) Our Saviour patient under all the many forms of trial. 3. Such as they produce by their influence. (1) By calling us to the holiness which involves trial. (2) By revealing the design of God in our tribulations, and so sustaining the soul in steadfast resolve. (3) By declaring to us promises as to the future which make us cheerfully endure present griefs. II. THE COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES. 1. Such as they inculcate. (1) They bid us rise above fear (Psa. xlvi. 1–3). (2) They urge us to think little of all transient things. (3) They command us to find our joy in God. (4) They stimulate us to rejoice under tribulations, because they make us like the prophets of old. 2. Such as they exhibit. (1) Enoch walking with God. (2) Abraham finding God his shield and exceeding great reward. (3) David strengthening himself in God. (4) Hezekiah spreading his letter before the Lord. Many other cases are recorded, and these stimulate our courage. 3. Such as they produce. (1) The Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, uses them to that end. (2) Their own character adapts them to that end. (3) They comfort us by their gentleness, certainty, fulness, graciousness, adaptation, personality, &c. (4) Our joyous experience is the best testimony to the consoling power of the Holy Scriptures. III. THE HOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES. Scripture is intended to work in us a good hope. A people with a hope will purify themselves, and will in many other ways rise to a high and noble character. By the hope of the Scriptures we understand—1. Such a hope as they hold forth. (1) The hope of salvation (1 Thess. v. 8). (2) "The blessed hope, and the appearing of our Lord" (Titus ii. 13). (3) The hope of the resurrection of the dead (Acts xxiii. 6). (4) The hope of glory (Col. i. 27). There is a good hope, a lively hope, the hope set before us in the gospel. 2. Such a hope as they exhibit in the lives of saints. A whole martyrology will be found in Heb. xi. 3. Such a hope as they produce. (1) We see what God has done for His people, and therefore hope. (2) We believe the promises through the Word, and therefore hope. (3) We enjoy present blessing, and therefore hope. Let us hold constant fellowship with the God of patience and consolation, who is also the God of hope; and let us rise from stage to stage of joy as the order of the words suggests. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Holy Scriptures a source of comfort*:—There is much in this text as to the Scriptures. 1. Written for our learning. 2. Help to patience. 3. Full of comfort. 4. Support of hope. Let us take one branch—the "comfort of the Scriptures." Whatever are our burdens, there is comfort here. I. ARE WE BURDENED UNDER A SENSE OF SIN? Many are so, like David (Psa. li.). The Bible does not make light of this, but rather reveals the greatness and number of our sins. Yet it is full of comfort, telling of the way of forgiveness, pointing to the fountain opened. It is a proclamation of mercy, a message—yea, many messages—from a loving Father. II. ARE WE TROUBLED BY DIFFICULTIES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONFLICT? There is "comfort in the Scriptures." 1. The Bible tells of "grace sufficient for thee." 2. It points to One who can be touched in our behalf, who is our Captain and Deliverer. 3. It gives bright examples, too, of many who "out of weakness were made strong." III. ARE WE ANXIOUS ABOUT TEMPORAL AFFAIRS? How many words of direction and encouragement meet us! Promises in the sermon on the mount, and lessons from the lilies and the fowls. Invitations to cast every care on Him who careth for us. In the Scriptures also the veil over the future is uplifted, and the better and enduring inheritance exhibited. IV. ARE WE SUFFERING FROM BEREAVEMENT? With our Bible in hand we suffer not as others who have no hope. Our minds are diverted from second causes to "It is the Lord." We read the eleventh chapter of John, and are soothed by the sympathy there manifested. V. ARE WE BURDENED WITH FEAR OF DEATH? There is still comfort in the Scriptures. Only let us come to Him in whom is salvation, and then the last enemy is destroyed. They promise victory (1 Cor. xv.); a house not made with hands (2 Cor. v.); a prepared place (John xiv.). No evil to be feared (Psa. xxiii.), and from the Apocalypse gleams of

glory to be seen. (*J. Lancaster, M.A.*) *The Scriptures the foundation of Christian hope, and patience a means of it:*—These words in their connection show us that Christ and the great truths of Christianity are to be found where a superficial observer would not expect to find them. The preceding verse, quoted from Psa. lxix. 9, would appear to be meant only of David; and yet the apostle was taught to consider them as also referring to Christ, of whom David was a type. We have similar instances in Psa. xxii. 8, 18; lxix. 21; xi. 6, 7; cii. 25, 26. Indeed, our Lord Himself intimates that He is the great subject of the Old Testament (John v. 39). I. WHAT IS THE "HOPE" OF WHICH THE APOSTLE SPEAKS, AND HOW IT APPEARS THAT IT IS OF IMPORTANCE WE SHOULD POSSESS IT. 1. It will be readily allowed that spiritual and eternal, not carnal and temporal, things are the objects of a Christian's hope—viz., God and His salvation (Lam. iii. 26), or the privileges and blessings of the gospel. 2. But as the subjects of this hope are already believers in Christ (Eph. i. 3–7; Col. i. 13), the attainment of these things is not properly the object of their hope, for these are already possessed; but a continuance of these blessings, together with guidance, protection, succour, and consolation in all difficulties and trials, timely deliverance from them, perfect holiness and meetness for heaven (Gal. v. 5), perseverance in grace, and, especially, eternal life (Titus i. 2), or the glory of God (Chron. v. 2). 3. The Christian hope is an earnest desire after this, in consequence of a discovery of its great excellency, by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). Thus the first Christians (Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 4–8), and even pious Jews, expressed their desire (Psa. xvii. 15; lxxiii. 24). 4. It is, moreover, a well-grounded and lively expectation of it, arising from our being entitled to it—(1) As justified (Titus iii. 7). (2) As being children and heirs (Rom. viii. 17). (3) As being, in a measure at least, prepared for it, in proportion to our sanctification and recovery of God's image (Col. i. 12). (4) As having an earnest of it (Eph. i. 14), and being in the way to it. 5. The fruits of this hope are joy (chap. v. 1, 2), gratitude (1 Pet. i. 3), humility, and patience (1 Thess. i. 3), not being weary of well-doing (Gal. vi. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 58), aspiring after complete purity (1 John iii. 3). 6. Hence we learn the vast importance of this hope; it is closely connected with the whole of religion. (1) The Christian life is a voyage, and hope an anchor (Heb. vi. 19), which we may not seem to want when wind and tide are for us; but when they are against us, it will be necessary to preserve us from losing the way we have made, from getting aground on the sand-banks of this world, from being dashed on the rocks of pride and self-confidence, or swallowed up in the whirlpools of despondency. (2) Christianity is a warfare: if righteousness be a breastplate, &c., hope is a helmet; it defends the head, where any injury received would be peculiarly dangerous. II. THE PROVISION GOD HAS MADE FOR OUR ATTAINING THIS HOPE IN GIVING US THE SCRIPTURES. 1. The Scriptures reveal the great object of this hope, and bring life and immortality to light, which neither the light of nature nor any other religion can do. 2. They discover the foundation on which we must build it—the death and resurrection of Christ. (1) These seal the doctrine which informs us about eternal life and the way to it, and so remove the first great hindrance to our hope—our ignorance, and unbelief. (2) They expiate sin and procure our forgiveness, and so remove the second hindrance—our guilt and condemnation. (3) They procure for us the Holy Spirit, which removes the third hindrance—our depravity. (4) Christ, as "the first-fruits of them that sleep," is our forerunner, giving us an example of immortality being destined for man. 3. They furnish the seed and ground, as of faith, so of hope, in their doctrines, precepts, and promises, laying a foundation for faith, the root of hope, and showing us the way in which we may arrive at the object of it. 4. They furnish us with many and very bright examples (Heb. xi. 13, 16, 26). III. THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH WE MAY RETAIN AS WELL AS ATTAIN IT. "Through patience," &c. 1. In one point of view patience is the effect of hope; in another it is a cause. An appetite for food is an effect of health, and yet a cause of it; an inclination and ability to use exercise and be active is an effect of health, and yet a cause thereof. And thus may we say of patience. Thus it is mentioned as a fruit of hope (1 Thess. i. 3) and as a cause of it (Rom. v. 2). 2. As to the respects in which patience is necessary, there must be—(1) A patient investigation and study of the Scriptures. (2) A patient progress through the various parts of Christian experience; we cannot step at once from our first awakening into glory. (3) A patient exercise of all our Christian graces as occasions call them forth. (4) A patient performance of all Christian duties (Rom. ii. 7; Matt. vii. 21; Heb. v. 9; Rev. xxii. 14). (5) Above all, a patient endurance of afflictions, which are chastisements of our

faults, trials of our grace, purifying fires; in this respect especially we have need of patience (Heb. x. 36). (6) But the word here used also means enduring, persevering to the end. In all these respects patience must minister to hope, and be a cause of an increase and confirmation of it. 3. But how shall this "patience have its perfect work" in us? Through the consolation of the Scriptures. They must be the medicine and food, the strength and refreshment of our souls. (*J. Benson.*) *The Bible* is—1. A lesson book of instruction. 2. A school of patience. 3. A well-spring of comfort. 4. A solid foundation of hope. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Bible*:—In it—I. WE CONVERSE WITH THE PAST—acquiring lessons of—1. Instruction. 2. Patience. 3. Experience. II. WE FIND COMFORT FOR THE PRESENT. III. WE DERIVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. (*Ibid.*) *The value and use of the Bible*:—I. THE BIBLE COMES TO US with three great powers, each of which is a guarantee of its truth, and should cause us to value it above all other books. It comes to us with the power of—1. Tradition. Sayings that are handed on by word of mouth become altered; and so doubtless it would have been with God's words had He not caused them to be written, and then to be delivered to appointed guardians, charged to keep them inviolate. We should thank God, then, that He has given us His holy Church, Jewish and Christian, to be "a witness and keeper" of His Word, thereby enabling us to know that, in believing it, we are not following "cunningly devised fables." 2. Prophecy. The Bible contains the history not only of the past and present, but also of the future. And we feel sure that all that is predicted will be fulfilled, just because all that was prophesied concerning the Jews, and Jerusalem, and Christ has been fulfilled. And then, if the prophecies of the Bible are true, all else which it contains, we may be sure, is true. 3. Edification. Parts of the Bible may be hard to understand, but none, however unlearned, ever yet studied it, prayerfully and humbly, without finding that it built them up in faith and love. Did ever you find any other book like it in this respect? II. HOW, THEN, SHOULD WE USE THE BIBLE SO AS TO PROVE THAT WE REALLY VALUE IT? 1. We should read it every day. Although we talk much about the blessing of an "open Bible," yet to a large number the Bible is kept like some rare treasure to be looked at, not used. It is a very good thing to read the Bible through continuously, endeavouring to grasp the teaching as a whole. But it is a good thing also every day to read a few verses, that all day long we may have in our minds some word of God to rest upon. And if we can commit them to memory, so much the better. Then, in time, we should have our minds stored with holy thoughts, and when Satan approached, "the sword of the Spirit" would be ready to our hand. 2. We should read with the definite desire of hearing God's voice. And this implies that we must read in a humble and teachable spirit; not approaching the Bible with our minds prejudiced, or that we may find some confirmation for our own theories and practices, but saying simply, "Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?" 3. In order that, in the reading of the Bible, we may thus listen for and respond to the voice of God, we must prepare our hearts and minds by earnest prayer. 4. As the Bible is the best book of private devotions, use it as such. 5. Do not be perplexed because there are some things in the Bible which you cannot understand. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." 6. Try to see Jesus there, and to realise the work that He accomplished and the example that He set. (*J. Beeby.*) *The Old Testament: its trustworthiness, value, and purpose*:—The apostle's purpose in making the quotation of ver. 3 was to bring about a more brotherly feeling between the two great divisions of the Roman Church (ver. 1). He might have illustrated his point by referring to many acts in our Lord's life, but he refers to a passage in Psa. lxix. instead. But although David in it is describing his own troubles, a Jewish Christian would not have been surprised at St. Paul's applying the words to our Lord, for he would have known that some Jewish books already understood these words of the promised Messiah; but a convert from heathenism would have had many difficulties to get over in accepting this. "Why should a psalm written by David, and referring to David's circumstances more than a thousand years before, be thus used to pourtray the life and character of Jesus?" This difficulty Paul meets by laying down a broad principle which includes a great deal else besides. "Whatsoever things," &c. Consider some of the truths which this statement seems to imply. I. THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. 1. Unless a book or a man be trustworthy, it is impossible to feel confidence in it or in him, and confidence is the very first condition of receiving instruction to any good purpose. Just as wilful sin is incompatible with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul, so invoracity is incompatible with the claim of a book to have been inspired by the Author of all

truth. Thus in the Book of Deuteronomy, long addresses are ascribed to Moses, and Moses describes a series of events of which he claims to have been an eye-witness. If, then, these addresses and narratives were composed by some Jew, who lived many centuries after Moses, and imposed the book upon the conscience of the Jewish people as the work of Moses himself, such a representation is irreconcilable with the veracity of the book. Or if a striking prediction in Dan. viii. about Antiochus Epiphanes was really written after the event, the book in which it occurs is not a trustworthy book. Unless there be such a thing as inspiration of inveracity we must choose between the authority of some of our modern critics and any belief in inspiration—nay, more, any belief in the permanent value of the Scriptures as source of Christian instruction. Nobody now expects to be instructed by the false Decretals. Certainly every trustworthy book is not inspired; but a book claiming inspiration ought at least to be trustworthy, and a literature which is said to be inspired for the instruction of the world must not fall below the level which is required for the ordinary purposes of human intercourse. 2. For Christians it will be enough to know that our Lord has set the seal of His infallible sanction on the whole of the Old Testament. He found the Hebrew canon just as we have it, and He treated it as an authority which was above discussion. Nay, more, He went out of His way to sanction not a few portions of it which our modern scepticism too eagerly rejects. When He would warn His hearers against the dangers of spiritual relapse, He bade them remember Lot's wife; when He would point out how worldly engagements might blind the soul to the coming judgment, He reminds them how men ate and drank, &c., until the day that Noah entered the Ark; when He would put His finger on that fact in past Jewish history which, by its admitted reality, would warrant belief in His own coming resurrection, He points to Jonah three days and nights in the whale's belly; when standing on the Mount of Olives with the Holy City at His feet, He would quote that prophecy, the fulfilment of which would mark for His followers that this impending doom had at last arrived, He desires them to flee to the mountains, when they shall see "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the Holy Place." The trustworthiness of the Old Testament is inseparable from the trustworthiness of our Lord. II. THAT THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES HAVE A WORLD-WIDE AND ENDURING VALUE. Some instruction, no doubt, is to be gathered from the literature of every people, but on the other hand, there is a great deal in the very finest uninspired literature that cannot be described as permanently or universally instructing; and, therefore, when the apostle says of a great collection of books of various characters and dates, and on various subjects, that whatsoever was contained in them had been set down for the instruction of men of another faith and a later age, we think it an astonishing assertion. Clearly, if the apostle is to be believed, these books cannot be like any other similar collections of national laws, records, poems, and proverbs. There must be in them some quality or qualities which warrant this lofty estimate. And here we may observe that as books rise in the scale of excellence, they tend towards exhibiting a permanence and universality of interest. They rise above the local and personal incidents of their production; they show qualities which address themselves to the minds and heart of the human race. This is the case within limits of our own Shakespeare. And yet by what an interval is Shakespeare parted from the books of the Hebrew Scriptures! His great dramatic creations we feel are only the workmanship of a very shrewd human observer, with the limitation of a human point of view, and with the restrictive moral authority which is all that the highest human genius can claim. But here is a Book which provides for human nature as a whole, which makes this profession with an insight and faithfulness that does not belong to the most gifted. Could any moral human author ever have stood the test which the Old Testament has stood? For what has it been to the Jewish people through the tragic vicissitudes of their wonderful history—to Christendom for nineteen centuries? It has formed the larger part of the religious note-book of the Christian Church, it has shaped Christian hopes, largely governed Christian legislation, supplied the language for Christian prayer and praise; the noblest and the saintliest souls have fed their souls on it. Throughout the Christian centuries the Old Testament has been a mine constantly worked, and far to-day from being exhausted. Its genealogies, apparently so long and so dry, may remind us when we examine the names attentively of the awful responsibility which attaches to the transmission of the gift of life, of a type of character which we had ourselves perchance modified, to another, and, perhaps, a distant generation; or sometimes they suggest the care with which all that bears upon the human ancestry of our Lord and

Saviour was treasured up in the records of the people of revelation. Those minute ritual directions of the law should bring before us first one and then another aspect of that to which assuredly they point—the redeeming worth of our Lord Jesus Christ. III. THAT A SECOND OR DEEPER SENSE OF SCRIPTURE CONSTANTLY UNDERLIES THE PRIMARY LITERAL, SUPERFICIAL SENSE. 1. Nobody, of course, would ever expect to find the second sense in an uninspired book, however well written. In Macaulay's History, *e.g.*, we read what he has to say about the events which he describes, and there is an end to it. But this is not true of the Old Testament Scriptures. In the account in Genesis of Abraham's relations with Hagar, Sara, Ishmael, and Isaac, the apostle bids us see the Jewish and the Christian Covenants, and the spiritual slaves of the Mosaic law, and the enfranchised sons of the mother of us all. And in like manner St. Paul teaches the Corinthians in his First Epistle to see in the Exodus and in the events which followed it, not a bare series of historical occurrences, but the fellowship of Christian privileges and of Christian failings. 2. The neglect of this secondary and spiritual sense of Scripture has sometimes led Christians to mis-apply the Old Testament very seriously. Thus, for instance, both the soldiers of Raymond of Toulouse and the Puritans appealed to the early wars of the Israelites as a sanction for indiscriminate slaughter. Dwelling on the letter of the narrative they missed its true and lasting but deeper import, the eternal witness that it bears to God's hatred of moral evil, and the duty of making war upon those passions which too easily erect their Jericho or their Ai within the Christian soul itself, and are only conquered by resolute perseverance and courage. 3. This second sense of Scripture is especially instructive as a guide to the knowledge and love of Christ, who is the end as of the law, so of the whole of the Old Testament, to every one that believeth. Prophecies such as Isaiah's of the virginal birth, and of the Man of Sorrows, or of Psa. xxii. and cx., can properly be referred to no one else. But there is much which has a primary reference to some saint, or hero, or event of the day, which yet in its deeper significance points on to Him. All this great deliverance from Egypt and Babylonia, foreshadowed a greater deliverance beyond; all these elaborate rights of purification and sacrifice, which have no meaning apart from the one sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and that succession of saints and heroes who, with all their imperfections, point onwards and upwards to One who dignifies their feebler and broken lives by making them in not a few respects anticipations of His glorious self. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The Bible meets life's deepest necessities*:—The psalmists never hesitated to say that the Bible, as they had it, met all life's deepest necessities: "This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy word hath quickened me" (Psa. cxix. 50); "I remember Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself" (Psa. cxix. 52); "Unless Thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction" (Psa. cxix. 92); "Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet Thy commandments are my delights" (Psa. cxix. 143). A book of which all this can be said the world will not willingly let die. Whatever is held by the heart is held longest. The friend that will sit up all night when we are in pain and weariness is not a friend we can easily cast off. Many a summer-holiday acquaintance we can well dismiss; but the friend that knows us, that sticketh closer than a brother, that is the same in winter and in summer, that is tenderer in affliction even than in joy, is a friend whose name will stand at the top, and will survive the going away of many whose affection was superficial, and whose relation to us, though ostentatious, was flimsy. If the psalmists could say all this, what can we say? If the dawn was so beautiful, what of the mid-day? If the spring was so trim, what of the harvest? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Comfort of the Scriptures*:—The best commentary upon the Bible is experience. The man who can stand up and say, "I have been in affliction, sorrow, darkness, weakness, poverty, and the Bible has proved itself to be a counsellor and light and guide and friend," is one of the best annotators the Bible ever had. (*Ibid.*) *Patience, comfort, hope*:—Among the manifold changes and chances of this mortal life, there are three things which we all need, and which, the more we have, the happier we shall be. These are patience, comfort, and hope. The three are closely connected. Hope produces patience, and in the patience of hope there is comfort amid all the trials of life. All these three are to be sought from God. 1. Patience. How much need we all have of it! How it sweetens life and lessens its ills! On the other hand, what mischief impatience does! Patience finds difficulties in God's Word, mysteries too deep for human intellect. Impatience turns away in a rage from these and takes refuge in the dreary darkness of unbelief. But patience waits in quiet trust upon God for mysteries to be unfolded. Patience is not blind to the

many dark problems in the history of the world and in human nature. It sees them. It grieves over the slow progress of good, the seeming triumph of evil. But impatience scoffingly denies that there can be a God and a superintending Providence. 2. Comfort. Ah, what a rich store of that is to be found in the Scriptures of God! There the soul that is weighed down by the burden of its sin, the heart that is broken learns how though its sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. There the afflicted learn that they are not suffering under the strokes of an angry God, but that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." They see the Captain of their salvation made perfect through sufferings. 3. Hope. Ah, how richly hope is sustained by the glorious promises of which the Scriptures are full! (*J. E. Vernon.*)

Vers. 5-7. **Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded.**—*The God of patience*:—When we say God is patient four things are implied. I. PROVOCATION. Where there is nothing to try the temper there can be no patience. Humanity provokes God. The provocation is great, universal, constant. Measure His patience by the provocation. II. SENSIBILITY. Where there is no tenderness or susceptibility of feeling, there may be obduracy and stoicism, but no patience. Patience implies feeling. God is infinitely sensitive. "Oh, do not this abominable thing," &c. III. KNOWLEDGE. Where the provocation is not known, however great, and however sensitive the being against whom it is directed, there can be no patience. God knows all the provocations. IV. POWER. Where a being has not the power to resent an insult or to punish a provocation though he may feel it and know it, his forbearing is not patience, it is simply weakness. He is bound by the infirmity of his nature to be passive. God is all powerful. He could damn all His enemies in one breath. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Patience of God* (text and Nahum i. 3):—I. THE NATURE OF THIS PATIENCE, OR SLOWNESS TO ANGER. 1. It is a modification of the Divine goodness. While goodness respects all creatures, patience has as its object only the sinner. 2. This patience is not the result of ignorance. Every transgression is in full view of Him who is one Eternal Now. And yet the Lord delays His thunders! 3. This perfection does not result from impotence (chap. ix. 22; Numb. xiv. 17). 4. Neither does it result from a connivance at sin, or a resolution to suffer it with impunity. 5. It is grounded on the everlasting covenant, and the blood of Jesus. Why was not patience exercised to the fallen angels? Because Jesus had not engaged to atone for them, as He had engaged to become the surety of man. II. SOME OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF IT. 1. When our first parents sinned, patience held them in being, gave them an opportunity of securing a better Eden, and pointed them to that Messiah who should repair the ruins of the fall. 2. When the old world had corrupted its way before God, for 120 years He bore with its enormities, sent His Spirit to strive with them, and His messengers to warn them. 3. When the Canaanites indulged in every abomination, He delayed for four hundred years to inflict on them the punishments they deserved. 4. When the Gentile nations, instead of adoring the God of heaven, had placed the vilest passions and the grossest vices in the seat of the Divinity, the Lord "left not Himself without witness" (Acts xiv. 17). 5. When the Israelites, notwithstanding His numberless miracles and amazing mercies, rebelled against Him, did He not bear with them? But why do I mention particular examples? There is not a spot on our globe, there is not an instant that has elapsed, there is not a human being that has existed, that does not prove the forbearance of our God. Consider the number, the greatness, and the continuance of the provocations against Him by His creatures whom He hath surrounded with blessings, for whose redemption He gave His Son. 6. Consider the conduct of God towards those whom He is compelled ultimately to punish. Before the judgment He solemnly and affectionately warns them. If they are still obstinate, He delays, gives new mercies, that their souls at last may be touched. If He must punish, He does it by degrees (Psa. lxxviii. 38). If at last He must pour out His vengeance upon the incorrigible sinner, He does it with reluctance. "Why wilt thou die?" "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" III. THE REASONS WHY HE EXERCISES SUCH LONG-SUFFERING. Lovely as is this attribute, its exercise has often appeared mysterious to the pious, and has been abused by the sinner. Yet a little reflection would have convinced them that in this, as in all the other proceedings of His providence, the manifold wisdom of God is shown. He is patient—1. From His nature (Lam. iii. 33). 2. That this perfection may be glorified. There can be no exercise of it in heaven, since there will be nothing to require it; none in hell, since there will be nothing

but wrath (Isa. xlviii. 9). 3. In consequence of the prayers of pious ancestors, and of the promises made to them and their offspring after them. Ah! careless children of pious parents, you know not how much you are indebted to them. 4. From the mixture of the wicked with the pious, and the near relations subsisting between them. From love to His dear children, He spares His enemies (2 Kings xxii. 18, 20). 5. Because the number of His elect is not yet completed, and because many of the descendants of these wicked men shall be trophies of His grace. Had a wicked Ahaz been cut off at once, a pious Hezekiah would never have lived and pleaded the cause of God. 6. Because the measure of their sins is not yet filled up (Zech. v. 6, &c.). 7. That sinners may be brought to repentance (2 Pet. iii. 15). 8. That sinners who continue impenitent may at last be without excuse. 9. That God's power may be displayed; the greatness of His protection and providence be manifested in preserving the Church in the midst of her enemies. 10. That He may exercise the trust of His servants in Him, and the "patience of His saints"; that He may call forth the graces of the righteous, and try their sincerity. IV. INFERENCES. Is God infinitely patient? 1. With what love to Him should the consideration of this attribute inspire us? 2. What a motive to the deepest repentance (chap. ii. 4). 3. Let us imitate Him in this perfection of His nature. 4. What a source of comfort is this to believers. 5. Then how patient should we be in all the afflictions with which He visits us? 6. Who, then, will not grieve at the reproaches and insults that are cast upon him? (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *The grace of patience*:—"It takes a brave soul to bear all this so grandly," said a tender-hearted doctor, stooping over his suffering patient. She lifted her heavy eyelids, and looking into the doctor's face, replied, "It is not the brave soul at all; God does it all for me." *Paul's prayer*:—1. THE TITLE HE GIVES TO GOD. "The God of patience and consolation," *i.e.*, a God that—1. Bears with us. 2. Gives us patience and comfort. II. THE MERCY HE BEGS OF GOD. 1. The foundation of Christian love and peace is laid in likemindedness. 2. This likemindedness must be according to Christ. 3. It is the gift of God. III. THE END OF HIS DESIRE. That God may be glorified—1. By Christian unity. 2. As the Father of Christ. (*M. Henry.*) *Unity*:—I. ITS NATURE. "Likeminded." II. ITS MOTIVES. 1. The character of God. 2. The mind and will of Christ. III. ITS SOURCE. God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian unity*:—1. Flows from the God of patience and consolation. 2. Is conformable to the mind and will of Christ. 3. Finds expression in the united praises of God, even the Father of Christ. (*Ibid.*) **According to Christ Jesus.**—*Jesus' view of life*:—How did the Christ look upon the lives of men? We may be sure that He saw all the strange minglings of comedies and tragedies which so confuse and exhaust us. If we feel at times the myriad multiplicity and infinite confusions of life, and wonder what it all means and is worth, we may be perfectly sure that the most sensitive and receptive soul that ever was found in fashion as a man felt life as we never have. He measured in His own experience our temptations, and His life took in Cana of Galilee, a sick room in Capernaum, the market-place before the temple, the streets of the city, the country towns by the sea, the Master in Israel, the multitude of the people, the whole world of His day and of all days—our world-age and God's eternity. Remembering thus that Jesus lived as never poet, philosopher, or novelist has lived, in the real world of human motives and hearts, with our real human life a daily transparency before His eye, open now these Gospels and see if you can find there in Jesus' view of our life, in His thought of us, any such sense of the emptiness, vanity, strangeness of life, as we have often felt resting like a shadow over our thoughts. Did not He look upon things as contradictory to goodness and God as anything we have ever seen under the sun? And with purer eyes? Did not He feel with larger sympathy and warmer heart the broken, tangled, bleeding lives of men? Did not He bear the sin of the world? Where, then, is our human word of doubt among His words? Where is the echo of man's despair among the sayings of our Lord? He could weep with those who mourned; but He spake and thought of life and the resurrection before the grave of Lazarus. You cannot say that He did not understand our sense of life's mystery and brokenness. He saw it all in Mary's tears. He read it in the thoughts of disciples' hearts. Why, then, did He never reproduce our common human weariness and doubt in His thought of life? It is not an endless wonder to Him. He sees our life surrounded by the living God. He sees, beneath our world, undergirding it, God's mighty purpose. He sees above the righteous Father. He sees the calm of eternity. And knowing life better than you or I do, knowing such things as you may have heard

yesterday or may experience to-morrow—enough sometimes to make men wonder whether there be a God, or truth, or anything of worth—Jesus Christ, in full, open view of all life, said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye believe in God; believe also in Me." We begin to come now in sight of the conclusion to which I wish to lead. The evangelists could not possibly have omitted this common human characteristic if the character of Jesus had been the creation of their own imaginations. You will find shadow after shadow of our human questioning crossing the path of Buddha, and lingering upon the heights of human genius, but not the shadow of a passing doubt or fear over all Jesus' conversation with men. How could the Son of man look thus in the joy and triumph of a God upon such a strange thing as our life is? It was because He saw the coming order and the all-sufficient grace for life. It was because He knew that He was Lord of the creation from before the foundation of the world, and the world sooner or later is to be according to Christ! According to Christ! This is the keyword for the interpretation of the creation. Everything comes right, as it takes form and being according to Christ. Everything in life or death shall be well, as it ends in accordance with Christ. This is the keynote for the final harmony—According to Christ! We shall understand life at last, we shall find all its shadows turned to light by and by, if we take up our lives and seek to live them day by day according to Christ. Every man who can read the New Testament can begin, if he chooses, to order his life according to Christ. He may not understand the doctrines. But when he goes down to his office or store, and looks his brother-man in the face, he may know what things are honest and of good report according to Jesus Christ. When he goes to his home he may know what manner of life there is according to Christ. Yes, and when trouble comes, or sickness, or we near the end, then we may know how we need not fear, nor be troubled, according to Christ. In our churches, too, we may be of many minds on many subjects, but we ought to know also how to be of the same mind, if we are willing to think and to judge all things by this one infallible rule—According to Christ. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) **That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.**—*The elements of unity*:—1. One God and Father. 2. One Lord and Saviour. 3. One heart and mind. 4. One mouth and language. 5. One object and aim. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian unanimity*:—With our mind we must think the same things, ere with our mouth we can speak the same things. Were we then more slow to speak of the things on which we differ, and more ready to speak of the things on which we agree, it would mightily conduce to the peace and unity of the visible Church. The members of the Church at Rome differed in regard both to meats and days; and Paul as good as enjoined silence about these, when he bade them receive each other, but not to doubtful disputations. But, on the other hand, he bids them join with one mouth, as well as one mind, in giving glory to God. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Christians and the glory of God*:—In explanation of the command to glorify God—it may seem strange and presumptuous to speak of such poor, sinful, worthless beings as we are, as glorifying, or as capable of glorifying God. But the perfect Christian may be compared to a perfect mirror, which, though dark and opaque of itself, being placed before the sun reflects his whole image, and may be said to increase his glory by increasing and scattering his light. In this view, we may regard heaven, where God is perfectly glorified in His saints, as the firmament, studded with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of mirrors, every one of them reflecting a perfect image of God, the sun in the centre, and filling the universe with the blaze of His glory. (*H. G. Salter.*) *The glory of God the end of man's creation*:—I have a clock on my parlour mantelpiece. A very pretty little clock it is, with a gilt frame, and a glass case to cover it. Almost every one who sees it, says, "What a pretty clock!" But it has one great defect—it will not run; and therefore, as a clock, it is perfectly useless. Though it is very pretty, it is a bad clock, because it never tells what time it is. Now, my bad clock is like a great many persons in the world. Just as my clock does not answer the purpose for which it was made—that is, to keep time—so, many persons do not answer the purpose for which they were made. What did God make us for? "Why," you will say, "He made us that we might love Him and serve Him." Well, then, if we do not love God and serve Him, we do not answer the purpose for which He made us: we may be, like the clock, very pretty, and be very kind, and very obliging; but if we do not answer the purpose for which God made us, we are just like the clock—bad. Those of my readers who live in the country, and have seen an apple-tree in full blossom, know what a beautiful sight it is. But suppose

it only bore blossoms, and did not produce fruit, you would say it is a bad apple-tree. And so it is. Everything is bad, and every person is bad, and every boy and girl is bad, if they do not answer the purpose for which God made them. God did not make us only to play and amuse ourselves, but also that we might do His will. *Glorifying God*:—The time when Venn passed from the state of nature into the state of grace seems to have been, not when he threw away his cricket bat, but when, in the exercise of his ministerial function, he was arrested by an expression in the Form of Prayer, which he had been accustomed to employ, without, however, apprehending its true import. "That I may live to the glory of Thy name," was the expression. As he read it, the thought forcibly struck him, "What is it to live to the glory of God's name? Do I live as I pray? What course of life ought I to pursue to glorify God?" The prosecution of the inquiries thus suggested led to a juster conception of "the chief end of man," which, with characteristic conscientious energy, he straightway followed out by a corresponding change in his mode of life. We can imagine with what depth of sympathy and interest this circumstance would be listened to by Lady Glenorchy, who, at a later period of his life, was Venn's intimate friend, and whose religious life, like his, was dated from her serious attention to the noble answer given to the question which stands first in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." **Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us.**—*Mutual conciliation enforced by the example of Christ*:—I. How CHRIST RECEIVED US. 1. When we were weak and guilty. 2. Freely and heartily. 3. To fellowship in glory. II. How WE SHOULD RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER. 1. Kindly, overlooking all infirmities and differences of opinion. 2. Sincerely, with the heart. 3. Into brotherly fellowship, as heirs together of the grace of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian fellowship*:—I. THE REASONABLENESS OF THIS PRACTICE, whereby it will appear to be the duty of those who profess the religion of Christ to agree together, and form themselves into particular societies. 1. Without such an agreement to unite together in the practice of Christianity, there can be no such thing as public worship regularly maintained among Christians, nor public honours paid to God in the name of Jesus. 2. Without an agreement to keep up such societies for worship, the doctrines of Christ and His gospel could not be so constantly and extensively held forth to the world, and there would be no rational hope of the continuance or increase of Christianity among men. II. THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT FOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. 1. It gives courage to every Christian to profess and practise his religion when many persons are engaged by mutual agreement in the same profession and practice. 2. It is more for the particular edification of Christians that such societies should be formed, where the Word of Christ is constantly preached, where the ordinances of Christ are administered, and the religion of Christ is held forth in a social and honourable manner to the world. 3. Such a holy fellowship and agreement to walk together in the ways of Christ is a happy guard against backsliding and apostacy, it is a defence against the temptations of the world and the defilements of a sinful age. 4. Christians thus united together by mutual acquaintance and agreement can give each other better assistance in everything that relates to religion, whether public or private. III. THE PERSONS WHO SHOULD THUS RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER IN THE LORD, OR JOIN TOGETHER IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. All that Christ has received to partake of His salvation (chap. xiv. 1–3, 17, 18). This is the general rule: but it must be confessed that there are some Christians whose sentiments are so directly contrary to others in matters of discipline or doctrine, that it is hardly possible they should unite in public worship. But let every person take heed that he does not too much enlarge, nor too much narrow the principles of Christianity, that he does not make any article of faith or practice more or less necessary than Scripture has made it, and that he does not raise needless scruples in his own breast, nor in the hearts of others, by too great a separation from such as our common Lord has received. IV. THE DUTIES WHICH PLAINLY ARISE FROM SUCH AN AGREEMENT OF CHRISTIANS TO WALK AND WORSHIP TOGETHER FOR THE SUPPORT OF THEIR RELIGION. 1. All the duties which the disciples of Christ owe to their fellow Christians throughout the world are more particularly incumbent upon those who are united by their own consent in the same religious society (Gal. vi. 10). 2. Those who are united by such an agreement ought to attend on the public assemblies and ministrations of that Church, where it can be done with reasonable convenience; for we have joined ourselves in society for this very purpose. 3. It is the duty of persons thus united to maintain their Church or society by receiving in new members amongst them by a general consent. 4. In order to keep the Church

pure from sin and scandal, they should separate themselves from those that walk disorderly, who are guilty of gross and known sins (2 Thess. ii. 6; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 7, 11, 13). 5. It is necessary that officers be chosen by the Church to fulfil several offices in it and for it. 6. It is the duty of those whose circumstances will afford it, to contribute of their earthly substance toward the common expenses of the society. And each one should give according to his ability: this is but a piece of common justice. 7. Everything of Church affairs ought to be managed with decency and order, with harmony and peace (1 Cor. xiv. 40, xvi. 14). V. REFLECTIONS. 1. How beautiful is the order of the gospel and the fellowship of a Christian Church. How strong and plain are the foundations and the ground of it. It is built on eternal reason and the relations of things, as well as on the Word of God. 2. How little do they value the true interests of Christian religion, the public honour of Christ and His gospel, or the edification and comfort of their own souls, who neglect this holy communion. 3. How criminal are those persons who break the beautiful order and harmony of a Church of Christ for trifles. 4. When we behold a society of Christians flourishing in holiness, and honourably maintaining the beauty of this sacred fellowship, let us raise our thoughts to the heavenly world, to the Church of the first-born, who are assembled on high, where everlasting beauty, order, peace, and holiness are maintained in the presence of Jesus our common Lord. And when we meet with little inconveniences, uneasiness, and contest, in any Church of Christ on earth, let us point our thoughts and our hopes still upward to that Divine fellowship of the saints and the spirits of the just made perfect, where contention and disorder have no place. (*I. Watts, D.D.*)

Vers. 8–13. **Now . . . Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision.**—*Christ a minister of the Old Testament*:—I. HE MINISTERED UNDER IT. 1. As a Jew. 2. In conformity with the law. 3. To the Jews. II. UNFOLDED ITS MEANING. As the truth of God. III. CONFIRMED ITS PROMISES. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ the bond of union* between—1. Old and New Testaments. 2. Jew and Gentile. 3. God and man. (*Ibid.*) *What is Christ?*—I. To THE JEW. 1. The example of perfect righteousness. 2. The witness of the truth of God. 3. The Fulfiller of the Old Testament. II. To THE GENTILE. 1. The personal manifestation of God's mercy. 2. The reconciler of Jew and Gentile in one brotherhood. 3. The Mediator of the New Covenant. III. To ALL MANKIND. 1. The source of hope. 2. The Prince of joy and peace. 3. The dispenser of the Holy Ghost. (*Ibid.*) **That the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy.**—*God's mercy to the Gentiles*:—1. Part of God's original purpose. 2. Predicted by the prophets. 3. Accomplished in Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Mercy*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS. II. FOR WHOM IT IS DESIGNED. III. HOW MUST IT BE MADE KNOWN? IV. WHAT IS ITS EFFECT? 1. Glory to God. 2. Joy among men. (*Ibid.*) *The praises of the Gentiles*:—1. Respect the mercy of God. 2. Are elicited by its proclamation. 3. Shall be universal—rising from many hearts—in many tongues. 4. Are especially due to Christ. (*Ibid.*) **Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people.**—"*Rejoice, ye Gentiles*":—In certain circumstances it is necessary to commit particular privileges to the custody of the few, in order that when the fulness of time shall have come such advantages may be the heritage of the many. It is not in human nature, however, to desire to share great blessings with the multitude. The spirit of monopoly is more or less natural to us all. It is one of the many ugly forms of selfishness showing itself wherever there is an advantage, say—power, territory, wealth, position, fame, knowledge—which the hand of man can grasp. Now, the extraordinary privileges which the children of Abraham possessed during many centuries made them selfish and exclusive. They did not desire that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs. It was reserved to the Son of God to make that common which had been exclusive and that universal which had been local. Referring to this the apostle saith in our text, quoting from one of the prophets, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people." The day upon which the angels sang, "Peace on earth and goodwill amongst men," the day upon which God's Son said, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," the day on which He charged the apostles to go into all the world, the day when Philip met the eunuch, and Peter visited Cornelius, and Paul turned his steps towards the Gentiles, were as early spring days in the history of the nations, giving promise that the dark and barren times of ignorance were well nigh gone, and that the desert should rejoice and blossom as the rose. I. THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN EXALTATION. What are our characteristic advantages as Christians? 1. To live under no ban or system of exclusion, as far as God's providence is con-

cerned, is cause for rejoicing. Jerusalem is no longer the place where men ought to worship. Palestine is no longer the chosen land. All the earth is hallowed ground. 2. To be turned from idols to the one true and living God is cause for rejoicing. He who worships the God who is Light becomes light. He who worships the Holy becomes holy. He who worships the God who is Love becomes love. 3. To have God speaking to us is cause for rejoicing. And God doth speak to us, Christians, by His Holy Spirit and by His Word. 4. To have a sin-offering which we may appropriate as for our sins is also cause for rejoicing. 5. To have God not only permit our worship, but seek it, is also cause for joy. 6. Moreover, not less should we rejoice in this, that Gentiles as well as Jews have become the people of God. II. THIS POSITION INVOLVES CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS. What are they? All men need the power and the riches of the Christian dispensation. No man is above the need of Christianity. No man is below its reach. Civilisation cannot take the place of the Christian dispensation. No being can make the Gentile rejoice but Jesus Christ. It strikes me that before we can pray more, give more, do more, we must rejoice more in our own privileges. Our advantages, as Christians, must be more real to us. There is great danger, not only of our underrating our own Christian advantages, but of our selfishly resting in the enjoyment of our privileges. Oh! exorcise the Jewish exclusive spirit. Exclusiveness and Christianity are as inconsistent as any two things can be. Say to others, "Rejoice with me." (*S. Martin.*) **And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse . . . in Him shall the Gentiles trust.**—*Jesus Christ the proper object of trust to the Gentiles*:—The Messiah, in prophecy, was to have dominion over the whole earth. In the preceding sentences the apostle quotes several passages relative to the admission of the Gentiles, with a view to conciliate the Jews. God, as he had previously argued, is the God, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and Isaiah had distinctly predicted the Messiah as "a root of Jesse," which, though it might appear as "a root in a dry ground," spoiled of its branches, and without appearance of its vegetating, should yet "stand for an ensign to the people." "He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust." Consider—I. THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUST. 1. This is necessary to the existence of society. The evidence of character is not the cause of our confidence in others: the first instance of trust cannot be accounted for, but as the result of Divinely implanted instinct. Children instinctively confide in their parents. All our information concerning external objects is matter of trust. The patient trusts his physician, the subject his governor; all are always trusting each other. Nothing can be more anti-social or mischievous than the violation of trust. 2. Trust supposes our own inferiority. We trust, for instruction or protection, in one whom we regard as our superior in respect to each: our reliance on him is the measure of our self-distrust. 3. What, then, is it for which the Gentiles trust the Messiah? Not for any present interest, but for our eternal destiny: it is that we may escape an evil and attain a good, not otherwise possible. II. THE QUALIFICATIONS THAT JUSTIFY OUR TRUST. Three things are required as the basis of our confidence in any being: his voluntary engagement? his probity and goodness; and his ability to fulfil the promised undertaking. Each of these exists perfect in Christ. 1. He has entered into a voluntary engagement; He has held Himself forth as the object of our trust. "I give unto My sheep," He says, "eternal life." "Every one that believeth in Me, I will raise him up at the last day." 2. His probity and goodness cannot be questioned. He bears all the marks of perfect ingenuousness; as when we find Him entreating His hearers to count the cost of becoming His disciples; or when He says, "If it were not so, I would have told you." He looked upon our race with a Divine compassion, put on our flesh, toiled, agonised, bled, and died. He was free to have left such a work alone; but He engaged in it that God might be just and sinners justified. We cannot question His sincerity or benignity. 3. Nor can we distrust His power. Can He who calmed the winds, walked the waves, raised the dead, &c., be supposed insufficient here? He who foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, the sufferings of His people, the triumph of His cause, must Himself be King of kings and Lord of lords. By rising from the dead, He proves that He has all power in earth and heaven. III. SOME LEADING PROPERTIES OF THIS TRUST IN JESUS. To be valid and saving it must be—1. A solemn, deliberate act; the effect of "seeing the Son," recognising in Him those qualities which justify unlimited confidence. You should "know whom you have believed," &c. 2. Exclusive, centred in Christ alone (Jer. xvii. 5). Trust not in any qualities or works of your own. He will never divide His glory with another.

It was the ruin of the Jews, that they went about to establish their own righteousness, while the Gentiles, ignorant of the whole business, found Him whom they sought not. 3. Humble and penitential. We must acknowledge and feel our utter unworthiness; otherwise we contradict our profession. Humility and confidence dwell together in perfect harmony. 4. Submissive and obedient. They are the foremost to fulfil the law of Christ, who place their entire affiance in Him: constrained by His love, which constrained Him to die for them, they bind His precepts on their hearts. It is a practical trust, that sets in motion all the springs of action, purifies all the powers and affections: for Christ saves by His merit those only whom He rules by His authority. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *The world trusting in Christ:*—I. THE GRAND TENDENCY OF THE RACES. To trust. 1. What creature is more dependent on nature than man? Birds, beasts, and fishes can do without him, but he is dependent upon them. 2. What creature is more dependent upon his own species? Man comes into the world the most helpless of all creatures. For years he lives by the help of others. No one is independent of his fellow. 3. What creature is more dependent on God? All live in and by Him; but man requires more from Him than any other creature, viz., spiritual illumination, strength, salvation. No wonder, then, that a being so dependent should crave for objects on which to rely. This tendency to trust explains—(1) The reign of imposture. The power of Mahomet, Confucius, the Pope, and priestcraft is begotten and nourished by man's tendency to trust. (2) The prevalence of disappointments. Why otherwise is every heart the grave of so many frustrated hopes, broken plans, and wrecked friendships? The great need of the world, therefore, is a trustworthy object. II. THE EVANGELIC PROVISION FOR THE RACE. 1. What attributes ought He to have to make all happy who trust in Him? (1) He should be all perfect in excellence. If we trust our being and destiny to the keeping of one in whom we discover moral imperfections, we shall soon grow wretched in the exercise of such trust. (2) He should be all-sufficient in resources. If we trust unboundingly in one who is not capable of taking care of us, our trust will end in agony. (3) He should be unalterable in being, character, and capacity. If we trust one who is given to change, there will be constant misgiving. 2. Now, where is the being who answers these conditions? Only in the gospel. (1) Is not Christ all-perfect, the incarnation of virtue itself? (2) Has He not all-sufficient resources? He is all-wise to guide, all-powerful to guard, all-good to bless. He is able to do "exceedingly abundant," &c. (3) Is He not unchangeable, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"? III. THE BLESSED FUTURE OF THE RACE. "In Him shall the Gentiles trust." This prediction has been partially fulfilled. Since Peter's sermon in the house of Cornelius down to this hour Gentiles have been trusting in Him. The partial fulfilment is a pledge that all men shall trust in Him. What harvests have already sprung from the one grain. When all men trust in Him, three things will be secured. 1. Spiritual peace. "He will keep them in perfect peace," &c. 2. Social unity. All men will be united to each other by being thus united to Christ. No more domestic broils, social animosities, national conflicts, or ecclesiastical strifes. 3. Moral elevation. All men being thus vitally connected with Christ, will become more and more assimilated to His moral attributes. Conclusion: Learn—1. The world's need of the gospel. If men's destiny depends upon the object of their trust and Christ is the only object of trust that can render them happy, then is not the gospel a necessity? 2. The way to preach the gospel. It is to hold Him forth, not yourself, nor your notions and theologies, but Christ as the object of the world's trust. The hungry world does not want your analysis of bread, but the "bread of life" itself. Humanity does not want our speculation about Christ, but Christ Himself. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Trusting in Christ:*—1. Man must have an object of trust. 2. Christ is the only ground of trust. 3. Shall become the trust of the world. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. **Now the God of hope.**—*The blessing given to the Church at Rome:*—I. A BENEDICTION PRONOUNCED. "Filled"—1. With what? "joy and peace in believing." 2. By whom? "the God of hope." 3. To what end? "that ye may abound," &c. II. A FACT STATED. 1. The high estimate in which Paul held the Roman converts. 2. The reminder that was needed by them, so that they should not forget God's grace. III. A GREAT PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE IMPLIED (ver. 14). The Romans were—1. Filled with knowledge. 2. Able to admonish their erring fellow Christians. (*J. Hanson.*) *Christian privileges:*—I. THE PRIVILEGES OF TRUE CHRISTIANS. 1. Joy. 2. Peace. 3. Hope. II. THE METHOD OF SECURING THEM.

1. God the source. 2. Faith in Christ the means. 3. The Holy Ghost the agent. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *A round of delights*:—1. The apostle desired for the Romans the most delightful state of mind. See the value of prayer, for if Paul longs to see his friends attain the highest possible condition, he prays for them. 2. Paul's making this state a subject of prayer implies that it is possible for it to be attained. There is no reason why we should hang our heads and live in perpetual doubt. We may not only be somewhat comforted, but we may be full of joy, &c. 3. The fact that the happy condition described is sought by prayer is a plain evidence that the blessing comes from a Divine source. Notice concerning this state:—I. WHENCE IT COMES. From "the God of hope." The connection is instructive. 1. To know joy and peace through believing we must begin by knowing what is to be believed from Holy Scripture (ver. 4). Where He is revealed as the God of hope. Unless God had revealed Himself we could have guessed at hope, but the Scriptures are windows of hope to us, and reveal the God of hope to inspire us with hope. Faith deals with the Scriptures and with the God of hope as therein revealed, and out of these it draws its fulness of joy and peace. At least three of the apostle's quotations call us to joy (vers. 10–12). 2. The apostle leads us through the Scriptures to God Himself, who is personally to fill us with joy and peace; *i.e.*, He is to become the great object of our joy. Our God is a blessed God, so that to believe in Him is to find happiness and rest. When you think of God, the just One, apart from Christ, you might well tremble, but when you see Him in Jesus, His very justice becomes precious to you. The holiness of God which aforetime awed you becomes supremely attractive when you see it revealed in the person of Jesus. How charming is "the glory of God in the face of Christ." His power, which was once so terrible, now becomes delightful. 3. God is, moreover, called the God of hope because He worketh hope and joy in us. Peace without God is stupefaction, joy madness, and hope presumption. This blessed name of "God of hope" belongs to the New Testament, and is a truly gospel title. The Romans had a god of hope, but the temple was struck by lightning, and afterwards burned to the ground. Exceedingly typical this of whatever of hope can come to nations which worship gods of their own making. The hope which God excites is a hope worthy of Him. It is a God-like hope—a hope which helps us to purify ourselves. He who graspeth this hope hath a soul-satisfying portion. It is a hope which only God would have contrived for man, and a hope which God alone can inspire in men. II. WHAT IT IS. 1. It is a state of mind—(1) Most pleasant, for to be filled with joy is a rare delight, reminding one of heaven. (2) Safe, for the man who has a joy which God gives him may be quite easy in the enjoyment of it. (3) Abiding. We may drink our full of it without surfeit. (4) Most profitable, for the more a man has of this joy the better man he will be. The more happy we can be in our God the more thoroughly will the will of Christ be fulfilled in us, for He desired that our joy might be full. (5) Which has varieties in it. It is joy and peace; and it may be either. Peace is joy resting, and joy is peace dancing. Joy cries hosanna before the Well-beloved, but peace leans her head on His bosom. We work with joy and rest with peace. (6) Which is also a compound, for we are bidden at one and the same time to receive both wine and milk—wine exhilarating with joy, and milk satisfying with peace. "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace." You shall lie down in the green pastures of delight, and be led by the still waters of quietness. 2. The joy and peace here spoken of are through believing. You come to know the God of hope through the Scriptures, which reveal Him; by this you are led to believe in Him, and it is through that believing that you become filled with joy and peace. It is not by working nor by feeling. 3. This joy and peace are of a superlative character, "Fill you with all joy." He means with the best and highest degree of joy, with as much of it as you can hold. 4. Notice the comprehensiveness of his prayer. (1) "All joy"; that is joy in the Father's love, the Son's redeeming blood, the Holy Ghost's indwelling; joy in the covenant of grace, in the promises, in the doctrines, in the precepts, in everything which cometh from God. (2) All peace—with God, of conscience, with one another, even with the outside world, as far as peace may be. 5. Observe the degree of joy and peace which he wishes for them—"that ye may be filled." God alone knows our capacity and where the vacuum lies which most needs filling. As the sun fills the world with light, even so the God of hope by His presence lights up every part of our nature with the golden light of joyous peace. III. WHAT IT LEADS TO. "Lead to? What more is wanted?" When a man brings you into a chamber vaulted with diamonds, walled with gold, and floored with silver, we

should be astonished if he said, "This is a passage to something richer still." Yet the apostle directs us to this fulness of joy and peace that we may by its means reach to something else—"that you may abound in hope," &c. How often do great things in the Bible, like the perpetual cycles of nature, begin where they end and end where they begin. If we begin with the God of hope, we are wound up into holy joy and peace, that we may come back to hope again, and to abounding in it by the power of the Holy Ghost. 1. The hope here mentioned arises, not out of believing, but out of the joy created in us by our having believed. This hope drinks its life at the fountain of personal experience. 2. The text speaks of an abounding hope. Much hope must arise to a Christian out of his spiritual joy. Grace enjoyed is a pledge of glory. Acceptance with God to-day creates a blessed hope of acceptance for ever. 3. "By the power of the Holy Ghost," is partially mentioned by way of caution, because we must discriminate between the fallacious hope of nature and the certain hope of grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Gospel blessings*:—I. THE BLESSINGS DERIVED. 1. Joy. 2. Peace. 3. Hope. II. THE SOURCE WHENCE THEY FLOW—the God of hope. III. THE MEASURE IN WHICH THEY MAY BE ENJOYED. IV. THE MEANS BY WHICH THEY ARE ATTAINED. V. THE POWER BY WHICH THEY ARE EFFECTED. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The unbounded beneficence of God in the history of a Christian*:—This is seen in:—I. THE CHARACTER HE ASSUMES TOWARDS THEM. "God of hope." In this chapter the apostle speaks of Him as the God of patience, and the God of peace. Patience implies something to provoke, viz., sin. The history of the Almighty towards us and our race is a history of patience. Peace implies benevolence, rectitude, and freedom from all anger, remorse, fear, the necessary elements of inward commotion and outward war. God is peaceful in Himself. The storms of all the hells in His great universe ruffle not the infinite tranquility of His nature. He is peaceful in His aim. The constitution of the universe, the principles of moral law, the mediation of Christ, and the work of the Spirit show, that He desires to diffuse peace throughout this stormy world. He is peaceful in His working. How quietly does He move in accomplishing His sublime decrees. But in the text He is styled, God of hope; an appellation more significant than either of the other two, and more interesting to us as sinners. It does not mean that God is the subject of hope. God is infinitely above hope; Satan is infinitely below it; this is the glory of the one, it is the degradation of the other. 1. God is the object of hope. What is hope? Is it expectation? No. We expect sorrow and death. Is it desire? No. A poor man may desire to live in a mansion, a lost spirit to dwell in heaven. But put these two things together. Hope is the expectation of the desirable—God—His favour, society, friendship. Now that God should thus reveal Himself is a wonderful exhibition of love. The mind never points its hopes to a being that it has offended; it always looks to those that it has pleased. But here is God, whom the world has injured, revealing Himself as the object of its hope. 2. God is the author of hope. Before man can possess real Christian hope he must have—(1) Ground to expect it. What reason have we to expect that the God of inflexible justice and immaculate purity will be favourable to us? Thanks be to Him, He has given us firm ground in the atonement of His Son. (2) Appetite to desire it. The reason that there is so little real Christian hope is because men do not want God. This appetite is produced by the Spirit of God. II. THE BLESSINGS HE IMPARTS TO THEM. 1. The nature of the enjoyment. "Joy and peace," *i.e.*, complete happiness. How delightful is the calm of nature after a thunderstorm! How still more precious is the peace of the empire after a long war! But how infinitely more so is the peace "that passeth all understanding!" The great causes of all mental distress are—(1) Remorse. God removes this by the application of the sacrifice of Christ. As oil smooths the troubled waters, so the atonement of Christ calms the agitated breast. "Being justified by faith," &c. (2) Anger. God takes this away, and fills the heart with love. (3) Apprehension. God removes this by assuring us of His constant presence and guardianship. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace," &c. 2. The plenitude of the enjoyment. "Fill you," &c. Not a mere taste, a transient thrill, but a fulness of deep spiritual happiness. Have you ever seen a person filled with delight? The tender mother that clasps in her arms a beloved child, &c. Now God wishes His people always to be filled with all joy—intellectual, social, religious: to have as much joy as their vessels can hold in this world. Christians have not lived up to this, and in consequence have led the world to associate the idea of sadness with that religion whose "ways are ways of pleasantness," &c. It is our duty to have joy. "Rejoice evermore," &c. 3. The condition of the enjoyment. What is this? Painful penances?

Great attainments? Difficult labours? No. "Believing." An act that can be performed at any time in any place. 4. The design of the enjoyment. That we may "abound in hope," &c. This is very remarkable. God wishes us to be filled with happiness, that we may expect the more. The more favours we receive from an individual the less we have to expect; but the reverse is the case with God. God's disposition to bestow is infinite, "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all," &c. Let us come to God with enlarged expectations. We can never weary Him, for it is His delight to give. We can never exhaust His fulness, for it is infinite. What a view does this give us of heaven! We shall be always anticipating; and the more we receive the more we shall anticipate. III. THE AGENCY WHICH HE EMPLOYS FOR THEM. "Through the power of the Holy Ghost." What an exhibition of mercy is this! Had God employed the greatest, the oldest, or the noblest spirit for this purpose, it would have been wonderful mercy; but He employs His Holy Spirit who is equal with Himself. We are not sufficiently impressed with the value of this Infinite gift. We profess to estimate the gift of His Son to bleed and die for us. True, the world could never be saved without that; but it is equally true that the world could never be saved without the operations of the Spirit. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Prayer to the God of hope:—All men desire to be happy; but very few obtain the happiness which they covet. All happiness, except that of the Christian, is but counterfeit. It is like the morning cloud and early dew. Yet even the true Christian often falls short of the blessedness which he might enjoy. I. THE ENCOURAGING CHARACTER HERE GIVEN OF GOD. This manner of speaking expresses somewhat more than if Paul had called God the Author or the Giver of Hope. It is meant to teach us that this is His distinguishing characteristic, that hope springs from Him. 1. Even if we had no revelation of His gracious purposes, the probability would be that there is hope from Him; for we, His guilty creatures, are not yet finally lost—"He hath not dealt with us after our sins." 2. This probability is, however, increased to certainty by the gospel. The great design is to encourage our hope. It reveals God's unspeakable gift to make reconciliation for iniquities. It exhibits God as a present Father and Friend, and assures an eternity of blessedness in Christ. II. THE BLESSINGS WHICH MAY BE SOUGHT FROM HIM. 1. Joy. This may be thought by the penitent too great a blessing to be expected; yet thy Lord allows thee to expect it. Nay, thou art even commanded to rejoice in the Lord. This, however, like all other duties, is hard to fulfil. We are often unfaithful; this unfaithfulness begets distrust; and this interrupts our joy in the Lord. We have, therefore, cause to pray that God would bestow on us, and preserve to us, this inestimable blessing. 2. Peace. This is a gift more common, perhaps, than the other; a gift, also, of a more uniform and abiding nature. The continuance of joy depends in some measure on bodily constitution; but the soul may enjoy peace under the greatest trials. This was, in fact, the dying bequest of Jesus—"Peace I leave with you." It is a holy calmness and tranquility, springing from faith in the promises of God. Let the apostle's example encourage you in this prayer, both for yourselves and for those whom you love. 3. Hope. Joy and peace are present blessings; but hope has respect to things future. We have already seen that the character of God is calculated to raise our expectation of these future mercies. Now, then, we must pray for strength to hope for them. We are too apt to rest satisfied with the present enjoyments; and, even when we look forward to the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, this is too often done with a cold heart and a languid eye. This is our infirmity and our sin. We ought rather to forget the things which are behind, &c. 4. The prayer of the apostle implies that we should set no bounds to our requests for these blessings. It is no scanty measure of joy, and peace, and hope, which he prays for. Hath He not said, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"? If, then, our joy, our peace, or hope be defective, we are not straitened in Him; but we are straitened in our own bowels. III. THE WAY IN WHICH WE MAY EXPECT THESE BLESSINGS TO BE COMMUNICATED. 1. On our part, Faith is the instrument. It is faith in His Word, which alone can make known to us the existence of such gifts. When, however, the discovery is made, true faith leads a man one step further, constraining him to say, "Here is all my salvation and all my desire." 2. On God's part, the power of the Holy Ghost is promised, for the communication of His gracious gifts. Faith is, indeed, the hand which grasps the gift; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally, in such kind and in such proportion, as He will. (*J. Jowett, M.A.*)

The God of hope:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS TITLE. 1. The expression is peculiar: He is termed

the God of peace (ver. 33), of grace (1 Pet. v. 10), of love and peace (2 Cor. xiii. 11), of patience (ver. 5), and the meaning is not only that He is the Author of these graces in us, but also that they exist in Him. But the case is different with respect to hope: this cannot exist in God, as He has every good in possession, and has nothing for which to hope. In this, and in this chiefly, the Creator differs from all His creatures. II. THE REASONS WHY GOD HAS THIS TITLE. 1. There is in Him the most stable foundation for the most glorious hopes to all His rational creatures. The most solid ground for hope is offered—(1) In His nature and attributes, *e.g.*, His self-existence, supremacy, eternity; His infinite power, wisdom, love and mercy, and even His justice, Christ having died. (2) In the relations in which He stands to us. What may not His offspring expect from such a Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer; His subjects from such a King; His servants from such a Master? What may not we, His children, hope for from such a Parent? (3) In what He has already done. He has given His Son for the redemption of mankind, and His Spirit's influence. And He, who withheld not His own Son, what gift can He deny? (4) In what He has promised still further to do: to receive us to be with Jesus, to raise our bodies, to give us the vision and enjoyment of Himself, and the society of saints and angels for ever! 2. He is the great object of our hope. The main thing we hope for is, the vision, love, and enjoyment of Him (Psa. lxxiii. 24). 3. He is also the Author of our hope. By freely justifying us, and by giving us peace with Him; by adopting us into His family; regenerating us by His grace; constituting us His heirs, and giving us an earnest of our future inheritance in our hearts (1 Pet. i. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 17). III. APPLICATION AND IMPROVEMENT. 1. What an antidote against—(1) Distress, on account of all present troubles (chap. viii. 16, 17; Heb. xi. 13-16). (2) Doubt, fear, despondency, and despair. 2. What a death-blow to the carnal expecters of a Mohammedan paradise! God Himself is the true object of hope. And what a help to spiritual-mindedness? How necessary the question, Are we "begotten again to a lively hope"? (*J. Benson.*) *Hope:*—This prayer is closely connected with the preceding (vers. 5, 6), and the more obvious link between them is "In Him shall the Gentiles hope"; but the note of hope had been struck before (ver. 4). The apostle, however, loses sight of the connection and gives us his solitary petition for this grace in a manner perfectly independent. Let us study the prayer in regard to—I. THE GOD TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED. Who derives many of His names from the gospel which manifests His glory. As that gospel rests on an accomplished propitiation, He is "the God of grace," "the Father of mercies"; as it displays its present effects in the soul, He is "the God of peace," and His name of names is love; as it reserves its blessedness for the future, He is "the God of hope," *i.e.*, the Fountain of the entire Christian salvation as it is not yet revealed. This includes—1. A wide range: there is hardly an aspect of the redeeming work which "the God of hope" does not preside over. His Son is "Jesus Christ which is our hope" (1 Tim. i. 1); the gospel is the foundation of a great hope (Col. i. 23); the Christian vocation is summed up in hope (Eph. i. 18); salvation is our comprehensive hope (1 Thess. v. 8). 2. An interminable perspective. The future is a glorious sequence of revelations which the God of hope has yet to disclose (Rom. viii. 20, 24). There is the hope of the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour (Titus ii. 3), the hope of the resurrection (1 Thess iv. 13), the hope of final deliverance from every evil (1 Thess. v. 8), the hope of eternal life (Rom. vii. 20), the hope of glory (Titus i. 2; iii. 7); and it would be easy to show that every one of these forms of the one great gospel blessing is referred to God as its Author (Col. i. 27; Rom. v. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 12). II. THE FULNESS OF THE BLESSING WHICH IT ASKS. Though other terms are found here, they all pay tribute to this grace. Faith is the root of hope; the peace and joy which are the fruits of faith are the nourishment of hope; and the abundance of hope is made the perfection of the Christian life as a state of probation. 1. Faith and hope are so inseparable that their only scriptural definition makes them all but identical (Heb. xi. 1); and they are one in this that their objects are invisible (chap. viii. 25). But they differ in this, that faith has to do with the present, but hope with the future; or faith brings the past and hope the future into the reality of the present moment. Faith rests upon the "It is finished" already spoken; hope rejoices in the assurance of another "It is finished" which the creation waits to hear. But faith must have the pre-eminence as the parent of hope; for while we can conceive of a faith without hope, we cannot conceive of a hope that does not believe in its object. Hence the apostle here utters his prayer in a circuitous manner, and takes faith on the way. 2. There is an evident connection in Paul's mind between the fruits of faith and

the abounding in hope. He borrows from the previous chapter (ver. 17). Peace is the blessed settlement of the controversy between God and the sinner as respects the past; while joy is the present good cheer of the soul as encompassed by mercies, but feeling the present rather than thinking of the past or future. Now these two demand a third to fill up the measure of the Christian estate; peace touching the guilty past, and joy in the fruitful present, do not so much cry out for as naturally produce good hope for the unknown future. 3. But of all these there may be measures and degrees. Nothing is more characteristic of St. Paul than his insistance on the increase even unto perfection of every grace. The notion of fulness enters into every department of his practical theology. Here we have set before us the abundance of peace, joy and hope as the result of the abounding power in us of the Holy Ghost. But the term reluctantly submits to exposition. It is chiefly to be defined by negatives, though they are positive enough for man's desire. To be filled with peace is to be dispossessed of the last residue of a servile dread before God, and to have risen beyond the possibility of unholy resentments towards man; to be filled with joy is to have vanquished the sorrow of the world, to find elements of rejoicing even in tribulation, and to possess a serene contentment that finds nothing wrong in nature, providence, or grace; to abound in hope is expressed by another word that rather brings the answer of the prayer down into the region of our own endeavour. The God of hope bestows its increase rather as the fruit of our patience and fortitude. Hence the marked allusion to the "power of the Holy Ghost." Hope is strengthened by the habits of endurance and resistance. While all graces demand His inworking, these demand His power. 4. Abounding in hope is prayed for as the end and result of the fulness of joy and peace. This indicates that these more tranquil graces are instruments for the attainment of that more strenuous grace. Joy and peace minister to hope. The assurance of reconciliation cannot rest in itself, but must muse on that which is to come; how can it but encourage the expectation of all the fruits of a justified estate? The soul, no longer weighed down under the burden of sin, by a holy necessity springs upward. Peace is not hope, but it sets hope free. So also joy, by an equally Divine necessity, encourages endurance and fortitude, and the hopeful expectation of the great release. Hope in this case ministers as it is ministered unto (chap. v. 2). Conclusion: Hope is in some sense the highest of the probationary graces. It is the servant of many of them, but is itself served by all. What would everything else be without this? The mere imagination of the withdrawal of hope withers the rest, and wraps all in darkness. Charity, of course, has the pre-eminence by every right; but as the grace of our stern probation-hope has its own peculiar pre-eminence. It imparts its strength to all other graces, so that they without it cannot be made perfect. It divides the triumphs of faith, and enters largely into the self-denials and labours of love. As it respects the present life hope is in some sense the abiding grace. Then comes a supreme moment when hope, or faith working by hope, is the only anchor of the soul; and when it has endured its final strain it will be glorified for ever. With all its fruition it will have its everlasting anticipation of glories not yet revealed. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

The secret of joy and of hope:—Joy, peace, hope: a fair triad which all men seek, and few find and retain. They are, for the most of us, like bright-winged, sweet-voiced birds that dart and gleam about us, and we hear their voices, but nets and cages are hard to find. This prayer opens up the way to find joy, peace, and hope. Notice that the text begins with "the God of peace fill you with" these things, and it ends with "through the power of the Holy Ghost." So, then, there are here three stages. There is, first, the Divine gift, which underlies everything. Then there is the human condition of making that gift our own; and then there is the triumphant hope which crowns joy and peace, and is their result. I ask you, then, to look at these three things with me this morning. I. THE ONLY SOURCE OF TRUE JOY AND PEACE IS GOD HIMSELF. The only way by which God can give any man joy and peace is by giving him Himself. No gifts of His hand, apart from Him; no mere judicial act of pardon, and removal from a state of condemnation, are of themselves enough to fill a human heart with calm gladness. And if there is ever to be tranquillity in this disturbed being of mine, if the conflict between duty and inclination, between passion and principle, between present and future, between flesh and spirit, is ever to be hushed, it must be because God dwells in us. Notice the bold emphasis of the apostle's prayer. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace." So then, where God comes and is welcomed by humble obedience and trustful love, there is a

fulness of these precious gifts. So as that a man has as much gladness and peace as he can hold. There is the difference between Christian joy and all other. In all others there is always some part of the nature lacking its satisfaction. Only when we put the colouring matter in at the fountain-head will it tinge every little ripple as it runs. Only when we have God for the joy of our hearts and the peace of our else troubled spirits will the joy be full. Otherwise, however abundant the flood, there will always be some gaunt, barren peak lifting itself parched above the rejoicing waters. No man was ever glad up to the height of his possibility who found his joy anywhere else than in God. And, then, mark that other word, too, "*all* joy and peace." From this one gift comes an infinite variety of forms and phases of gladness and peace. And so it is wise, in the highest regions, to have all our investments in one security; to have all our joy contingent upon one possession. One pearl of great price is worth a million of little ones. One sun in the heavens outshines a million stars; and all their lustres gathered together only illuminate the night, while its rising makes the day. So if we want joy and peace, let us learn that we are too great and too miserable for any but God to give it us. II. AND NOW THE HUMAN CONDITION OF THIS DIVINE GIFT OF FULL AND MANIFOLD JOY AND PEACE. "Fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Believing what? He does not think it necessary to say, partly because all his readers knew who was the object of faith, and partly because there was more prominent in his mind at the moment the act of faith itself than the object on which it rests. They who thus trust in Jesus Christ are they to whom, on condition of, and at the moment of their trust or faith, God gives this fulness of joy and peace. Altogether apart from any consideration of the thing which a man's faith grasps, the very act of trust has in itself a natural tendency to bring joy and peace. When I can shift the responsibility off my shoulders on to another's, my heart is lightened; and there comes a great calm. Christian faith does not wriggle out of the responsibilities that attach to a human life, but it does bring in the thought of a mighty hand that guides and protects; and that itself brings calm and gladness. You fathers have got far more anxious faces than your little children have, because they trust, and you are responsible for them. Trust God, and it cannot be misplaced, and the vessel can never be swept out of the centre of rest into the hurtling rage of the revolving storm around. Nor need I do more than just remind you of how, in the object that the faith grasps, there is ample provision for all manner of calm and of gladness, seeing that we lay hold upon Christ, infinite in wisdom, gentleness, brotherliness, strength. Oh, if only we keep hold of Him there can be but little in any future to alarm, and little in any present to disturb or to sadden. But note how the communication from God of joy and peace, in their fulness and variety, is strictly contemporaneous with the actual exercise of our faith. Our belief is the condition of God's bestowal, and that is no arbitrary condition. It is because my faith makes it possible for God to give me Himself that He only gives Himself on condition of my faith. You open the door, and the daylight will come in. You remove the hermetical sealing, and the air will rush into the vacuum. Only mark this, as long as you and I keep up the continuity of our believing, so long, and not one moment longer, does God keep up the continuity of His giving. Because there are such spasmodic and interrupted acts of faith on our part, we possess such transient and imperfect gifts of joy and peace. Let me drop one more word. Their are other kinds of religion and religious exercise than that of trust. There is no promise of peace and joy to them. "Fill you with all joy and peace" in poking into your own hearts to see whether you are a Christian or not. That is not the promise. "Fill you with all joy and peace" in painfully trying to acquire certain qualities, and to do certain duties. That is not the promise. III. And so, lastly, THE ISSUE OF THIS GOD-GIVEN JOY AND PEACE IS HOPE. The apostle did not tell us what was the object of the faith that he enjoined. He does not tell us what is the object of the hope either; and I suppose that is because he is not thinking so much about the object as about the thing. And this is the teaching here, that if a man, trusting in God in Jesus Christ, has all this flood of sunny gladness lying quiet in his heart, there will be nothing in any future that can alarm. For the peace and joy that God gives bear witness in themselves to their own immortality. Ah, there is a difference between all earth's gladnesses and the joys that Christian people may possess. In all earthly blessedness there blends over the unwelcome consciousness of its transiency. Therefore the best demonstration of a heaven of blessedness is the present possession of

"joy and peace in believing." These are like the floating timber and seeds that Columbus saw the day before he sighted land. But, brother, is there any reason to suppose that you will find a heaven of blessedness beyond the grave, in close contact with the things that you do not like to be in contact with now? We must begin here. We must here exercise the faith. We must here experience the peace and the joy, and then we may have the hope. Then, rich and blessed with such gifts from such a Giver, we may venture to say, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," and that hope shall not be put to shame. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christian hope*:—I. COMES FROM GOD. 1. Worldly hope rests upon favouring circumstances—our own powers. It hangs often upon a slender thread. "Hope centred in that child." How often parents with broken hearts have said that. 2. Few are atheists in theory, but many are such in their feelings. They are hopeless because they are godless. On the other hand, the Christian is first of all a believer in God as revealed in Christ. God therefore is the giver and the foundation of his hope. II. COMES "THROUGH JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING." 1. It comes not to a heart that is without faith. It comes not from a creed repeated, or held merely intellectually. It comes from a faith that yields the affections, the will, the whole life to God. Are there "Christians" without faith? Then they are also without hope. Are they without "joy and peace"? Then they are also without hope. 2. Peace and joy in believing make God known. This is the logic of the heart. "Such joy and such peace can come only from God." The joy of pardon and cleansing is the faith that only God can pardon and cleanse. 3. "Peace and joy in believing" are the firstfruits of Heaven. They are like the two faithful spies who came back loaded with the rich clusters of the promised inheritance. Larger faith, permanent faith, mean larger and more permanent hope. Being "justified by faith," our tribulations work patience, our patience experience, our experience hope. 4. And this hope is for others as well as for ourselves. The man whose hope is confined to his individual interests is not a Christian. Under the stimulus of "joy and peace in believing" we argue: "The God who has pardoned my sins can pardon others." III. IS BY THE POWER OF THE "HOLY GHOST." 1. Like all other elements of the Christian life, hope is inspired. It is not a natural impulse. The lack of hope argues, then, a lack of spiritual life. Do we find persons professing faith in Christ, and yet living drearily? It may mean enfeebled health, or overtaxed nerves. It may mean also that they have not "received the Holy Ghost." And when we remember this saintly apostle who writes of hope, yet has an enfeebled body, and nerves constantly taxed by toils and perils, we can conclude what the lack of despondent Christians most commonly is. 2. Our hope is not for the sanguine only, but for persons of every shade of temperament. Conclusion: 1. Our hope is not a selfish emotion. God never inspires mortals with any sort of selfishness, not even with religious selfishness. The hope we cherish, if it reflects the spirit of Christ, will be large-hearted. It will rest upon "the God of Hope," as the God who rules over all the world. 2. It is an exclusively Christian possession. Such is the unavoidable inference from the text. Men who are not Christians are "without God and without hope." (*E. McChesney, Ph.D.*) **Joy and peace in believing.**—*Joy and peace in believing*:—Consider—I. THE SOURCE OF THIS DESIRED GOOD. God sometimes permits the use of titles descriptive of what He is in Himself, and sometimes of names denoting His relation to His creatures. In the former sense we apply such designations as "the God of mercy," "the God of love," "the God of truth." Examples of the latter are "the God of peace," "the God of patience," "the God of all consolation." In the text He is "the God of hope," because—1. He is the Fountain from which all hope must flow. Hope, like its sister Faith, is one of those "good and perfect gifts" which, pass through what intermediate channels it may, must come down to us "from the Father of lights." And this hope, which God begets in us, is "a lively hope"—that is, God invests spiritual objects with a new attractiveness, and creates within us longing desires after their attainment. 2. He is the object on which all hope must terminate. God can never raise an expectation in His creatures for the mere purpose of disappointing them. It might be optional whether He should give to us a ground of hope or not; but having given us cause to hope, it is no longer an option whether such a hope shall be fulfilled. "God cannot deny Himself." And although God may and will take His own time, we must not, as in the case of human promises, allow the heart to sicken at hope deferred. Delays with God are but invisible means of hastening mercy. "He that believeth" must "not make haste." "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." II. THE PARTICULAR

BLESSINGS. 1. Joy is one of those early fruits of the Spirit which flow from a sense of our interest in the promises—a well-grounded persuasion of our having a part in the great propitiation. It is a joy with which "a stranger intermeddleth not," and of which even adversity depriveth us not. Hence this joy is to be distinguished from every other as having God for its object. It is not in riches, which have wings—not in honours, which may fail—not in health, which may languish, &c.; but it is Isaiah's joy when he said, "My soul shall be joyful in my God." It is the Virgin's joy when she said, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour." It is the apostle's joy when he said to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord alway." And this may serve to explain the paradox, "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." For the Christian has meat to eat that the world knows not of. 2. Peace—(1) The peace of reconciliation with a God offended. (2) The peace of conscience for a law infringed. (3) The peace of an assured conscience. The apostle would have us filled with peace—the true peace—the peace which was the Father's token, the Son's legacy, the Spirit's seal and earnest unto the day of a complete redemption. This is a "peace which the world cannot give." 3. "In believing." We might have expected "after ye have believed," as if joy and peace were not to be looked for at the outset of our Christian course, but the recompense of an advanced and established faith. But no; you should expect the blessing as you believe, and because you believe. Faith is the hand which takes the blessing at God's hand. III. THE FRUIT. 1. In ver. 4 and here the respective functions of the Word and the Spirit in our salvation are beautifully brought together. Perfectly distinct as these agencies are, yet their joint operation issues in the same result. The reason is, that one is the agent and the other the instrument in this great work. The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit"; it is that by which He works. The Word cannot convert without the Spirit; and, as a rule, the Spirit does not convert without the Word. And here the Word and the Spirit join together to make us "abound in hope." 2. What is the hope in which we are to rejoice and abound? Why, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God"; we "rejoice in hope of the glory" that shall be revealed. We "abound in hope" of entering a world without sin, suffering, and death. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The present happiness of believers*:—I. FAITH NATURALLY TENDS TO FILL THE SOUL WITH THE MOST PLEASANT AND DELIGHTFUL FULNESS, PLEASURE, AND HOPE. II. THOUGH FAITH NATURALLY TENDS TO FILL THE SOUL WITH THE MOST PLEASANT AND DELIGHTFUL FEELINGS, YET EVEN TRUE CHRISTIANS DO NOT ALWAYS FULLY ENJOY THEM. III. WE MUST LABOUR TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLES WHICH PREVENT OUR FULL ENJOYMENT OF THIS SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS. (*D. Savile, M.A.*) *Joy and peace in believing*:—There are a large number of persons who profess to have believed in Christ, but who assert that they have no joy and peace in consequence. Now I shall suppose that these are not raising this difficulty by way of cavil, and that they are not labouring under any bodily sickness such as might bring on hypochondriacal feelings. We begin with two observations—1. That joy and peace are exceedingly desirable for your own sakes and for the sake of your acquaintances, who set down your despondency to your religion. 2. Do not overestimate them; for, though eminently desirable, they are not infallible evidences of safety. Many have them who are not saved, for their joy springs from a mistake, and their peace rests upon the sand of their own imaginations. It is a good sign that the spring is come, that the weather is warm; but there are mild days in winter. A man may be in the lifeboat, but be exceedingly ill, and think himself to be still in peril. It is not his sense of safety that makes him safe. Joy and peace are the element of a Christian, but he is sometimes out of his element. The leaves on the tree prove that the tree is alive, but the absence of leaves will not prove that the tree is dead. True joy and peace may be very satisfactory evidences, but their absence, during certain seasons, can often be accounted for on some other hypothesis than that of the absence of faith. 3. Do not seek them as the first and main thing. Let your prayer be, "Lord, give me comfort, but give me safety first." Be anxious to be happy, but be more anxious to be holy. I. THE TEXT MAY BE USED TO CORRECT TWO COMMON AND DANGEROUS ERRORS. 1. That there is a way of joy and peace through self. Some look for them through good works. Now if we had never sinned, joy and peace would have been the consequences of perfect holiness; but since we have broken God's law any rational joy and peace are impossible under the covenant of works. You have broken the alabaster vase; you may preserve the fragments, but you cannot make it whole again. Many who are conscious of this say, "Then I will do my best." Yes; but a man who is drowning may say that, but it is no solace to him as the

billows close over him. Some try the plan of scrupulous observance of all religious ceremonies. These things may be good in themselves; but to rest in them will be your ruin. 2. That of turning the text upside down. There is such a thing as joy and peace in believing, and some therefore infer that there is such a thing as believing in joy and peace. You will get peace just as the florist gets his flower from the bulb; but you will never get the bulb from the flower. To trust Christ because you just feel happy is—(1) Irrational. Suppose a man should say during a panic, "I feel sure that my bank is safe, because I feel so easy about my money"; you would say to him, "That is no reason." Suppose he said, "I feel sure that my money is safe, because I believe the bank is safe." That is good reasoning. But here you put the effect in the place of the cause. If a man should say, "I have got a large estate in India, because I feel so happy in thinking about it," that is no proof whatever. But if he says, "I feel very happy, because I have got an estate in India," that may be right enough." (2) Irreverent. You say to God, "Thou tellest me to trust Christ and I shall be saved. Well, I cannot trust Christ, but I can trust my own feeling, and if I felt very happy I could believe that He would save me." (3) Egotistical. Here is a person who has the Divine promise—"He that believeth on Him is not condemned"; and instead of confiding in this, he says, "No, I shall believe nothing which I do not feel." II. THE GREAT TRUTH OF THE TEXT IS, THAT BELIEVING IN CHRIST IS THE TRUE GROUND FOR JOY AND PEACE. Believing in Christ is trusting Christ. "But what sort of a Christ is this I am to confide in? Is He worthy of my trust?" The reply is this, "We have trusted Christ"—1. Because of the wonderful union of His natures. He is God, and whatever God undertakes He is able to accomplish. But He is man, and has the requisite tenderness to deal with sinners. 2. Because of the evident truthfulness of His character. Could we suspect the Saviour we should find it difficult to trust Him; but as we cannot imagine a cause for suspecting Him, we feel shut up to believing Him. Millions of spirits bear witness to the trustworthiness of Christ. He did not fail one of them. 3. Because He was sent of God on purpose to save. Now if this be so, and Christ comes into the world and says, "Trust, and I will save you," He has God to back Him, and the honour of the Trinity is pledged to every soul that comes to Christ. 4. Because the merit of His sufferings must be great enough to save us. 5. Because He rose again from the dead, and now He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Wherefore, "He is able to save to the uttermost." III. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TEXT IS OF CONSTANT APPLICATION: JOY AND PEACE ALWAYS COME THROUGH BELIEVING. We do not always have joy and peace, but still, in the main, joy and peace are the result of believing. *E.g.*—1. As soon as a person is saved, one of the earliest evidences of spiritual life is a great battle within. Some have the notion that as soon as they are saved they shall never have to fight. Why, it is then that you begin the campaign. But you shall have joy and peace while the fighting is going on. 2. Remember that even after you are secure in Christ, and accepted before God, you may sometimes get despondent. Christian men may have a bad liver, or some trial, and then they get depressed. But what then? Why then you can get joy and peace through believing. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Joy essential*:—Joy has been considered by Christian people very largely as an exceptional state; whereas sobriety—by which is meant severity of mind, or a non-enjoying state of mind—is supposed to be the normal condition. I knew a Roman Catholic priest that was as upright and conscientious a man as I ever met, who said he did not dare to be happy; he was afraid that he should lose his soul if he was; and he subjected himself to every possible mortification, saying, "It is not for me to be happy here; I must take it out when I get to heaven. There I expect to be happy." That was in accordance with his view of Christianity. Now, it is of the utmost importance that it should be understood that health of soul and joyfulness are one and the same thing. You cannot be healthy in soul and not be happy. The true idea of religion is one that makes men happy by making them happiable; that brings them into that soul-knowledge, and into that concord of soul, out of which comes happiness. Remember that the state of suffering, if you must suffer, is the abnormal state, and that a true Christian is a man who is a happy Christian. You may say, "I cannot be happy." Very well, then you cannot be an ideal of true Christianity. You are not able to reach the highest condition of which the human soul is capable. It does not follow because a man has one leg shorter than the other, and is obliged to limp, that limping is a part of the best state of man. The man whose legs are lithe, and who can run like a roe, is a true man physically, in so far as that is concerned; and the man who is maimed, and

cannot do this, is physically so much less than a true man as he falls short of the possibility of it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *A cheerful hope:*—A hopeless life is a bitter life. Surely the heart is broken when hope is gone. Thank God, this is a rare thing. You tread upon the wild flower in the field, and for a time it is crushed; but ere the next morning comes, when the dew is on the grass, it stands erect again. And when deep trouble comes the heart may be crushed for a time, but it is generally only for a time. It is wonderful how people will recover and see there is still something left. Here is a bankrupt: his plans are frustrated, his heart is bruised. For a time he droops his head despondently, but he is soon ready to make another start. He adapts himself to his circumstances, and finds hope rising within him. "I may yet be in comfortable circumstances," he says, and again he can work with a will. It is beautiful, though sometimes very sad, to see how the poor consumptive patient will retain hope to the last. "It is only a little cold," she says; "I shall soon be strong again." "We are saved by hope," says Paul, and there is a depth of meaning in his words. People often say, "While there is life there is hope"; but would it not be truer still to say, "While there is hope there is life"? This cheerful hope is the Christian's. All things are his, not in possession, but in prospect. The heart can cherish no desire which is not abundantly spread out before him. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for those who love Him." (*J. Matthews.*) **Through the power of the Holy Ghost.**—*The power of the Holy Ghost:*—Power is the peculiar prerogative of God. "Twice have I heard this," &c. If He delegates a portion of it to His creatures, yet still it is His power. This prerogative is to be found in each of the three persons of the Trinity. We shall look at the power of the Holy Ghost in—I. THE OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAYS OF IT. 1. In creation works (Job xxvi. 13; Psa. civ. 29; Gen. i. 2). But there was one instance of creation in which the Spirit was more especially concerned, viz., the formation of the body of Christ. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow Thee," &c. 2. In the resurrection of Christ. Sometimes this is ascribed to Himself, sometimes to God the Father. He was raised by the Father, who said, "Loose the Prisoner—let Him go. Justice is satisfied." He was raised by His own majesty and power because He had a right to come out. But He was raised by the Spirit as to the energy which His mortal frame received (chap. viii. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 18). 3. In works of witnessing. When Jesus went into Jordan the Spirit proclaimed Him God's beloved Son. And when afterwards Jesus raised the dead, healed the leper, &c., it was done by the power of the Spirit, who dwelt in Him without measure. And when Jesus was gone the master attestation of the Spirit was when He came like a rushing mighty wind, and cloven tongues. And all through the apostle's ministry "mighty signs and wonders were done by the Holy Ghost, and many believed thereby." 4. The works of grace. Under the power of the Holy Ghost the uncivilised become civilised, the savage polite, the drunkard sober, &c. II. THE INWARD AND SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION. The former may be seen, this must be felt. The Holy Ghost has a power over—1. Men's hearts. Now these are very hard to affect. If you want to get at them for any worldly object you can do it. But there is not a minister breathing who can win man's heart himself. He can win his ears, his eyes, his attention; but he cannot reach the heart. The Holy Spirit can. He can "Speak with that voice which wakes the dead." 2. The will. This, especially in some men, is a very stubborn thing. I can bring you all to the water, and a great many more; but I cannot make you drink; and I don't think a hundred ministers could. But the Spirit of God can make us willing in the day of His power. 3. The imagination. Those who have a fair share of imagination know what a difficult thing it is to control. It will sometimes fly up to God with such a power that eagles' wings cannot match it; but it is also potent the other way, for my imagination has taken me down to the vilest kennels and sewers of earth. Can you chain your imagination? No; but the power of the Holy Ghost can. III. ITS FUTURE AND DESIRED EFFECTS. He has—1. To perfect us in holiness. The Christian needs two kinds of perfection—of justification in the person of Jesus, of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. At present corruption still rests even in the breasts of the regenerate, but the day is coming when God shall finish the work which He has begun. 2. To bring on the latter-day glory. 3. To raise the dead. That same power which raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies. Practical inferences: 1. The Spirit is very powerful, Christian! (1) Then you never need distrust the power of God to carry you to heaven. (2) Why should you doubt anything? 2. Sinners,

there is some hope for you. I cannot save you, but I know my Master can. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Our urgent need of the Holy Spirit* (text, and ver. 19):—1. The Spirit of God is necessary to the Church for its own internal growth in grace. Hence ver. 13, where the apostle attributes the power to be filled with joy and peace in believing, and to abound in hope, to the Holy Ghost. But the power of the Church outside, to be aggressive, is this same energy (ver. 19). If the Church is to be happy and holy within herself, and if she is to conquer the world for Christ, she must have the power of the Holy Ghost. 2. The power of the Church for external work will be proportionate to the power within. (1) There are two cottages in winter. From the roof of one the snow has disappeared, while the other is still covered with it. The reason is that there is a fire burning inside the one, but the other is untenanted. So where worldliness and formalism lie thick upon Churches there is not the warmth of Christian life within; but where hearts are warm with Divine love through the Spirit of God, evils vanish and beneficial consequences follow. (2) Here is a trouble arising between different nations. Everybody knows that one of the hopes of peace lies in the bankrupt condition of the nation which is likely to go to war. Thus is it in the great battle of truth. The strength or weakness of a nation's exchequer affects its army in its every march, and in like manner its measure of grace influences the Church of God in all its actions. (3) The rising of the Nile depends upon those far-off lakes in the centre of Africa. If there be a scanty supply in the higher reservoirs, there cannot be much overflow in the course of the river through Egypt. So if the upper lakes of fellowship with God are not well filled the Nile of practical Christian service will never rise to the flood. You cannot get out of the Church what is not in it. We must ourselves drink of the living water till we are full, and then out of the midst of us shall flow rivers of living water. Out of an empty basket you cannot distribute loaves and fishes, however hungry the crowd may be. The power of the Holy Ghost is manifested in—I. THE QUICKENING OF SOULS TO SPIRITUAL LIFE. 1. All the spiritual life which exists in this world is the creation of the Holy Spirit. Every growth of spiritual life, from the first tender shoot until now, has also been His work. You will never have more life, except as the Holy Ghost bestows it upon you. 2. The Holy Spirit is absolutely needful to make everything that we do to be alive. We are sowers, but if we take dead seed in our seed-basket there will never be a harvest. How much there is of Church work which is nothing better than the movement of a galvanised corpse. How much of religion is done as if it were performed by an automaton, or ground off by machinery. 3. As the Spirit is a quickener to make us and our work alive, so must He specially be with us to make those alive with whom we have to deal for Jesus. As well may you try to calm the tempest with poetry or stay the hurricane with rhetoric as to bless a soul by mere learning and eloquence. We are utterly dependent here, and I rejoice in this. If I could have a stock of power all my own apart from the Spirit, I cannot suppose a greater temptation to pride and to living a distance from God. II. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. This He has done by giving us His Word; but the Book, inspired though it be, is never spiritually understood by any man apart from His personal teaching. The letter you may know, but no man knows the things of God save he to whom the Spirit of God has revealed them. 2. If professors be not taught of the Spirit their ignorance will breed conceit, pride, unbelief. Sorrow too comes of ignorance. Hadst thou known the doctrines of grace thou hadst not been so long a time in bondage! Half of the heresy in the Church of God is not wilful error, but error which springs of not submitting the mind to the light of the Holy Ghost. If He will but enlighten the Church thoroughly there will be an end of divisions. Practical unity will exist in proportion to the unity of men's minds in the truth of God. 3. We find in this gracious operation our strength for the instruction of others; for how shall those teach who have never been taught? "Son of man, eat this roll"; for until thou hast eaten it thyself thy lips can never tell it out to others. It is the law of Christ's vineyard that none shall work therein till first of all they know the flavour of the fruits which grow in the sacred enclosure. An ignorant Christian is disqualified for great usefulness; but he who is taught of God will teach transgressors God's ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Christ. III. THE CREATION IN BELIEVERS OF THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. 1. We are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and so receive the nature of children; and that nature He develops and matures. This is of very great importance, for sometimes the spirit of slaves creeps over us. 2. This will have a great effect upon the outside world. A body of professors performing religion as a task can have but small effect upon

the sinners around them. But bring me a Church made up of men who know they are accepted and beloved, and are perfectly content with the great Father's will; put them down in the midst of ungodly ones, and they will begin to envy them their peace and joy. IV. SANCTIFICATION. 1. Holiness is the entirety of our manhood fully consecrated to the Lord and moulded to His will. This is the thing which the Church of God must have, but it can never have it apart from the Sanctifier, for there is no holiness but what is of His operation. 2. And if a Church be destitute of holiness what effect can it have upon the world? Scoffers utterly despise professors whose lives contradict their testimonies. V. PRAYER. 1. The strength of a Church may pretty accurately be gauged by her prayerfulness. But all acceptable supplication is wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost. 2. Furthermore, when we come to deal with sinners we know that they must pray. "Behold he prayeth" is one of the earliest signs of the new birth. But can we make the sinner pray? VI. FELLOWSHIP. 1. In the apostolic benediction we pray that we may receive the communion of the Holy Ghost. He gives us fellowship with God Himself. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. So, too, our fellowship with one another is always produced by the Spirit. 2. If you are to tell upon the world you must be united as one living body. A divided Church has long been the scorn of Antichrist. VII. IN HIS OFFICE OF PARACLETE. 1. The Holy Spirit is our friend and Comforter. Many a heart would break if the Spirit of God had not comforted it. This is a very necessary work, for if believers become unhappy they become weak for service. 2. He is the Advocate of the Church—not with God, for there Christ is our sole Advocate, but with man. The grandest plea that the Church has against the world is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. All the evidences of the truth of Christianity which can be gathered from analogy, history, and external facts, are nothing whatever compared with the operations of the Spirit of God. If we have the Spirit of God amongst us, and conversions are constantly being wrought, the Holy Spirit is thus fulfilling His advocacy, and refuting all accusers. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 14-21. **And I myself also am persuaded of you.**—*Paul's testimony to the Church in Rome:*—I. ITS SUBSTANCE. Full of—1. Goodness. 2. Knowledge. 3. Sanctified ability. II. ITS VALUE. 1. Honest. 2. Inspired. 3. Kind. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian policy:*—The apostle—I. PRAISES, but does not flatter. II. HUMBLES, but does not demean HIMSELF. III. MAGNIFIES HIS OFFICE, but not himself. (*Ibid.*) *Attributes of Christian character:*—Paul's characteristic delicacy is seen in "I myself am persuaded," &c., which corresponds with chap. i. 8. It was no flattering compliment, but a just commendation. Exhortations are to be accompanied with courtesy (1 Pet. iii. 8). Christian gifts and graces are to be duly commended. Love esteems a brother above rather than below his work (chap. xii. 10). The Romans were commended for their—I. GOODNESS. 1. Moral excellence in general (Eph. v. 9). 2. Kindness to one another in particular (2 Thess. i. 11). II. KNOWLEDGE. Spiritual knowledge is a believer's privilege. It is the Spirit's office to impart it (John xvi. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 10–12; 1 John ii. 20, 27). Such knowledge is to be greatly desired (Phil. i. 9; Col. ii. 2). All treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Christ (Col. ii. 3; 1 Cor. i. 30). This knowledge is necessary to comfort, holiness, and usefulness, and embraces all the subjects of revealed truth, doctrines, duties, dispensations, &c. The deep things of God; things freely given us of God (1 Cor. ii. 10, 12). Goodness and knowledge rarely combined in the world, but both are given in and with Christ. These are the heart and the head of the new man (Eph iii. 24), and are to be taken in their fulness (Isa. lv. 3; Luke i. 53). Paul's large hearted love is seen in the terms he employs. He delights to point to the fulness believers enjoy in Christ. They should grow in grace and knowledge. III. ABILITY TO ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER—to put each other in mind of duty as to matter by knowledge, as to manner by goodness. This may be done either publicly or privately (Heb. iii. 13, x. 25; Col. iii. 16). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Essential qualifications of a Christian minister:*—I. HE MUST DISCHARGE HIS FUNCTIONS WITH WISDOM AND HUMILITY. 1. Recognising good where it already exists. 2. Humbly putting those who have believed in mind of common duties and privileges. 3. Seeking the salvation of the unconverted—in the name and for the glory of God. II. HE MUST HAVE A SPECIAL CALL. 1. Attested by the gifts and power of the Holy Ghost. 2. Approved first of all in a narrower sphere of labour. 3. Directed especially to the ignorant and unconverted. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The publication of the gospel:*—I. ITS OBJECTS. 1. To confirm those who believe in grace (vers.

14, 15). 2. To save and sanctify the unbelieving (ver. 16). 3. To promote the cause of God (ver. 17). II. Its success. 1. Proceeds from the power of the Spirit of Christ (vers. 18, 19). 2. Reaches all who learn the knowledge of His name (vers. 20, 21). (*Ibid.*) *Mutual admonition*:—"Of his extreme humility, I experienced an instance which at once astonished and embarrassed me. One day, in conversation, Mr. Wilberforce kindly gave me some advice. I expressed my thanks, and said how much I should feel indebted if, in conversation or correspondence, he would at all times be my counsellor, and, if necessary, correct me, and point out my faults. He suddenly stopped (for we were walking together), and replied, 'I will; but you must promise me one thing.' 'With pleasure,' I answered, little thinking what it was. 'Well, then,' continued Mr. Wilberforce, 'in all your conversation and correspondence with me, be candid and open, and point out my faults.'" (*Memoir of Wilberforce.*) *Reproof should be judicious*:—Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms, not in a haughty or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely; not with sour looks, or in bitter language, for those ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best efforts of reproof; they do certainly inflame and disturb the person reproved; they breed wrath, disdain, and hatred against the reprover; but do not so well enlighten the man to see his error, or affect him with a kindly sense of his miscarriage, or dispose him to correct his fault. Such reproofs look rather like the wounds and persecutions of enmity than as remedies ministered by a friendly hand; they harden men with rage, and scorn to mend upon such occasion. If reproof doth not savour of humanity it signifieth nothing; it must be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold, and tempered with sugar, otherwise it will not go down, or work effectually. (*I. Barrow.*) **Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly.**—*St. Paul's ministry*:—I. Its general nature. 1. Paul was "the minister of Jesus Christ." The word is compounded of two words, signifying a work and that which belongs to the public; the character described, therefore, is that of one devoted to the public welfare—one called of God out of a private into a public station, who therefore became public property, and who could not, without manifest impropriety, make his own ease, or influence, or aggrandisement, the objects of his pursuit. 2. Paul was employed in this ministry for "the offering up of the Gentiles to God," in which there is an allusion to the priestly office. He evidently considered himself an evangelical priest; one who was to be the mouth of God to the people, and the mouth of the people to God. (1) He points out his duty, which was to offer the Gentiles to God. (2) He relates his experience of success—the reward of his labour, viz., the presenting to God those who were saved through his instrumentality. 3. The means by which he was thus enabled to prepare and to present to God such an acceptable oblation: by the preaching of the gospel of Christ fully. The gospel is called the gospel of God, and of Christ, both in reference to its Divine authority, and in reference to its subject: it is of God, and it speaks concerning God. II. Its sphere. 1. "Where Christ was not named." Such a people—(1) Were, of course, ignorant of Christ, of His character, relations, salvation. (2) Could not, therefore, believe in Christ. Hence they derived no spiritual benefit from His mediation; they had no hope of being with Him for ever. (3) Could not, of course, be happy. All that Christians enjoy or hope for is through Christ alone. Through Him they are justified, renewed, sanctified, consoled, strengthened, &c. Without Christ is misery. Yet such is the miserable, the awful condition of countless millions. Christ is not named among them. They have no Bibles; no gospel ministry; no Christian Sabbaths. 2. The apostle preached "from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum"; places about one thousand miles from each other. "Round about," *i.e.*, diverging into all the neighbouring places, and still pushing onwards till he had filled the country with his doctrine. This statement should be improved by us—(1) In reference to our own country. Let those who, after mature deliberation and earnest prayer, feel it to be their duty to confine themselves to domestic labours, be careful to cultivate a missionary spirit. Let them not rest till in every town and village they have "fully preached the gospel of Christ." Negligence in this respect will be criminally inexcusable in such a country as this, where no impediment is presented by the existing government, but where every facility is afforded. 2. And chiefly in reference to heathen lands. We must take care of home, but we must not overlook other places. The gospel must be planted in place after place, till its influence has spread over the whole earth. III. The testimony of God by which it was accompanied. Through "mighty signs and wonders," and "by the power of the Spirit of God"; without which all else would have been

vain. Miracles are not absolutely necessary to the success of the Christian ministry, and never were the direct causes of conversion. The faithful record of the miracles wrought in attestation of the truth in the days of the apostles, answers every purpose of miracles themselves. If the apostles had the auxiliary of miracles, we have the auxiliary of Bibles gradually translating into every language. We have the advantage of patronising governments, *e.g.*, the Spirit of God can and does convert without miracles. The larger outpourings of this Spirit must be sought in fervent, persevering prayer. IV. ITS EFFECTS. The Gentiles—1. Were made obedient. Theirs was the obedience of faith, of profession, of practice. They were Christians doctrinally, experimentally, and practically. 2. Were offered to God. The preachers made no improper use of their influence; their only aim was to bring men to know, love, and serve God. The true missionary spirit is not a sectarian spirit, and it is injured whenever it becomes so. 3. Were an acceptable offering to God. V. THE PRIVILEGE, HAPPINESS, AND HONOUR REALISED BY PAUL IN BEING PERMITTED TO EXERCISE THIS MISSIONARY VOCATION. He speaks of it as "grace given to him of God." He accounted it—1. A privilege. He does not talk of the burden, danger, or expense, but the favour to be so employed. No Christian will account it a burden to support missions, or to engage in actual service, if it be clearly his duty. The missionary has no right to talk of making sacrifices, he is but doing his duty; he is honoured by God in being allowed so to labour. Mean is that man who accounts the labours of a missionary to be mean. 2. An honour. "I have whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ." 3. A happiness. "I glory"; I exult—I rejoice greatly. Let Christians consider that a share in all this privilege, honour and happiness is offered to their acceptance. Let ministers beware how they keep back from such work. And let all Christians see to it that they promote the cause by their contributions, their influence, and their prayers. (*J. Bunting, D.D.*) **That I should be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.**—*The ministerial office*:—I. ITS FUNCTIONS. 1. To serve Christ. 2. To offer spiritual sacrifices. 3. To preach the gospel. II. ITS ACCEPTABLENESS. 1. In its power. 2. In its fruits. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian ministry*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. The word "minister" imports any one who transacts the affairs consigned to his charge, whether they be religious or civil. It is therefore used in relation to—(1) The Jewish priesthood. "Every high priest standeth daily ministering." (2) Christ, the antitype of that priesthood, who hath "obtained a more excellent ministry." (3) Angels. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (4) Civil magistrates, who "are God's ministers." (5) Persons who perform acts of kindness. "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of your spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to you in carnal things." "Epaphroditus . . . ministered to my wants." 2. The office to which the apostle refers was emphatically a sacred office, partly peculiar and temporal, consisting in the exercise of agencies which were strictly miraculous; and partly general and spiritual, consisting in the proclamation of certain truths relating to eternal interests. The former department passed away with a single generation, but the latter is to be exercised till the end of time. 3. The office is connected with "Jesus Christ." The mode in which Paul received it, as recorded by himself, is one of the most wondrous events recorded in the annals of mankind. Thenceforth, renovated by that grace of which he speaks in ver. 15, he lived as a devoted servant of Him whose cause he once laboured to destroy. It is from Christ alone that all ministers derive their existence and authority. Every one of us hath received grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Nothing can save men from the guilt of blasphemous intrusion into this office, except their introduction to it by a power which is itself Divine. Intellect, imagination, eloquence, are nothing if they be not consecrated by the Spirit of the Holy One, nothing but the trappings of the traitor. II. ITS DIRECTION. "To the Gentiles," *i.e.*, all nations who were not numbered amongst the family of Israel. The Christian economy was expressly constituted that it might be applied to the race generally. This fact had been declared in prophecy, and by the Lord Himself. 1. This commission was directed to the Gentiles with a marked and peculiar emphasis. "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Hence he exclaims, "Inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office." The ministers of Christ must be always ministers of the Gentiles until the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. When, therefore, Christian men carry forth throughout the nations the instrumentalities and energies of Christ's religion, they are doing nothing more than carrying out the essential principles of that religion. 2. This commission was needed at

this period. The Gentiles were idolaters, and their hands, in consequence, were rife with the very foulest abominations. The same spiritual need still spreads over the vast track of the Gentile nations; God's power has indeed been felt over not a few. Yet, what are these among so many? Regard the existing state of a large proportion of our own population; regard those who own the influence of a superstition, bearing the name of Christ only to blaspheme it: regard the state of those who own the power of the false prophet of Mecca; and then regard the state of those over whom there still hangs the unbroken cloud of idolatry, and what a fatal mass of need and destitution is here, pleading tenderly and powerfully that with apostolic zeal there should go forth a ministry to the Gentiles! III. ITS THEME. "The gospel"; a system which, as its chosen name imports, was glad tidings, and one which confers on man all the blessings which are identified with the happiness of his immortal nature. Note—1. Its precise adaptation to the state and the wants of those to whom it comes. It is adapted—(1) To the ignorance of the Gentiles, unfolding the light of the knowledge of the Divine truth. (2) To their guilt, setting forth the all-sufficient propitiation for sin. (3) To their pollution, purifying and refining the heart. (4) To their debasement, lifting up the fallen spirit so that man appears but a little lower than the angels. (5) To their misery, instilling the peace which passeth understanding. 2. This gospel has a certain mode of administration. It ought to be administered—(1) Faithfully. Every one of its facts and principles should be announced in the precise proportion in which we find them in the Word of God. (2) Freely. Its glad tidings must be proclaimed to all men everywhere, regarding all men as equal and inviting all to buy the great provision without money and without price. (3) Zealously. The famine is in the land, and it is for us to distribute the bread of heaven; the plague is in the city, and it is for us to apply the medicine; the wreck is upon the breakers, and it is for us to go and snatch the perishing from the billows. Where is the chilling and heartless argument that would forbid? IV. ITS RESULTS. The labours of the apostle were exercised in the express expectation that multitudes would embrace the gospel. Contemplating this result, he presents those in whom it must be accomplished under a very interesting figure—that of an oblation to God. Further, he states, this offering so presented to be "acceptable," being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, whose agency, working through the ministry, accomplished the transformation and renewal of the Gentiles—being likened unto the fire, which, under the Levitical dispensation, purified the oblation, and was at once the instrument and the token of its acceptance with God. The language before us shows—1. That the success of the Christian ministry is always to be ascribed to the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is owned in the words before us, and in vers. 18, 19. Nothing is more manifest throughout the gospel than that the Word is nothing but the instrument of the Spirit; that by the Spirit the Word is rendered effectual to renovate and to redeem. "Not by power, nor by might," &c. 2. That this success shall be of vast and delightful extent. The apostle clearly anticipates that the Gentiles should receive the gospel generally, and that it should establish a redeeming empire over all the nations. Take the series of prophecies, the heads of which he quotes in preceding verses (Psa. xviii.; Deut. xxxii.; Psa. cxi.; Isa. xi.), the application made of which by the apostle rebukes the unauthorised application made of them by theorists of our own day to the personal reign of Christ. But passing this by, they tell us of a period which is to come, by the instrumentality and agency we have described, when the reign of peace and of blessedness shall be universal (see specially Isa. xi.). 3. That this success is to redound in one mighty ascription to God. The presentation of the Gentiles as a sacrifice means that in their conversion God is to be honoured, that all the glory may be to Him. (1) Ministers, who are the instruments of this conversion, must ever render such a tribute, renouncing all pretensions; and when the sacrifice is laid upon the altar, exclaiming, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us," &c. (2) Men, who are the subjects of this conversion, must ever render such a tribute, acknowledging grace in all its sovereignty and freeness, and in each instance transforming the statement of doctrine into the song of praise—"Of His own mercy He has saved us," &c. (*J. Parsons.*) *The Christian missionary:*—I. HIS WORK. To preach the gospel to the heathen with—1. Priestly consecration. 2. Devotion. 3. Patience. II. HIS AIM. That they may become—1. An offering to God. 2. Acceptable. 3. Holy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **I have therefore whereof I may glory.**—*Of what may a Christian glory?*—I. OF FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST. 1. By faith. 2. In the service of God. II. OF THE SUCCESS WHICH GOD GIVES HIM,

because his labour—1. Is acknowledged by God. 2. Brings glory to God. III. OF THE POWER OF GOD WHICH IS IN HIM. 1. Accomplishing what is beyond the ability of man. 2. Inspiring unselfish zeal. 3. Constraining abounding charity. (*Ibid.*) *The Christian glories*:—I. IN CHRIST, as—1. The foundation of his hope. 2. The object of his love and imitation. The Head of his profession. II. IN THE SERVICE OF CHRIST as most—1. Glorious. 2. Honourable. 3. Remunerative. III. IN THE THINGS OF GOD as most—1. True. 2. Sublime. 3. Enduring. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 18, 19. **For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient.**—*Paul's success*:—I. ITS EXTENT. 1. Matter of notoriety. 2. Needed no attempt on the part of the apostle to exaggerate it. II. THE MEANS. 1. Word. 2. Deed. III. THE POWER. 1. Christ's. 2. Exerted through the Holy Spirit. 3. Displayed in signs and wonders. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The work of missions*:—I. ITS OBJECT. To make the Gentiles obedient to the gospel. II. ITS AGENCIES AND MEANS. 1. Christ, the Supreme Director, who works in us to will and to do. 2. Converted men, the instruments by word and deed. 3. The Spirit of God, the efficient power displayed in signs and wonders. III. ITS SPHERE. 1. Commencing at Jerusalem. 2. Embracing the Gentile world. 3. Throughout which the gospel must be fully preached. (*Ibid.*) *Invincible power*:—One of Satan's artifices is to induce men to attempt to reduce the gospel to a mere system within the reach of human intellect; and in this attempt they have gone far to deny and reject everything supernatural. But so long as we have the Book of God in our hands, and the power of the Spirit of God to accompany its hallowed truths, we shall dare to insist upon that gospel being "the power of God unto the salvation of every one that believeth." Paul always advocated the old-fashioned doctrine, "It is not by might or by power," &c. Note—I. THE SUCCESS OF PAUL'S PREACHING THE GOSPEL. 1. "I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 19). Then it was a pure gospel (Gal. i. 8, 9). He did not mix law and gospel together (Rom. iii. 20; Eph. ii. 8). In his preaching I mark four things prominent: and a man does not preach a pure gospel who does not preach all four. (1) Principles (1 Cor. iii. 11). What principles? They are summed up in "By grace are ye saved" (Eph. ii. 8). Well, then, there is nothing for works, as he urges elsewhere (chap. xi. 6). (2) Privileges (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 16). (3) Promises. Paul dwelt on these with delight, but he never set them forth as dependent upon creature doings, or as subject to contingencies (2 Cor. i. 20). (4) Precepts. In his Epistles, which he commences with doctrine, and proceeds with experimental godliness; but he always closes with the most pressing exhortations to "every good word and work." 2. His success in the pure preaching of the gospel. He talks about "mighty signs and wonders" and names one in the preceding verse, viz., that the Gentiles should be made "obedient by word and deed." It is one of the greatest miracles when God brings a poor ruined sinner down to obedience to the sceptre of Christ. Paul's success lay in—(1) The rescuing of Satan's slaves. (2) Refreshing and establishing the Churches of the living God, so that they were "built up in their most holy faith." (3) Thus the glorifying of Jesus' name. II. ITS EFFICIENCY. It was by the power of the Spirit of God—and truly such "mighty signs and wonders" are never accomplished by any other power. This power—1. Is invincible—it is sure to conquer, and accomplish that for which it was designed. Every other power is found to be conquerable! The power of the Holy Ghost is so invincible, that the most stubborn hearts must yield, and the most confirmed habits of idolatry, or of licentiousness, are vanquished. 2. Defies all hostility. 3. Is new creating. All creation, in a spiritual point of view, is a chaos under the fall, until the Spirit calls to a new state of existence the souls that were destitute of it. III. PAUL'S TRIUMPH CONCERNING HIS SUCCESS. 1. The wonders of God's grace, the miracles accomplished, the triumphs of the Cross, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, made Paul rejoice. Here is a criterion by which we are to judge of every faithful minister of Christ. 2. Moreover, in all his exultations he took care to neutralise and give the negative to the boastings of proud free will. (*J. Irons.*) *The power of the gospel*:—I. Its SOURCE, God. II. Its MEDIUM, the Spirit of God. III. Its EVIDENCE, "Signs and wonders"—miraculous, moral and spiritual. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.**—*The preaching of the gospel*:—I. IN WHAT LIGHT IS THE GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED BY ITS MINISTERS. Surely in the same in

which it was preached by the apostle, viz.—1. As it reveals the ground of a sinner's acceptance with God. 2. As it furnishes the only perfect rule of moral conduct, and the only efficient motive, love. 3. As it unveils the mysteries of a future state. II. How THE APOSTLE PREACHED THE GOSPEL. 1. Fully. He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God; he instructed, exhorted, and warned that they might grow in grace in the knowledge of Christ (Acts. xx. 20). The gospel should be thus fully preached. (1) Because it is connected with the spiritual and eternal interests of the hearers. A physician would be considered in the last degree criminal who trifled with his patient; but the gospel minister is charged with the cure of souls. (2) Because failure here will contract awful guilt upon the preacher (Ezek. iii. 17–21). 2. Extensively. Paul carried it from Jerusalem to Illyricum. He was not weary in well-doing, but continued active and diligent to the end. "The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." But how many places are there yet destitute of sufficient means of grace! This, then, is a call upon our zealous exertions. Conclusion: Note—1. That natural and acquired talents may be efficiently employed in promoting the cause of religion. This is well illustrated in the case of Paul. What are the talents God has entrusted to you? Wealth? Influence? Zeal? Use them all for God. 2. The gospel is worthy of all acceptation. (*D. Jones.*) *The evangelisation of the world a practicable work*:—I. LET US ESTIMATE PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK. Note—1. The length of time during which it was done. He began very shortly after his conversion, and carried it on till his martyrdom; a period of about thirty years. From those thirty years the time spent in Arabia and in prison has to be deducted. 2. The helps by which the work was done. (1) His strong faith that the gospel was the power of God to every one who believed. (2) His fervent love to Christ. (3) His great love to mankind. (4) His good natural capacity and education. (5) The gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon him so largely. (6) His companions. (7) His Roman citizenship. 3. His hindrances. (1) He was a Jew, and the great contempt in which the Jewish race was held by the Gentiles must have been an immense hindrance to the apostle as he went about preaching salvation through a crucified Jew. (2) He was by no means a strong man physically. He suffered much through infirmity of the flesh. (3) His speech was not acceptable to some. Not only did the unconverted Athenians ask, "What will this babbler say?" but there were Christians at Corinth who pronounced his speech "contemptible." (4) His ungenerous critics did acknowledge that his writings were weighty and powerful; but in regard to them he laboured under a very great disadvantage. The art of printing had not been invented, and if he wrote an epistle intended for more Churches than one, well, then, it was slowly passed from one to another. And not only so; those who had the charge of Churches did not always like to read Paul's epistles to the people (1 Thess. x. 27). Here in the apostolic age is the germ of the evil practice of withholding the Word of God from the laity. (5) Travelling in those days was very slow, difficult and dangerous, whether by land or sea. (6) The apostle chose to labour for his own support at his trade as a tent-maker. (7) He was hindered by Jews and Judaisers wherever he met with them. (8) The other apostles were not very much in sympathy with him. 4. The extent of his work. To say nothing of his preaching at Damascus and neighbourhood, from Jerusalem, substantially through Asia Minor together with Macedonia and Achaia, westward to the shores of the Adriatic, the apostle preached the gospel of Christ. "And not only so" he could say, "I have fully preached it." This work was by no means of a superficial character. As to the results, they were various; sometimes very few were converted, sometimes very many. The power of the gospel was acknowledged by enemies of Christ at Thessalonica and Ephesus. Therefore the apostle really did so evangelise that large tract of country, and if the Churches planted in those regions had done their duty, most certainly all the inhabitants would have been brought to Christ. II. FROM THIS SUMMARY OF THE APOSTLE'S WORK WE MAY LEARN THAT THE EVANGELISATION OF THE WORLD IS REALLY A PRACTICABLE THING. This is not universally acknowledged. Of course, a very large proportion of those who do not believe the gospel, utterly deny it, and there are Christian people who do not seem to be very strongly convinced of it, for if they were, surely they would think of it, pray for it, and give towards it more. 1. Here was a great work done through God's grace by this one man in a space of thirty years. Sixty periods of thirty years have passed by since. Now, supposing that, during these periods, there had been in each—that is in each generation—just one man like Paul, the world would have been more nearly evangelised than it is. 2. Compare—Paul's helps with our own.

8. Whatever Paul's helps might be, his hindrances were greater than ours. Conclusion: Then the evangelisation of the world has not proceeded just because Christians have not done their duty. But for the apathy of our forefathers we should not be held accountable. Let us cheer ourselves with the thought that the work is really practicable. And certainly the results of Christian missionary effort in modern times are such as to encourage the most sanguine hope. The evangelisation of the whole world is quite within the reach of practical religion. It can be done: it ought to be done: let it be done! (*H. Stowell Brown.*)

Ver. 20. **I have strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation.**—*St. Paul's method of procedure*:—St. Paul "strived," even made it a point of honour—matter of holy ambition to preach Christ in Christless regions, and not where his brethren had been before. Christian love is always tender of the rights of others. The truest ambition is to serve God in the best and most devoted manner. Worldly ambition is the perversion of a right principle. The objects worthiest of man's ambition and effort are—1. To bring the greatest glory to God and to Christ. 2. To impart the greatest amount of happiness to men. 3. To act with the greatest uprightness and courtesy to all. Paul's ambition the principle in every true missionary, *e.g.*, Morrison, Carey, Martyn, Judson, Williams, Moffatt. He and they sought new fields of labour. Such fields are more difficult to cultivate. More rich and abundant in the return. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *St. Paul's evangelistic methods*:—I. OBSERVE THE APOSTLE'S METHODS. 1. He went to those who needed him most. 2. Encountered the difficulties of untried ground. 3. Was ambitious to build on an independent foundation. II. INQUIRE HOW FAR THEY ARE WORTHY OF IMITATION. 1. Circumstances are now much altered; others have laboured, and we must enter upon their labours. 2. Yet neglected neighbourhoods deserve special attention. 3. Difficulties are not to be shunned. 4. Every Christian labourer, while he respects the rights of others, should aim at leaving the distinct impression of his own efforts somewhere. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Foundation work*:—1. The converse is 1 Cor. iii. 10. When Paul was converted he stood high among his own people for knowledge and executive talent. He took the lead in putting down Christianity. One would suppose that such a man, being converted, would have gone to Jerusalem, and put himself at the head of the Christian movement. But instead of this, he secretly went to Arabia, returning thence to Damascus. Then he went to Jerusalem; but he stayed there only a fortnight, and departed into Asia Minor, where he laboured for fourteen years. When he went back to Jerusalem, it was but for a brief stay; and he declares that he, by preference, preached the gospel in places where nobody had been before him. He was not after a settlement or a good salary. Paul's feeling was "I will take foundation-work. Let other men have the building upon that." 2. Now, foundation-work is always the hardest, as the figure, namely, the rearing of a structure here implies. Look at those immense stores that are going up in great cities; in proportion as they go up, they must preliminarily go down; and the consequence is that the laying of foundations is no small business. It is the most awkward, difficult, and unrequiting; when you have worked your best, your work is all hidden out of your sight, and nobody thanks you for it. 3. Now, that a man should like to do that work is scarcely possible. Offer a man a job, and ask him which part he would prefer. "The frescoing" says the man, "so that people, when they come in, should say 'What a genius!' I should like to have my name somewhere up there to show who did it." But if a genius should come and say, "Why, let me dig, and clear away, and lay the foundations, other men may build the superstructure," people would say, "There are thousands who can do that, but there is not one in a thousand who is able to do what you can do." And that is true. But is there no way in which the great mass of men can labour at foundation-work so as to be happy? This has been the problem of ages. I see streaming from Paul's example light upon it. Note—I. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH PAUL WAS ACTUATED. 1. Christian pride. (1) He never tired of declaring that he was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, not for the sake of praise, but because he would not have his message discredited. His temperament was such as would make him feel himself quite as much as he was. So he says, "I am not behind any man. I am a match for anybody." (2) Then such a man ought to do work that nobody else can do as well as he. He ought to say, "My business is to work where nobody else will work," which is in keeping with the Master's saying, "He that would be chief, let him be a servant." Thousands of

men want something to do. Oh! that the spirit of Paul was among young scholars, preachers, operatives. Then they would say, not, "Who will show me a good parish?" not, "Who will show me a remunerative, or honourable place?" but "Where is the place that other men do not want to go to? That is the place for me, because I am a man, and a Christian man." Such is the ideal of pride. People preach against pride; but the proper way to deal with it is to set it to work. 2. The feeling he never got over—that he had persecuted the Church. Most persons would have said, "Don't feel so bad about this matter, all you had to do was to turn when you saw your mistake, and quit it." That, however, did not satisfy him. Oh, to have persecuted Jesus! The more he thought of it, the worse he felt; and he, as it were, put upon himself tasks which no other man would take by way of making amends for that wrong. That is the kind of penance which one may well glory in. The humility of his fall was as magnificent as his pride. 3. Heroic, enthusiastic love of Christ. This filled his whole soul. And he felt, "There is nothing that love cannot do." The deeper the love, the more it glorifies in sacrifice. "God commendeth His love toward us," &c. And so Paul said, "Give me the hardest work, for the hardest work will show the greatest love." 4. The feeling that in doing foundation-work he was making a contribution to the happiness of his kind. This he intimates in 1. Cor. iii. 10. Elsewhere he repeatedly speaks of sowing and not reaping, the others may reap where he has sown. He felt that he was making the way easier for somebody else; that he was bearing pain that others might not have pain to bear. II. THE LESSONS THAT PAUL'S EXAMPLE TEACHES. 1. That there is to be a consecration of men's pride in work. Every true man should feel, "I bring to my work the worth that is in it, no matter how low it is. I am doing this work." False pride says to a man, "Why are you bothering yourself with these trifles? This is not becoming to you. You are a man that ought to come up higher." If, 1800 years ago you had gone to Jerusalem, who would have been the man the least to be envied there? He who was about to be led out to crucifixion. But go to Jerusalem to-day, and find a place where He put His foot, and a million pilgrims from every nation crowd thither, willing to bow down and kiss that place. Why, what did He give to it? Himself. It was the manliness and divinity of the Man, it was the soul-element which He brought to it, that consecrated the place, and made it a shrine for the eternities. When men consecrate themselves to their labour, that labour is no more ignominious. The trouble with men who labour at disagreeable work is that while the work is mean, the workman is meaner. 2. That there should be a spirit of benevolence connected with one's work. Men who are doing low work are working for their fellow-men. Do you suppose the builder of Eddystone Lighthouse, working through winter and summer to lay the foundations of that magnificent structure, never thought, "how many ships coming home from foreign lands and bringing the husband, the son, the lover, will run safely into harbour by reason of this work that I am now doing? Let men who are working in life think, for their encouragement, how many will probably be blessed by their work. When the cook raises the bread and bakes it, and it comes out of the oven, should she think, "Oh, those dear little hungry children! how happy it will make them all!" or should she think, "Well, now, my mistress cannot say but that I am the smartest cook in the kitchen"? 3. That men, as Christians, should recognise that there is a providence that supervises all human affairs. If they reflect upon what Christ said—"Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's notice"—they will derive a comfort from that source which they can obtain from no other. Take that faith into your disagreeable work, and say, "I am serving my Lord and Christ, and His providence is ordaining my work." "Lord, wilt Thou receive this mixed labour of mine?" Then He will say "Yes; inasmuch as you do the least and the lowest of these duties, I accept them." Then it becomes a question of allegiance—of love. Where there is love, it can transmute everything and make it radiant. 4. That immortality should be taken into account. Reflect "I am working but for a little time here. Ere long I shall be translated, and then the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Dives was seen far down, and the beggar was seen in Abraham's bosom. There will be a redistribution." Why is it that in circumstances of peril a poor ignorant woman, giving her life for others, doing what others would not do, becomes immortal? Grace Darling, who has saved so many lives at the risk of her own—what was it that gave her a name? It was that she heroically performed an unrequited service which was not demanded of her. Now, in this great world of unrewarded service, do you suppose God forgets? (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver 21. **But as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see.** —*Prophecy and the means of its fulfilment*:—This ambition of the apostle was the means of fulfilling a prophecy with respect to the spread of the gospel in heathen countries. Thus it is that God fulfils His predictions and His purposes. He gives His people an earnest desire to be the means of accomplishing them at the moment when He designs their accomplishment. It will be thus that the gospel will at last be effectually carried to every country under heaven. It is thus that modern missionaries have, in some measure, carried the gospel to the heathen, and although the slothfulness of the people of God in former ages is not without blame, it is because the time to fulfil God's predictions to the nations was not come that a like ambition to that of Paul was not found more generally to animate Christians. Whenever the Lord has work to do, He raises up men with a heart to perform it. This, however, is no excuse at any particular time for indifference or want of effort to spread the gospel. (*R. Haldane.*) *Missionary toil*:—I. ITS DIFFICULTIES. 1. Untried ground. 2. A foundation must be laid. 3. Particular obstacles removed, &c. II. ITS ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. The nature of the gospel. 2. Its actual successes. 3. The faithful promise of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Missions*:—I. THE OBJECT OF MISSIONARY ZEAL. To speak of Christ, and to make Christ known. If a heathen could say, "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me," how much more should our hearts burn, when we are told that the knowledge of Christ is at present limited to one-third of the human race! Surely this is an object sufficient to justify missionary efforts. II. THE CHARACTER OF MISSIONARY LABOURS. To go forth and to preach the gospel of Christ. Leaving it to Mahomet to draw the sword and enforce obedience, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, our appeal is not to secular authority, for the religion of Christ made its way against that authority. III. THE PROMISES OF MISSIONARY SUCCESS. We can appeal to "It is written," and I should like to know what nineteen centuries have done to invalidate Paul's testimony. IV. THE EXTENT OF MISSIONARY CLAIMS. If Jesus looked beyond His conflicts and trials, and saw of the travail of His soul, can we be indifferent to that on which His heart was set now He is in heaven? If He anticipated much as the reward of His labours, can we be satisfied that He should receive but little? Did He say, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me"? Shall not we aim to lift Him up by the preaching of the gospel, and say to perishing men, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world"? (*R. C. Dillon, D.D.*) *The claims of missions*:—1. There are millions still who have not heard the gospel. 2. The gospel is not only adapted to their case, but intended for them. 3. The obligation rests on us to send it. 4. The successful result is certain—predicted—exemplified. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 22-24. **For which cause I have been much hindered from coming to you.**—*Paul's desire to visit the Roman Church*:—The apostle had mentioned in the beginning of his letter this desire which he had long cherished (chap. i. 9-13). He here repeats it. The cause which had frustrated its accomplishment was the principle mentioned in vers. 20-21. New openings had presented themselves in succession, for a long period, "in these parts"—Macedonia, Achaia, and the surrounding districts, and while there remained a spot of earth which had not been visited by the gospel, he could not be satisfied. On the principle of preaching "where Christ was not yet known," it is likely he would not have thought of Rome had there been no "region beyond" into which he might be the first to carry the truth. Even Rome, the metropolis of the world, is not here his primary object. It is only secondary and by the way. He would "make his journey into Spain," and take Italy in passing (ver. 24). Here is—I. OPEN HONESTY. He does not pretend that Rome was the immediate, far less the sole, object of his proposed journey. He does not, for the sake of ingratiating himself, make more of the believers at Rome than the truth warranted. There is often great danger of insincerity arising from this cause. We wish to impress those to whom we speak or write with their holding a prominent place in our regards; and we tacitly leave them to think that we have come, or purpose coming, to see them, when the real object of our visit is different. There is too much of this kind of hypocritical courtesy even amongst Christians. When we cannot be courteous but at the expense of truth, it is better to say nothing at all. II. REAL AFFECTION, ACCOMPANIED WITH GENUINE POLITENESS—the politeness of honest feeling. It appears—1. In his confidence in their kindness to himself. He does

not hesitate to express his assurance that they would help him forward. This confidence is always one of the marks of true friendship. Whenever we feel it necessary to make many apologies for presuming to request or to expect a favour, it is a proof that friendly confidence does not exist. There is, however, a tact and propriety in such matters. There are persons who have a knack of availing themselves of the slightest acquaintance for taxing others with trouble and expense. But still, where there is true friendship, there will be mutual freedom, and the fullest confidence that it will be a pleasure to our friend to serve and to help us. Then Paul had friends at Rome to whom he could have said as he does to Philemon (ver. 19), and with regard to them all, he confided in the interest they felt about the cause in which he was engaged. This is a ground of confidence on which ministers of the gospel may often have to presume in prosecuting their work (3 John 5–8). 2. In the pleasure with which he anticipates their company, and his desire to be with them for as long a time as his ulterior objects and engagements would permit. But he does not speak of being fully satisfied, or even simply of being satisfied with their company: he speaks in the terms of heartfelt love, and yet of the most unexceptionable courtesy—"if first I be somewhat filled." He knew he might not have it in his power to stay so long as his inclination might dictate; but he hoped to be able to spend some short time with them. In many cases, there is little pleasure, and less profit, in merely seeing individuals for an hour or for a day. The most valuable characteristics require time to elicit. The superficial are soonest known, because there is least to know. If, on the other hand, they are well-known friends, the fondness of true friendship always produces a lingering reluctance to part. But duty ought to dictate against inclination. When an important object demands our presence elsewhere, however fascinating or improving the company of our friends, it must not be allowed to detain us; nor should we, in such cases, attempt to detain those whom we might even like to keep permanently. Conclusion: The apostle did see Rome. But it was in another way than he thought of. He went thither as "a prisoner in bonds." It was the way in which it pleased the Lord to send him: and he himself found that it contributed to the benefit of his cause (Phil. i. 12–14). Let us, in all our schemes, while we trust in God for their fulfilment, trust with submission, leaving everything in His hands as the Infinitely Wise. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Paul's desire to visit Rome*:—I. ITS OCCASION. 1. Not curiosity. 2. But because Rome was to him—(1) A new sphere of Christian effort. (2) An important centre of Christian influence. II. ITS INTENSITY. It survives hindrances, time, &c. III. ITS REGULATION: By other claims and duties. IV. ITS ANTICIPATED ACCOMPLISHMENT was—1. Associated with wider schemes of Christian enterprise. 2. Brightened with the hope of profitable Christian intercourse. 3. Overruled by Providence. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *A good purpose*:—I. MAY BE LONG HINDERED by many causes, even by success. II. MUST NOT BE RELINQUISHED. III. OUGHT TO BE CARRIED OUT AS SOON AS PROVIDENCE OPENS THE WAY. (*Ibid.*) *Desire*:—My brethren, we might well pause here to observe a feature of our common human nature. The impulsive force in life is not thought, not will, but desire. Thought sees its object, will gives orders with a view to attaining it; but without desire thought is powerless, and will, in the operative sense, does not exist. Desire is to the human soul what gravitation is to the heavenly bodies. Ascertain the object of a man's desire, and you know the direction in which his soul is moving. Ascertain the strength of a man's desire, and you know the rapidity of the soul's movement. In the memorable words of St. Augustine, "Whithersoever I am carried forward, it is desire that carries me." (*Canon Liddon.*) *The unwearying zeal of the Apostle Paul*:—I. ITS EVIDENCES. 1. In the foundation and direction of so many Christian Churches. 2. In sacrificing his private wishes to his great work. 3. In imperilling his own life in ministering to the saints. II. ITS SUPPORTS. The consciousness—1. That his labours were successful. 2. That he was sustained by the prayers of others. 3. That he could commend himself and others to the care of the God of peace. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *True missionary zeal* is—I. UNWEARYING. 1. It survives hindrances. 2. Desires ever to extend its sphere of operation. II. PRUDENT. It—1. Proceeds cautiously. 2. First discharging those duties which are most imperative. III. WISE. 1. It does not overlook nearer claims in its desire to meet those which are more distant. 2. Paul's zeal reached to Spain, the boundary of the then known world—but he would not pass by Rome. IV. COMPREHENSIVE. He does not forget the mother Church, but makes his new spheres of labour subservient to its prosperity—1. By

proofs that its efforts have not been unsuccessful. 2. By material help in time of need. 3. By the happy effect which the examples of the converted heathen might have upon the careless at home. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 25–27. **But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.**—*Paul's present mission*:—Paul is now at the end of his second journey to Greece, and at Corinth (chap. xvi. 1, 23). When writing to Corinth, his Jerusalem journey uncertain (1 Cor. xvi. 4). Romans, therefore, was written after Corinthians. Duty now called Paul to take money to Jerusalem rather than the gospel to Rome. There is a time for every work, and everything is beautiful in its season. To be faithful in littles is to be faithful in all. Obedience to every call of duty learned in the school of Christ. Paul's visit to Jerusalem was fraught with danger, yet was of the deepest importance, viz., to overcome the prejudices of Jewish against Gentile believers, and to unite both more closely in Christian love. Christian union to be promoted before evangelising new countries as essential to success. This mission was in accordance with the recommendation of the council of Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 10). Ministering to the poor not beneath an apostle, as it was not beneath the apostle's Master. Often the best way to the heart is to help with the hand, and the cost of sympathy is the best proof of its sincerity. What Paul could not give himself, he moved others to give. A double benefit is conferred in exciting the liberality of others. The giver and the receiver are both blessed (Acts xx. 35; 2 Cor. ix. 10–14). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Liberality to the poor*:—1. Is a Christian duty. 2. Should be a pleasure. 3. May be a debt of justice. 4. Is always a blessing. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *True Christian zeal* is ready—1. To go anywhere. 2. To engage in every good work. (*Ibid.*) *Liberality*:—To dispense our wealth liberally is the best way to preserve it and to continue masters thereof; what we give is not thrown away but saved from danger; while we detain it at home (as it seems to us) it really is abroad and at adventures; it is out at sea, sailing perilously in storms, near rocks and shelves, amongst pirates; nor can it ever be safe till it is brought into this port or insured this way; when we have bestowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unquestionable safety, in a place where no rapine, no deceit, no mishap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it. All our doors and bars, all our forces and guards, all the circumspection and vigilancy we can use, are no defence or security at all in comparison to this disposal thereof: the poor man's stomach is a granary for our corn which never can be exhausted; the poor man's back is a wardrobe for our clothes which never can be pillaged; the poor man's pocket is a bank for our money which never can disappoint or deceive us; all the rich traders in the world may decay and break, but the poor man can never fail except God Himself turn bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and intrust in His hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch; it is laid up in heaven, whither no thief can climb; where no moth or rust doth abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich, for God's providence is his estate, God's wisdom and power are his defence; God's love and favour are his reward; God's Word is his assurance, who hath said it, that "he which giveth to the poor, shall not lack"; no vicissitude of things therefore can surprise or find him unfurnished; no disaster can impoverish him, no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occasions: he that "deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand," saith the prophet. (*I. Barrow.*) *Liberality and its opposite*:—The great ocean is in a constant state of evaporation. It gives back what it receives, and sends its waters into mists, to gather into clouds, and so there is rain in the fields, and storm on the mountain, and beauty everywhere. But there are men who do not believe in evaporation. They get all they can, and keep all they get, and so are not fertilisers, but only miasmatic pools. *Consecration of carnal things*:—A missionary of the China Inland Mission says, "There is one gentleman down in the southern part of my province, a man of wealth among the Chinese, a man of landed property, but one who considers the whole of his time and influence and means must, as a matter of course, be at the feet of the Lord Jesus. We never told him that. He said, 'Why, the Lord has redeemed me; He shed His blood, He spared nothing in working out my redemption; therefore I consider that granary of mine, full of rice, is for the use of the brothers and sisters if they need it.'" (*China's Millions.*) **For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints.**—*Collections in the*

Church :—I. How THEY OUGHT TO BE REGARDED. 1. As a service due on account of spiritual benefits received. 2. Or as an expression of Christian love to the needy. II. How OUGHT THEY TO BE SUPPORTED? 1. Not of necessity, or by constraint. 2. But—(1) As a pleasure. (2) As a fruit of grace acceptable to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Collections for the poor* :—After the breaking up of the Christian community at Jerusalem on the martyrdom of Stephen, those who remained were much persecuted, and became poor. The apostle was much concerned about them, and exhorted the Churches at Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica, and Philippi to make a collection in their behalf, which might be sent by the hand of trustworthy persons, he also promising to accompany them. It was when on that mission he was apprehended. The collection—I. WAS A DUTY (ver. 27). The gospel came through a Jewish channel, and from Jerusalem. We cannot say of what service the Christian poor have been to the cause of truth and to ourselves. God has heard their prayers, blessed their labours in former days, and we are their debtors. Let not our alms be made in the spirit of mere pity, but under a sense of obligation. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." II. WAS TO BE SYSTEMATICALLY MADE (1 Cor. xvi.). It was some time after the contribution was sent to Jerusalem, but the Churches stored weekly. Sunday was the day of thanksgiving for the resurrection of Christ, and it was meet that each Christian should honour the day by consecrating his gift to the Lord. This is the only scriptural method of giving. The portion is thoughtfully laid aside for the service of God, and brings a blessing on the giver. III. WAS TO BE LIBERALLY AND CHEERFULLY MADE. "God loveth a cheerful giver." No gift is acceptable in the sight of God except it comes from the heart. To give from custom or from shame is not an act of worship. Our compassion for those in want excites the heart to give largely and lovingly. IV. WAS TO BE MADE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD (2 Cor. ix.). The thanksgiving of the poor saints at Jerusalem was twofold—for relief in their poverty, but principally because the gospel was bearing fruit in other lands. V. WAS TO BEAR THE STAMP OF JESUS. He, though rich, became poor for our sakes. As He, so we must endeavour to enrich others. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *The claims of poor saints* are—1. Founded in the ordinations of Providence. 2. Strengthened by the ties of Christian brotherhood. 3. Stronger than national prejudice. 4. Should be met with pleasure. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The poor stand in the place of Christ* :—Macaulay, in his essay on Milton, says—"Ariosto tells a story of a fairy who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul, poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterward revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war." So what is done to Christ in His disguised and lowly form, of the poor and sick of earth, is a test of our character and our love, and will be rewarded by Him when He comes in His glory. *Retrenchment must not begin at the house of God* :—A Christian who had made heavy losses asked his pastor about the missionary collection. He said, "I have made it already; but, knowing that you had been a great loser this year, I did not think it proper to call upon you for your usual donation."—"My dear sir," replied the gentleman, "it is very true that I have suffered great losses, and must be prudent in my expenditures; but retrenchment must not begin at the house of God." **If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.**—*Our obligations to the Jews* :—I. OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THE JEWS. We have received "of their spiritual things." 1. With the patriarch Abraham was made that covenant, on the footing of which every blessing that we hope for, in time or eternity, is secured to us. But Abraham has further conferred a mass of obligations upon us, in that he illustrated the life of faith in his conduct. Who doubts what is the duty of the Christian, when he sees what the father of the faithful did? 2. From Moses we had the law, that law which shows us our need of the covenant, and shuts us up to it. When we come to God and lay hold of this covenant, the same law, which is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, becomes a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths. 3. Take the prophets, and see what they have given us, in the shape of promises of Christ and spiritual blessings. 4. Who reads the Psalms and does not feel a sense of obligation to David, that he ever unfolded so all the workings of his own heart for our edification

and for our comfort? 5. Remember the apostles, who exhibited the Saviour, and laid down their lives that we might know Him, and enjoy all the blessings of the gospel. Now the text says that we have received their spiritual things, and that, consequently, we are their debtors. Perhaps you will say, they were far distant; we were indebted to them, but what have the Jews of the present day done unto us? But God blessed the Jewish nation in spite of all their rebellion, for Abraham's sake, and preserved a light unto Judah for a thousand years for David's sake! Well, then, if He, at the distance of so many centuries regarded Abraham, and David, and vouchsafed to the most unworthy persons blessings for their sakes, surely let not us talk of the unworthiness of the existing generation, but remember our obligations to the generations that are past. But we are expressly told that the Jews are beloved of God for their fathers' sake; shall they not, then, be beloved by us for their fathers' sake? II. THE RETURN WE SHOULD RENDER TO THEM. 1. To seek for ourselves those blessings which they have transmitted to us (Heb. ii. 3, 4). In embracing the Saviour, and giving ourselves up to Him as Abraham did in a life of faith, and as all the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles did. 2. To make them partakers of the blessings which you yourselves have received. If the apostles were debtors to the Gentiles, much more are we debtors to the Jews. The Gentiles had done nothing for them; the Jews have done everything for us (chap. xi. 30–31). Conclusion: 1. Now, suppose there were famine, and every one of you had given to his steward a large sum of money, to supply the wants of the sick and dying, and instead he wasted the money on himself, who would not be filled with indignation? Oh, let conscience speak, and it will show you that you are much bound to strive for the salvation of the Jews, as well as for your own; and if you do not you are a robber. 2. But some, perhaps, may say, the time is not come. Where has God told you that? What have you to do with the times and seasons? Did not the apostles search and seek them out at the peril of their lives? 3. But they won't receive it; they are hardened. Pray, tell me what you yourselves were? And whose fault is it? Ours, who have treated them with such contempt. What would you have been if they had treated you as you have treated them? 4. Do you ask, How shall I do it? In any way you can—by prayer, by sending them instruction, by giving them the Bible. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *Ministration to the need of those who have contributed to our spiritual benefit not an act of generosity but of debt*:—I. THE BENEFITS RECEIVED. 1. Spiritual things. 2. Of infinite value. 3. Of enduring importance. II. THE PAYMENT REQUIRED. 1. Carnal things. 2. Worthless in comparison, and perishable in their nature. III. THE DUTY IMPLIED. A duty of—1. Love. 2. Gratitude. 3. Justice. IV. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE PERFORMED. With pleasure as the expression of grateful feeling to man and God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The duty of spiritual and carnal beneficence*:—This comparison between spiritual and carnal things is still more distinctly made in 1 Cor. ix. 11—where the apostle speaks of the right which he and Barnabas had earned to a maintenance from their hands. In this matter, too, there is great room for the condemnation of professing Christians—because of their gross practical insensibility to the rule of equity here laid down. It is in virtue of this that the instructors even of large and opulent congregations, have often so parsimonious an allowance doled out to them; and if so wretched a proportion of their own carnal be given in return for spiritual things to themselves, we are not to wonder at the still more paltry and inadequate contributions which are made by them for the spiritual things of others. The expense of all missionary schemes and enterprises put together, a mere scantling of the wealth of all Christendom, argues it to be still a day of exceeding small things—a lesson still more forcibly held out to us by the thousands and tens of thousands at our own doors who are perishing for lack of knowledge. There is a carnal as well as a spiritual benevolence. That the carnal benevolence makes some respectable head against the carnal selfishness of our nature, is evinced by the fact that so very few are ever known to die of actual starvation. That the spiritual benevolence falls miserably behind the other, is evinced by the fact of those millions more in our empire, who, purely from want of the churches which ought to be built, and of ministers who ought to be maintained for them, are left to wander all their days beyond the pale of gospel ordinances—and so to live in guilt and die in utter darkness. Verily in such a contemplation it might well be said even of this professing age—Are ye not yet altogether carnal? (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Ver. 29. **And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness**

of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.—*The fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*:—Separation is one of the evil fruits of sin. God loves union. When He created Adam He bound together the whole family of man in one common link. Hence it is one great end of the gospel to restore this union, which was one leading subject in the Saviour's intercessory prayer (John xvii.). Christianity imparts to us the love of one common God and Saviour, and infuses into all one common spirit. St. Paul had imbibed largely of this spirit. He knew what it was to feel communion of spirit even in the absence of all personal knowledge. Such was the case with regard to the Church at Rome (chap. i. 8, xv. 22, 29). Note—I. THE SUBJECT OF THE APOSTLE'S CONFIDENCE. To carry the glad tidings of salvation to those who are altogether ignorant of them—this might seem to be one sense in which the minister of Christ might be said to "come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Nor, perhaps, is this application wholly to be excluded. If he chiefly refers here to his ministry within the Church, he yet might include the blessing of adding to its numbers from without. And certainly the conversion of sinners must be one great blessing for which we are to look as the end of our work. Yet it is of the ministry to the saints that Paul more expressly speaks. Hence, observe that this expectation will be realised—1. If Christ should become more precious to the flock. "To you that believe He is precious." All you want is treasured up in Him. We come, then, "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," if the fruit of our ministry be to make Him to dwell in our thoughts and hearts—if it be to set Him always before us in all things, and to do all things in His name. 2. If the Holy Ghost in all His operations should be more honoured by us. We are placed under the dispensation of the Spirit. He is our teacher, sanctifier, preserver; and our progress must be in proportion as we are taught by and made submissive to Him. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"; and then we "shall come in the fulness," &c. 3. If the ordinances of the Church, as such, should be more valued by us, Jesus Christ, as the head of His Church, has provided for its edification. It is by submitting to His ways, and not walking in our own, that we may hope to be built up in holy things. If we come to them not as mere forms, but as filled with the Spirit of the living God, then shall we have just cause to adopt the language of the text. 4. If Christ shall be more magnified by us. This will be in proportion as we are transformed into the image of Christ, and are able to manifest His holy character. To have the mind that was in Christ, to make Him the centre around which we move, is included in "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." II. THE GROUNDS ON WHICH HE RESTS HIS CONFIDENCE. 1. Not any power or wisdom in himself. These weapons he knew well are too weak to be employed in so great a warfare. 2. Something personal, however, might have had to do with it—*e.g.*, (1) His own conviction of the great truths which he ministered. He could say, "I know whom I have believed," &c. Now, this must unquestionably tend to engender confidence as to the success of the ministry, when we can speak of those things which we know of a truth in our own souls. (2) His consciousness of sincerity, and purity of intention (2 Cor. ii. 17, iv. 7). It inspires confidence to feel that it is at no partial exhibition of God's truth we aim; no favourite doctrine, no select portions, but the whole of God's revealed counsel so far as He teaches it to us. 3. These, however, after all, may be termed rather auxiliaries of the apostle's confidence than its foundation; the foundation of it is doubtless to be found primarily, in the promised blessing of God, and the presence of Christ in all His ordinances. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." (*W. Dodsworth, A.M.*) *The fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*:—I. THE NATURE OF THESE BLESSINGS—1. Spiritual. 2. Undeserved. 3. Blessings of peace. II. THEIR ABUNDANCE in their—1. Variety. 2. Supply. 3. Sufficiency for all, in this life and the next. III. THEIR FREE DISPENSATION. 1. To saints. 2. To sinners. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The fulness of gospel blessing*:—That was a privileged man who could say this. Did he do so in the confidence of apostolic power, in the strength of some special Divine mission? I think not. There are many who carry with them their own atmosphere, radiators of holiness, overflowing with affection and full of heaven, whom you cannot be near and not feel that "a virtue goes out of them"; their very presence is a benediction. And those are the same men who are lowly enough to confess the power, not their own, but Christ's. But who are they? Those who live so near to God that they are always breathing in the Divine; and such was Paul. Observe these words in their series and their climax. I. CHRIST. And in His holy anointing is all which you can ever want for time or for eternity. A ransom paid, a life hidden, a friend

at the throne, a brother at the side; all love, and all loveliness. II. THE GOSPEL. For you, poor miserable sinner, He died. He has "loved you with an everlasting love,"—between you and heaven, between you and God, there is no barrier. III. THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. 1. You are at peace. You know it in your heart's deep secret places that you are safe. 2. You shall serve Him, see Him, be like Him, enjoy Him for ever, 3. And your forgiveness shall become your holiness. He is in you, and you in Him, by living union. Therefore "as He is, so shall you be in this world." 4. You shall be blessed and be a blessing. IV. THE FULNESS OF THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. It is all done. No fact in history more sure, more complete. The heavens are not complete; the angels are not perfect. But His work and His people are. An eternity of happiness—of usefulness, and of God. Conclusion: 1. Do not be afraid of a full, free gospel. It will neither make you presumptuous nor indolent. Nothing humbles like being loved. And how shall a man conquer his sins, and do good works, if he have not a motive? What motive is strong enough but the love of God? 2. Therefore, let me take care to preach, and you to receive, a full gospel. Not half fear and half hope; not half self and half Christ; not a partial pardon; not a change which is to come; not a possible heaven. 3. Now, when we meet, we are to come together with this "blessing." Woe to me if I do not so preach as to bring "this fulness of the blessing" to you! And woe to you if you do not so pray as to bring it to me! Very great is my privilege to preach it, and very large will be your loss, if, from prejudice, or fear, or unbelief, or Satan's wiles, or men's false teaching, you refuse it, or add to it conditions which God has never placed—or abate one iota from it. 4. And to one another you are to be a "blessing." When you go to a man, and try to speak faithfully to him, when you are teaching your child, when you engage in some work of mercy, or in each day's common converse, or recognise the promise. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The fulness of the blessing*:—A doctor may come with healing or with failure, because his remedies are fallible. A statesman may come with progress or retrogression, because his measures are only fallible; but a servant of Christ comes with nothing but blessing. Indeed, the house of God is the one place on earth where blessing abounds always. The home may be miserable; business disappointing; the Senate House the scene of turmoil; but in the house of God there broods unruffled peace. Blessedness is the watermark of Christianity, and just as you know a five-pound note by the watermarks upon it, so you will know the message, as to whether it is Divine, by this: it makes men blessed. Its morality is the high road to blessedness. The life of its Founder is the blessed life. His death leads to man's reconciliation with God. His resurrection tells us that man's last enemy is destroyed. Its message is well called a gospel. I. IT IS A CERTAIN BLESSING. 1. Because the messenger is sent of God. God can make all things sure; not man, but God. Paul had often said to God, "O Lord, let me preach the gospel at Rome," and God at length heard his prayers; but what a strange answer it was! But all through life he had been led to see that the God who had called him to that work of the ministry would also show him when and where he was to carry on the ministry. Now that—(1) Helps the hearer. There is a communication from heaven; it comes through the man—very imperfect, but the trappings of the messenger must never make us forget his Divine message. (2) It helps the speaker. He is taken away from man; he breaks through the ensnaring influences of the sense, and he sees nothing, feels nothing but God and the souls of men. 2. When the people are prepared to receive the message. There is a vital difference between a prepared and an unprepared people. You may have the best seed in the world, but unless you choose carefully the best soil you will not get the best fruit. There is a mysterious power of self-choosing in every one, which enables men to resist all appeals. Vain, then, are all our reasonings and pleadings. They are showers on a rock, sunlight on a barren desert. II. A FULL BLESSING. There is—1. The fulness of giving that comes from the Divine love to us. To all things else there is a limit, and it is very difficult for us to rise to the conception of a Being whose power is illimitable. We see suggestions of it in the sky, the rolling prairie, and the immense sea. Now, the same God rules in grace as in Nature; and in His dealings with the spirits of men we may expect He will exercise the same largeness. And we are not disappointed. Indeed, the greatness of the gospel baffles many. They measure the Infinite Reason, love, and plans by the littleness of their own; and when they find themselves confronted by the incarnation, deity, atonement, and resurrection of Christ, they find the greatness and the glory too much for their faith. But so it should not be with us. It is said

that the Highlanders who dwell among the rocky fastnesses get a strength and heroism which do not come out of the plain. It is so in spiritual things. Here the air is keen. The mountain solitudes of truth are trodden by few; but when once we have stood on those glorious heights we know God as we have never known Him before. But just as in the mountain regions there will be here and there a little châlet where the sun rests in quiet and cheering warmth, so the truth of God subdivides itself, and rests on every converted heart. 2. The fulness of the human reception. On the Divine side there is love given to us; on the human side there is faith receiving God's gifts. "Not the hearer only of the Word." Oh, how often we stop here! We think that a ministry is successful when numbers of attentive hearers are drawn to hear the word; and this is so far a great gain. But pews may be full, and yet hearts may be empty. What we must pray for is not that these seats may be full only, but our souls also. The whole question of our having a full blessing or of having half or none hangs upon our faith. It is not faith in our minister, in one another, in this building, and in these outward services. These, no doubt, are all helpful gifts, but our great need is a full faith in Christ. (*S. Pearson, M.A.*) *The fulness of the gospel*:—I. IN WHAT IT CONSISTS. In—1. A full Christ for empty sinners. 2. A full salvation for lost sinners. 3. A full assurance for doubting sinners. 4. A full restoration for fallen sinners. 5. A full comfort for sorrowful sinners. 6. Fulness of food for hungry sinners. 7. Fulness of love, joy, hope, peace for all. II. WHAT WE ARE TO DO WITH IT. 1. Believe it. 2. Receive it. 3. Enjoy it. 4. Live it. 5. Impart it. 6. Die with it in our hearts and on our tongues. (*Bp. Villiers.*) *The blessings of the gospel*:—I. THE GOSPEL ORIGINATES FROM A SOURCE OF SUPREME ELEVATION. 1. Men form their opinions of existing systems by referring to the character of their founders. The absence, *e.g.*, of dignity and worth in the founders of systems, is always converted into an argument against the principles they have propounded; and *vice versâ*. This mode of reasoning is, of course, liable to abuse, but if it be applied aright to the gospel and its Founder, it will be discovered as possessing every claim on reverence, admiration, and love. To Christ the gospel is indebted for its existence; and hence in the text the association of His name. Christ unfolded its promises and principles, established its laws, performed its confirmatory miracles, bestowed its efficacy, and constituted those arrangements by which it was to be propagated in the world. 2. There are truths with regard to Him which render Him a character of matchless elevation. (1) He was without sin. (2) His human nature was invested with an especial appointment from God the Father. (3) He was essentially and eternally Divine. (4) Besides these dignifying truths with regard to Christ, there are His resurrection, ascension, and session as the triumphant Mediator at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Wonder, then, at the amazing dignity which the gospel receives in consequence of its association with such a Being, and measure the imperious claim which the gospel possesses on the reverence, faith, and obedience of mankind. II. THE GOSPEL IS FRAUGHT WITH ABUNDANT BLESSINGS TO THE WORLD. The very term "gospel" verifies this proposition. Note—1. The nature of the blessings which the gospel is able to impart. When we speak of these we seem as though we stood at the entrance of a beauteous garden, within whose limits we cannot stir a step without plucking flowers, and beholding fruits on the trees of life, whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations." The gospel imparts to man—(1) A knowledge of God and of all spiritual truth (chap. xvi. 25; 2 Cor. iv. 6; 2 Tim. i. 9, 10). The communication of this knowledge is essential to all real dignity, to all moral worth, and to the introduction of man into that state where "we shall know even as also we are known." (2) A deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin (chap. iii. 23–26; Eph. ii. 12–17). Will any one compare the difference between a state of condemnation and of justification, of pollution, and of holiness, and not at once perceive that here are given blessings so vast that no intellect can compute them, and no fancy conceive them? (3) Abundant consolation and support amidst all sorrow (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 17, 18). 2. The extent to which these blessings are to be diffused. A great portion of the value of the blessing depends upon its extent. Now, if the gospel had possessed but a restricted constitution, so as by implication to pass a sentence of outlawry on any portion of the human family, there would be a vast subtraction from its value. But its expansiveness was indicated in prophecy, by Christ's parables, instructions, and example, and by those series of commissions which He gave to His apostles. Its operations truly have been as yet imperfect, yet there is to arrive an era when the gospel shall become the property of our race. "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the

earth," &c. And so replete shall be the then weight of blessing, when the groanings of creation shall have been hushed, when its travailing shall have been terminated, and when peace and liberty and joy shall have become the charter of our free and emancipated race, that then shall be totally verified the title of the gospel, "the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ." III. THE MINISTRY IS THE APPOINTED INSTRUMENT FOR CONVEYING THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL TO MANKIND. The apostle is speaking as one engaged in the exercise of the ministry of the Word. It must be clear that there is here a connection instituted between the ministry and the efficacy of the gospel (chap. x. 13–17; 2 Cor. v. 18–20). There is a solemn call on us—1. To acquire a perfect knowledge of its contents, and freely and faithfully to declare it to our fellow-men. 2. To honour the ministry by giving "earnest heed" to the things which you hear, remembering that he that despiseth us despiseth not man, but God. In conclusion, let me remind you—1. Of the awful danger that will be incurred on your part by the rejection of the gospel. 2. Of your duty to assist in its propagation. (*J. Parsons.*)

Vers. 30–33. **Now I beseech you . . . that ye strive together with me in your prayers.**—*Paul's request for prayer*:—Observe—I. THE APOSTLE'S REQUEST—that they would pray for him. Especially for—1. His protection. 2. The success of his mission. II. THE ARGUMENTS HE USES. 1. For Christ's sake; for the love of Christ, that His cause might be promoted, &c. 2. For the love of the Spirit, wrought in us, exhibited to us. III. THE ANTICIPATED RESULT. 1. A prosperous journey to Rome. 2. The mutual joy and edification of all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Pleading for prayer*:—The apostle of the Gentiles held a very useful and glorious office; but when we consider his struggles, we do not wonder that he was sometimes in great sorrow of heart. He was so now. So he wrote to his brethren to pray for him. Does it astonish you that a man so rich in grace should do so? It need not; for such always feel most their dependence upon God's people. The larger a man's trade, the more he is dependent upon those around him. The apostle did a great business for his Lord, and he felt that he could not carry it on unless he had the co-operation of many helpers. He did not want what are called "hands" to work for him, but hearts to plead for him. In a great battle the general's name is mentioned; but what could he have done without the common soldiers? Wellington will always be associated with Waterloo; but, after all, it was a soldiers' battle. Every minister is in much the same condition as Paul. In the text there is—I. PRAYER ASKED FOR. Here is—1. A request to the people of God for prayer in general. (1) He asks it for himself. It reminds us of Carey, who says, when he goes to India, "I will go down into the pit, but brother Fuller and the rest of you must hold the rope." A man cannot be charged with egotism if he begs for personal support when he is labouring for others. (2) He asks it of his "brethren." He seems to say, "Show this token of your brotherhood. You cannot go up with me to Jerusalem, and share my danger, but you can by your prayers surround me with Divine protection." (3) He asks them to "agonise"—that is the word, a reminder of the great agony in Gethsemane. The apostle felt that an agony alone was too bitter for him, and he therefore cries, "I beseech you," &c. Now, as the disciples ought to have sympathised with the Saviour, but did not, I trust that the unfaithfulness to the Master will not be repeated upon His servants. When the uplifted hands of Moses are known to bring a blessing, Aaron and Hur must stay them up when they are seen to grow weary. (4) He asks, "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake." What an argument! As you cannot repay what you owe to Christ personally, repay it to His servant by your prayers. But he adds another argument. "For the love of the Spirit." If the Spirit of God has indeed loved you and proved it by quickening and sanctifying you; if He has created a love in you, which is stronger than mere natural affection, then pray for me. Why do you think the apostle at that special time asked these brethren to pray for him so? (*a*) He was going up to Jerusalem, and the Jews would seek to slay him; but he believed that God could overrule all things. We believe this; therefore let us pray that all opposition to His gospel may be overcome. (*b*) He was afraid that the Jewish believers would be cold to him, and therefore prays that the Spirit may warm their hearts, so that the offerings from the Grecian Churches might foster a sense of hearty fellowship. Do you not also believe that there is not only a Providence that shapes our ends, but a secret influence which moulds men's hearts? Therefore we urge you to plead with God that we also may have acceptance with His people. 2. A statement of the apostle's desires in detail. We should pray for

something distinctly. Some prayers fail from want of precision. It is as if a regiment of soldiers should all fire off their guns anyhow. Paul gives his friends three things to pray for: (1) That he might be delivered from them that did not believe in Judæa. He was delivered, but not in the manner he hoped for. Against all oppositions from without let us pray. (2) That his service which he had for Jerusalem might be accepted of the saints. This also was granted. (3) That he might come unto them with joy by the will of God; and might, with them, be refreshed. This petition also was heard, but not as Paul might have desired. He did come to them according to the will of God, and may have been on his way to Spain, but certainly he was on his way to prison, as he had not purposed. Therefore pray for a blessing, and leave the way of its coming to the good Lord who knoweth all things. II. THE BLESSING GIVEN. 1. Paul, with all his anxiety to gain the prayers of his friends, cannot finish without a benediction upon them. (1) "Now the God of peace." What a blessed name! In the Old Testament He is the "Lord of Hosts"; but that is never the style in the New Testament. (2) "Be with you," not only "peace be with you," but, better far, the source and fountain of peace. When "the God of peace" makes peace with Himself, and so keeps our minds at peace within, He also creates peace with one another. (3) With you all," not with some of you, with Priscilla and Aquila, but with Mary, Amplias, &c. Unless all are at peace, none can be perfectly quiet. One brother who is quarrelsome can keep a whole Church in trouble. 2. Paul seems to imply that this will be the result of their prayer. If you will but strive together with me in your prayers, then the God of peace will be with you. We may view it as the reward of such prayer, or as a necessary condition and cause of true prayer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Prayer besought for the ministry*:—I. THE OBJECT OF THE APOSTLE'S REQUEST—the prayers of the people. Observe the importunity of his spirit, and the fervency of his manner. Ministers need the prayers of their people, if we consider them—1. As men. They are men of like passions with ourselves, and are surrounded by manifold temptations. 2. As Christians. They want refreshing with the same water, and stand in need of the same heavenly food as you do. 3. As officers of the Church—as stewards of the mysteries of God. 4. Their work—to negotiate matters with others on behalf of God. 5. Their danger. They are on a hill, and far more the objects of observation than others. A failure in an ordinary member is a serious matter, and is often attended with distress; but a failure in a minister is attended with more serious consequences. 6. Their responsibility. II. THE PLEASING EMERGENCY ON WHICH HE FOUNDS IT. 1. "For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake." The honour of Christ is bound up with the success of the ministry of the gospel. So the apostle appealed for prayer, not for his own sake, though he might have put it upon that ground, but for his Master's. 2. "For the love of the Spirit." (1) The love which the Spirit has wrought in us. Love to God, to ministers, to souls, is but a feeling which has been wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. (2) The love which the Spirit has to us. We are in the habit of underrating this love. We dwell on that of the Father, and the Son; but we seldom dwell on the love of the Spirit. And yet that love is most manifest. He strives with us, bears with us, checks us in our wanderings, and creates us anew. III. THE SPECIFIC END WHICH HE HAD IN VIEW. 1. Mutual joy. Ministers sometimes come in fear and in sorrow. 2. Mutual improvement. "That I with you may be refreshed." (*J. Beaumont, M.A.*) **The love of the Spirit.**—*The love of the Spirit*:—Consider—I. THE IMPORT OF THE EXPRESSION HERE USED. It may mean either the love, of which the Spirit is the author in the heart of the believer; or the love of which the Spirit is Himself the object; or most probably, the love which the Spirit bears to them that believe. II. "THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT" AS A MOTIVE TO CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE. The Spirit shows love, as much as the Father or the Son; and the love of the Spirit is as much a motive to duty as the grace of Christ itself. As the love of Christ is displayed chiefly in an external work, so the love of the Spirit is exhibited in His internal operation on the soul. In order to illustrate this love; consider—1. The absence of anything on our part fitted to attract that Holy Agent. "Not of works, but of His mercy, He saves us by the renewing of the Holy Spirit." That the Spirit of God should dwell in a holy mind may be well believed; but what manner of love was this which impelled the Spirit to inhabit such a mind as that of the natural man! 2. The fruits of the Spirit; "love, joy, peace," &c., of what high value are these! 3. The happiness imparted by the Spirit. The word of promise has no power to comfort until it is applied by the Spirit of promise. If we abound in hope, it is through the power of the Holy

Spirit. He is emphatically the Comforter; no true joy without His influence; and He is the grand and only preparation for eternal happiness. 4. This love is displayed in His continual operation on the heart, amidst so much opposition, and so much ingratitude. III. IMPROVEMENT. Surely we should—1. Show returns of love to this Spirit of love. 2. Show ourselves meek and docile to such a Teacher and Guide, and prize His influence. 3. Vindicate His character from all low notions of His person, dignity, power and importance. 4. Pray in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, war after the Spirit. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *The love of the Spirit*:—Consider this—I. IN THE FORMS OF ITS EVIDENCE. 1. The dictation of the Holy Scriptures. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Had His influences been withholden, there would have been no Bible; and without the Bible think of the hopeless wretchedness in which we should have been plunged. 2. His teachings. For however incomparable the blessed Book may be of itself, yet in the spirituality of its particular meanings, it can only be understood and realised through the same power that produced it. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 3. His work in relation to the Saviour who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, anointed by Him and filled with Him without measure. 4. His offices which He fills, and the provisions which He makes for us, answering to the spiritual necessities of our nature. Convincing of sin, converting, witnessing, sanctifying, comforting, &c. II. ITS OBJECT. Not that His own happiness may be advanced by it, nor that it was forced into exercise by any worthiness of ours. No; as it sprung spontaneously out of the law of His own nature—for "God is love"—so it disinterestedly devoted itself to the promotion of our present and immortal good. III. THE EFFECTS IT SHOULD PRODUCE. 1. Love begets love; and surely we should do Him all the honour we can. 2. A humble and unreserved dependence upon Him. 3. An excitement to our prayers. 4. A sincere purpose, an energetic endeavour, to avoid all that will vex and grieve the Holy Spirit. 5. A full display of the graces of the Spirit in our lives. (*T. J. Judkin, M.A.*) *The love of the Spirit*:—The Bible is emphatically a revelation, and not an argument; its teachings are dogmatic and absolute. You look in vain in the Bible for anything like an elaborate argumentation to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. The inspired writers everywhere take it for granted. Deny it, and there are profound mysteries which perplex us all. A truth also equally clear in the Scriptures is this, that the Three Persons of the Godhead are equally interested in the great scheme of human redemption. I. HIS RESTRAINING LOVE. All men are everywhere wicked in heart and life, tyrannised over by the sin which dwells within them. They might be worse; men feel that they are not left to the uncontrolled power of the evil passions; they are conscious of an opposite power. Even savages and cannibals—the most degraded and ignorant of our race—testify that they are conscious of some power beside an evil one acting upon them. And hence the idea obtains in a large portion of the heathen world that there must be two divinities—a bad and a good divinity; and this is the only way in which they can account for the great truth of which they are conscious. It is not the mere fruit of fancy. And this is also true of ourselves. How many evils have been averted, how many bad passions have been restrained, how many schemes of wickedness have been overthrown by the direct action of the Holy Ghost on men's minds, no man can possibly tell. A gigantic scheme of wickedness is concocted by half-a-dozen persons; but previous to its consummation, one of the company has a strange sense of uneasiness which he cannot help, and he is restless by day and night. His wife or his nearest friend observes there is something on his mind. But the restlessness grows upon him, the man is miserable. Now, what ails the man? Who has caused him to stagger in his fiendish enterprise? No human voice reasoned with him; it is the Holy Ghost in love that acted directly without any human agency upon that man's conscience and heart. A man is studying to commit murder. The would-be murderer lies under the shadow of the tree waiting for his intended victim. By and by he hears the sounds of human footsteps—a strange irresolution paralyses him—and instead of springing forward to execute his purpose, he falls back powerless. Again I say, what ails the man? What has acted upon his mind? No human being has reasoned with him; but he is so acted upon by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. Oh! just think for a moment what would have been the state of the world now if all the evil passions of men had been carried out to the utmost. II. THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT CONVICTING. The provisions of redemption are ample, and there is no want that we can feel, but

what is filled by Christ Jesus. But there are difficulties that stand in the way. Man does not feel his need of these provisions, man is not conscious that he requires a Saviour, he does not entertain the same views of sin that God does, and he thinks he can do without redemption. "Oh!" he says, "sin is only a harmless gratification of human passions, over which I am not responsible, which were born with me into the world." And so men do not see any grandeur and reality in the scheme of redemption. Man plays gaily and foolishly on the verge of an awful precipice in a blindfolded condition, and knows not the terrible death under his feet. If you would make him watchful, and to turn away from the verge of that danger, you must convince him there is danger. Man will never seek liberty until he is convinced of his bondage; he will never seek or appreciate the remedy until he is made conscious of his disease. Who is to awake his mind and give him this sight, and thus prepare him for the reception of mercy? It is the Holy Ghost, and He, out of love to us, has made suitable provision for bringing home to individual consciences the sense of sin and danger. He has embodied for us God's thoughts, which man could never have discovered, and has raised up men to commit these thoughts to writing, and has raised up a succession of men to apply these truths. He does not, for instance, convince the drunkard of drunkenness, or the blasphemer of blasphemy. That is not the mode in which the Spirit operates on human consciences. But He convinces men of the sinfulness of their nature, that sin is in them; generally speaking, the light is shed inwardly, and the man sees himself, not his life, and he is horrified. If the Holy Ghost awakens within you a sense of sinfulness, He does not rest there, but reveals to you at the same time a remedy, and that you must perish, not because you have sinned, but because you reject the only Saviour from sin. It is a rough process, and God has rough mercies as well as tender mercies. But there is another difficulty in the way. Even when man is convinced of his sin and danger, Jesus is not the first remedy that he repairs to, as a rule. There is something so humiliating in being saved by another, that a man will try a variety of ways before he submits to God's way. He will give up a bad habit, hope to reform himself, and thus divide the glory of salvation with Jesus by doing a little for himself; and it is the Holy Ghost who follows the sinner in his wanderings, drives him out of these false refuges. It is the love of the Holy Ghost, as though driving a man into the only path which will lead him into immortality and blessedness. III. THERE IS THE FORBEARING LOVE OF THE SPIRIT. A mother displays a vast amount towards her child, when she watches the sickly infant by day and by night. No doubt that is a high manifestation of love, because it is shown while the child is not capable of appreciating that affection, but it is not the highest. That child grows up to youth and manhood, and he becomes a profligate, and, not only neglectful, but positively cruel. She cannot cast him out of her heart, she yearns for him still, and nothing would rejoice the mother more than to see the lad return. And such is the love of the Holy Ghost. It is a love which survives ingratitude, insult, rebellion, blasphemy. He presents Himself to you again and again, not for the purpose of asking a gift, but of conferring one. If you were in a condition of temporal distress, and a neighbour heard of it who knew nothing about you, and out of pure benevolence offered to alleviate your sorrow, you would feel you were not capable of saying—"I will not accept his offer, but prefer to remain in my condition." And if you did refuse his offer of assistance, the benefactor would not be very likely to offer himself another time. No, humanity would say, "such a wretch as that deserves no relief; let him alone." And this is the conduct of some of you towards the Holy Ghost. His forbearance is Divine, but it has limits. IV. HIS CONDESCENDING LOVE. Now the work of Christ has relation to the Lawgiver; the work of the Spirit has relation to the law breaker. Jesus Christ had to offer a demand to the satisfaction of the Lawgiver, but the Holy Spirit has to come and make the sinner willing to accept of the provision. The blessed Saviour had no difficulty in persuading the Father to accept of His substitution on behalf of humanity. But here lies a sad truth. When the Holy Ghost comes to man, He finds it difficult to persuade man to accept of the provisions of Christ, and yet He condescends to repeat His visit. You admire the condescension of a man like Howard, who penetrated distant countries, and exposed himself to rude insults, who entered hospitals and prisons, and visited the guilty and degraded. But what shall we say of the condescending love of the Holy Ghost, when we remember the theatre He has selected for His signal action, for His most powerful operations. It is a stupendous exhibition of the condescending love for that Spirit to come down and live for hundreds and thousands of years in

the vilest place in the universe — the heart of humanity. (*R. Roberts.*) **That I may be delivered.** — *The propriety of prayer for temporal deliverance:* — How different is this from the language of Ignatius, who seemed rather to call for the prayers of his brethren, that he might be honoured with a crown of martyrdom, than to be preserved from his enemies. Christians ought to be willing to give their lives for Christ rather than deny Him or refuse to do any part of His known will. But it is not only lawful but dutiful to take every proper means for their deliverance out of danger. If even an apostle, in the cause of Christ, was so desirous of preserving life, what shall we think of those who profess a spirit of indifference respecting it, which would wantonly throw it away? (*R. Haldane.*) *Two important elements of ministerial comfort and success:* — I. DELIVERANCE FROM THEM THAT BELIEVE NOT. Because—1. They hate the truth. 2. Interpose difficulties. 3. Prevent success. II. ACCEPTANCE WITH THE CHURCH. Because—1. It encourages zeal. 2. Makes labour delightful. 3. Insures prosperity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.**—*The pastor's incoming* (inaugural sermon): I. ON WHAT GROUNDS? I have come—"by the will of God." 1. In planning his own movements, Paul exercised Christian common-sense. Thus his work was distinguished from that of Peter, &c. (Gal. ii. 9). Thus he abstained from Jerusalem and Corinth (2 Cor. i. 23), and varied his plans. But he ever consulted the will of God, and found it sometimes identical with his own, and sometimes not (2 Cor. i. 17; Acts. xvi. 7). He was sure he ought to see Rome (Acts xix. 20), and long desired it (ver. 23), and prayed for it (chap. i. 10; xv. 30). Yet he found that God's will was different from his as to time and manner. 2. The will of God is that which He sees best to be done, or to be, for all creatures. Every star that shines is an embodied will of God. But there is a higher region of intelligence and love. Nature is blindly obedient. Far above it are the hosts that are little miniatures of God. Christ could ask for nothing more than that, as in heaven, so on earth, God's will might be done. 3. Now, it is the privilege of a Christian not only to have the written will of God in general, but to be able also to ascertain God's will as to our separate movements. This was afforded to Israel by the "pillar of cloud and fire," and is not less so now. Let a man do three things—clear his heart of self-will; use his best judgment, aided by counsel; and pray. And is it presumptuous to believe that through the blended circumstances, the many counsels and prayers, I am here by the will of God? II. WITH WHAT PURPOSE? Note—1. The sphere within which the effect of the ministry is to be sought. The pastor aims at an effect on the spirit of man. When the six days have run you down; when your spirit is weary, dull, and almost without holy thought or desire, you need, and I hope, will find rest and refreshment here. 2. The identity of the preacher's experience and his hearers'. I preach not a Saviour that I do not need myself. "With you" I come to "be refreshed"; with the same nature and needs, and to the same supply. In this identity lies one of the chief charms of the ministry. III. IN WHAT MOOD? "With joy." There is in the responsibilities of the ministry much to oppress. Yet I do come with joy—1. That there is such refreshment provided for weary souls. 2. That I am permitted the honour of ministering the same, and to stand in the happy relationship which never fails to rise out of a faithful ministry. 3. That the Lord Himself will be with us. 4. In hope of the final joy of the Lord. Conclusion: All this turns on one condition. Paul did not hope for it in his case apart from prayer (vers. 30–33). (*S. Hebditch.*) *Spiritual refreshment:*—I. NEEDED. 1. The Christian is often—(1) Weary. (2) Hungry. (3) Thirsty. 2. This arises from—(1) The labour and conflict of life. (2) The world's spiritual barrenness. II. PROVIDED. 1. In the means of grace—prayer, hearing, reading, singing, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and in Christian fellowship (Prov. xxvii. 17). 2. By Christ Himself. "Come unto Me," &c. (Psa. xxiii; Mark vi. 31). III. SHOULD BE ENJOYED. 1. The consequences of its enjoyment. (1) Augmented strength. (2) Invigorated courage. (3) Happy feelings. 2. The consequences of its neglect. (1) Feebleness. (2) Fear. (3) Misery. (*J. W. Burn.*) **Now the God of peace be with you all.**—*The God of peace:*—Whatever may be the amount of agitation in the universe, there is one Being without one ripple upon the clear and fathomless river of His nature. Three things are implied in this. That there is nothing—I. MALIGN IN HIS NATURE. Wherever there is jealousy, wrath, or malice, there can be no peace. Malevolence in any form or degree is soul-disturbing. In whatever mind it exists it is like a tide in the ocean, producing eternal restlessness. But the Infinite heart is love. II. REMORSEFUL.

Wherever conscience accuses of wrong there is no peace. Moral self-complaisance is essential to spirit peace. God has never done wrong, and His infinite conscience smiles upon Him and blesses Him with peace. III. APPREHENSIVE. Wherever there is a foreboding of evil, there is a mental disturbance. Fear is essentially an agitating principle. The Infinite has no fear. He is the absolute master of His position. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The God of peace*:—I. HIS NATURE is peace. II. HIS PURPOSE is peace. III. HIS PRESENCE secures peace. 1. In every heart. 2. Among Christian brethren. 3. From foes without. 4. Under all circumstances. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The God of peace*:—I. GOD IS THE ORIGINAL POSSESSOR OF THIS BLESSING, IN ITS ETERNAL AND INFINITE FULNESS. In the Divine nature all is in harmony, because all is perfect. Truth, justice, wisdom, and goodness, are in the nature of things consistent with themselves and with each other. If it were possible for the infinite nature to be swayed by storms of passion, and changed by course of time and events, for the hand that upholds all worlds to tremble—even the destruction of all worlds would be a less calamity than this. But this is the one grand impossibility: "Though we believe not, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." And since there is no discord, strife or change in His nature, these must arise from something contrary to it. He can have no delight in them. His works must reflect His character, and He must delight to fill and bless the hearts of His creatures with the image of His own Divine peace. II. GOD IS THE AUTHOR AND GIVER OF PEACE. 1. Between Himself and His sinful creatures. The first announcement of the gospel was "Peace on earth," its first invitation, "Acquaint thyself with Him, and be at peace." The Word of God sounds, indeed, an awful note of alarm against those who are resting in a false peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But this is only like the cry of "fire!" when you are asleep, and your roof is burning over you; or of "breakers a-head!" when your ship is driving on towards a lee shore. You are told your danger that you may escape it. If you will lay down your arms and fling open the gates to receive your King, He will enter, not as an Avenger or a Judge, but a Redeemer and Friend (Isa. i. 19). Peace with God's law, or in other words, freedom from condemnation, is the first blessing which the gospel offers. As soon as we believe in it, it is ours (1 John i. 9; Rom. v. 1). The cause of this exercise, of God's pardoning mercy, is His love to His guilty child. And the end for which it is bestowed is to bring back the estranged heart, and fill it with love to Him. So the peace which God offers is not merely peace with the law, but peace with Himself. 2. God makes the heart at peace with itself. The carnal heart is at enmity not only with God, but with itself. Pleasure it may have, but not peace. Sin has destroyed the balance of our nature, which only the influence of God's Spirit can either preserve or restore. The love of God being absent, the ruling affection of the soul is wanting. First, the word of Christ applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, brings back God to the throne of the heart, and love to Him becomes the ruling affection. Next, this puts the law of God in a wholly new light. Its condemning terror being taken away by the blood of the Cross, we find that, instead of an enemy, it is a friend. So the schism between duty and inclination, law and love, conscience and will, is healed. Then, as nothing so divides the soul as the multitude of varying aims, and nothing so unites it as to have all its powers absorbed in one practical pursuit; the gospel gives us a single object, and that the noblest to live for—the glory of Christ; and a single hope, and that the most precious and certain—eternal life in inseparable union with Christ and His Church. 3. When the soul is thus at peace with God, and at peace with itself, it is comparatively an easy thing to keep it at peace in the midst of all outward causes of trouble. He could easily, if He pleased, keep us out of the reach of trouble; but He sees it fitter and happier to make us experience His power to give peace in the midst of it. He has given us our hope in Him "as the anchor of the soul," and He will have it proved in the storm. And the greatest triumph of Divine peace is that which our Saviour promises, "These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace" (Isa. xxvi. 3). 4. The fullest manifestation of God's character as the God of peace is to be revealed and enjoyed hereafter. There is a world of peace. There remaineth a rest for the people of God. (*E. R. Conder, D.D.*) *The God of peace*:—Note—I. THE TITLE. Mars amongst the heathens was called the god of war; Janus was worshipped in periods of strife; but our God styles Himself the God of peace. Although He permits war sometimes for necessary purposes, and has even styled Himself the Lord, mighty in battle, yet His holy mind abhors bloodshed. Peace is His delight. 1. This is so with all the Persons in the Trinity. (1) God the Father is the God of

peace, for He planned the great covenant of peace; He justifies, and thereby implants peace in the soul. (2) God the Son is the God of peace; for "He is our peace," &c. He makes peace between God and man, in the conscience and in the heart, and in the Church. (3) The Holy Ghost is the God of peace. He of old brought peace out of confusion, by the brooding of His wings. So in dark chaotic souls He is the God of peace. When by earthly cares we are tossed about, He says, "Peace be still." He it is who on the Sabbath-day brings His people into a state of serenity. And He shall be the God of peace at life's latest hour, and land us save in heaven. 2. He is the God of peace because—(1) He created nothing but peace. See if in the great harp of nature there is one string which when touched by its Maker giveth forth discord; see if the pipes of this great organ do not all play harmoniously! When God made the angels did He fashion one of them with the least ill-will in His bosom? Go into the Garden of Eden: there is nothing of tumult. (2) He restores it. Nothing shows a man to be much fonder of peace than when he seeks to make peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers." God is the great Peacemaker. When Satan fell, there was war in heaven. God made peace there, for He smote Satan. But when man fell, God made peace not by His power, but by His mercy. (3) He is the Preserver of peace. (*a*) Whenever I see peace in the world, I ascribe it to God. So combustible are the materials here that I am ever apprehensive of war. "Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not from your lusts?" If, then, we desire peace between nations, let us seek it of God, who is the great Pacificator. (*b*) There is an inward peace which God alone can keep. Is thy peace marred? Go to God, and He can say, "Peace, be still"; for He is the God of peace. (4) He shall perfect and consummate it at last. There is war in the world now; but there is a time coming when there shall be peace on earth and throughout all God's dominions. II. THE BENEDICTION. 1. Its necessity. Because there are enemies to peace always lurking in all societies. (1) Error. (2) Ambition. "Diotrephes loveth to have the pre-eminence," and that fellow has spoiled many a happy Church. (3) Anger. (4) Pride. (5) Envy. 2. Its appropriateness. We indeed ought to have peace amongst ourselves. Joseph said to his brethren when they were going home to his father's house, "See that ye fall not out by the way." Ye have all one father, ye are of one family. The way is rough; there are enemies to stop you. Keep together; stand by one another; defend each other's character. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Peace with all:*—I. WHENCE IT FLOWS—from the God of peace. II. HOW IT IS SECURED—by His presence. III. WHAT IS THE RESULT—peace—1. Within. 2. Without. 3. With all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XVI.

VERS. 1–16. *The conclusion of the Epistle:*—1. This is scarcely the kind of conclusion that one would have expected. One would have thought that the rapt apostle, having been borne to the loftiest circles of contemplation, would have now flung his inspired pen upon the page he had immortalised. Instead of this, he threads his way into many of the minutest details of Christian life, and concludes his unparalleled effort by blessing many who had lightened his toil. 2. We dare now approach the apostle. While he was pursuing some of the issues of his "great argument," we could but gaze with fearfulness (chap. xi. 33). Now he speaks friendship's simple and holy word we can better see the man. This summary of friendly reminiscences and fraternal salutations—I. REVEALS THE TRUE BOND OF MORAL UNITY. 1. Look at the representative character of the list. You have men and women, old and young, prisoners and freemen, apostles of note and persons who are lost in obscurity; men of prudence and of enthusiasm. What is the secret of union between such a community and the solitary apostle? Love. This is the indissoluble bond. Every other tie snaps. Some persons have suggested that Paul was not the most lovable of men. Probably this was so according to the common canons, but so much the worse for the common canons. Paul was a man who made enemies every day, but the man who is most hated is also the man who is most loved. While forty Jews would enter into a vow to kill him, Priscilla and

Aquila would lay "down their own necks" to save him from a blow. You could not comprehend this man in one day's acquaintance. He did not publish a full edition of himself every day. He must be much known to be much loved. Hence the affection of this representative community. They had sat with him by the quiet fireside; in the man-revealing company of little children; they had heard him thrill the vast assembly; they had listened to him praying within their own homes; they had seen him make Felix quake and turn Agrippa pale; and the closeness of their acquaintance explained the depth of their affection. 2. Here is encouragement for all true moral labourers. You may meet with much ingratitude, yet if you truly labour you will come into a large estate of love, and love will do more for us than genius or wealth or prestige. II. JUSTIFIES THE EMPLOYMENT OF BOTH SEXES IN MORAL SERVICE. Note—1. The honourable mention which is made of certain beloved sisters; and it is not to be overlooked that they are referred to as directly connected with Church work. Phœbe was a deaconess and went to Rome on a Church errand. The apostle's testimony concerning her is brief, but full of significance. It is as though he had said, When the eye sees her it blesses her. Little children hail her presence as they hail the morning sunshine. Misery dries its eyes when she approaches; she never puts out her hand except to succour the servants of Christ. Priscilla was a "helper in Christ Jesus"; the beloved Persis "laboured much in the Lord"; and Mary "bestowed much labour." Thus shall the righteous be had in everlasting remembrance. If you ask me whether I object to a woman preaching, I answer, I never object to any woman doing a good thing. Apart from this, however, there is much Church-work which a woman can do much better than a man. At the same time note Titus ii. 1–5. 2. The great diversity in their methods of operation. Tryphena and Tryphosa laboured in the Lord; Persis laboured "much" in the Lord. Tryphena and Tryphosa may represent either those who can only do a little, but who do that little with all their heart; or those half-day teachers who could come both times, but prefer not to do so; our attendants who regulate their evangelical zeal by the barometer, and who are now sunny as July, now sullen as November. On the other hand, Persis is always at work; she can never do enough; her godly ambition is never satisfied. 3. That all those persons laboured "in the Lord." If you ask me whether unconverted persons should teach in the Sabbath School, I answer—Teach what? If the Sabbath School aims to teach the way of salvation, then how can those who do not know that way teach it? How can the man who does not know geometry teach geometry? It is argued that many by so doing have found salvation. I know it. I rejoice in it. At the same time it is a risky experiment. Would you engage a dishonest man to teach your children honesty, in the hope that by so doing he might become conscientious? Would you engage an unskilled man to teach your children music, with the hope that he himself might gain skill through practice? If some teachers have become saved, may not some scholars have been lost, or have received wrong ideas of religion? The school had better be taught by one man who loves Jesus than by a thousand who have only heard of Him. III. WARRANTS THE EXERCISE OF DISCRIMINATION AS TO THE RESPECTIVE MERITS OF MORAL LABOURERS. The apostle connects the highest encomium with some names, and only mentions others. As an honest man he entertains different opinions about different people. He loves some, and others he loves very much. Imagine the Church assembled to hear this letter read. To one name there is a compliment, to another none! Amplias is "my beloved in the Lord," while not a word is said about Philologus or Julia! Andronicus and Junia are "of note among the apostles"; while Nereus and his sister are coldly mentioned without a flower being flung to either of them! Apelles is "approved in Christ"; but not a word is said about Olympas! Think what jealousy might have been fired in the Roman breast! Only grace could overcome the passions under such circumstances. Let us beware of envy. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The conclusion of the Epistle as a revelation of Paul's character*:—As, in the main body of the Epistle, Paul appears to have been a very knowing man, so, in these appurtenances of it, he appears to have been a very loving man. (*Matthew Henry.*) *The salutations*:—I. WHY SHOULD SUCH A CATALOGUE OF OBSCURE NAMES FIND A PLACE IN WHAT WAS INTENDED TO BE A UNIVERSAL AND PERMANENT REVELATION OF THE DIVINE WILL? 1. It is obvious to remark that if by mentioning them by name was fitted to answer a good end in the Church for whose advantage the Epistle was primarily written, that is a sufficient reason. Such kind remembrances were plainly fitted to knit more closely the bonds of Christian love between them and the apostle, and

between him and the as yet unknown members of the Church. To the persons noticed it must have been gratifying and stimulating, and while elevating them in the estimation of their brethren, it enlarged their sphere of useful influence. It must have been felt by all as a compliment to the Church, and have called forth kindly feelings from all toward Paul. 2. But the passage is useful for all time and in all places. (1) It strongly corroborates the evidence of the genuineness of the Epistle. It could not have occurred to a forger to have introduced such a train of salutations, especially as the author had never been at Rome. (2) It presents a very lovely picture of living Christianity both in the writer and those whom he greets. We see how well the principles of that religion harmonise with and draw forth all that is amiable and tender in the human constitution; how consistent a deep knowledge of Christianity and an ardent zeal for its progress are with the dignified proprieties of an advanced state of civilisation, and the gentle charities and graceful delicacies of the most refined friendship. These things considered, the passage is a striking illustration of—"All Scripture . . . is profitable." II. HOW CAME THE APOSTLE TO BE SO INTIMATE WITH THE INHABITANTS OF A CITY HE HAD NEVER SEEN? Some suppose that Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii. 2, 3, 11) had given him much particular information respecting members of the Roman Church. Perhaps so; but the true account seems to have been this. Rome was then the metropolis of the world. There was a constant influx of persons from all quarters of the empire to that city. Paul had now for nearly thirty years been engaged in various parts, and it is not at all wonderful that many of his converts should have taken up their residence in the capital. A man who for thirty years had mixed with society throughout the leading towns of England and Scotland, on visiting London for the first time would be likely to find himself in the midst of friends. Besides the ordinary reasons which make men leave the provinces for the metropolis there was this, that till the imperial persecutions Christians seem to have been safer in Rome than anywhere else. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The salutations:* —The change from sustained argument and lofty appeal to these simple greetings is like a descent from the heart of some grand mountain scenery to the levels of a country garden. Note—I. THE PARTICULAR SALUTATIONS. 1. The term may be simply equivalent to our own ordinary message of Christian remembrance or regard. In one place, however, it becomes more definite. "Salute one another with a holy kiss." The kiss was no more than the clasp of the hand among ourselves. But it early acquired a certain specific meaning in the Christian fellowship under the name of "the holy kiss," "the kiss of charity," or "the kiss of peace." It is mentioned by Justin Martyr as a recognised part of the communion-service. The custom remained for centuries as a symbol of reconciliation, and its spirit still survives wherever "brethren dwell together in unity." 2. There is another mark of primitive times in "the church that is in their house," "the brethren that are with them." The Roman believers met, not in one large hall, but in different private houses. Our Epistle would have to travel from one to another till all had opportunities of hearing it. One advantage of this lay in the fact that they would be little likely to catch the eye of the government. Another lay in the homeliness and heartiness which they imparted to the Christian service and life, which, with our more finished organisations, we are very liable to lose. "Where two or three are gathered together," &c. 3. We have no photographs of those ancient saints, yet as we read we can see them, and catch their look of pleasure as each name is uttered and each greeting received. Shadows they are to the casual reader, but every name represents a separate Christian soul, and usually a vivid phrase of description helps to stamp the name upon the memory. (1) In one verse is a batch of bare names, all unknown. One wonders what manner of men were these (ver. 14). (2) Here is another list, with a certain sense of domestic life underlying it, but nothing more (ver. 15). (3) Others, again, are marked by a single term of affection or of commendation (ver. 9). (4) But we have wider openings into character in the salutations to those of the household of Aristobulus and Narcissus. Both would have large retinues of slaves, and it is to slaves that the present reference is probably to be applied. (5) "Salute Herodion my kinsman." The word is also applied to five others. Had Paul, then, so many Christian cousins? It would be gratifying to believe it, but as he speaks of "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," meaning his fellow-countrymen, no doubt he here addresses Christian Jews. (6) There is an exquisite touch in the notice of Rufus (ver. 13), who has been sometimes identified as the son of Simon the Cyrenian; but the name was common. Who, and what, however, was she who had two

claimants on her motherly attention? Perhaps when Paul's mother had cast him off this Christian lady took in the great friendless man, and treated him like her own Rufus, and made him welcome to her home, as Peter was to Mary's home in Jerusalem. (7) Here, again, are glimpses of Christian experience, which would be otherwise unknown to us (vers. 5, 7). For "Achaia" in the former passage most of the ancient MSS. have "Asia." Epenetus then was probably an Ephesian, led to Christ at the time of Paul's first visit, the firstfruits of his ministry there, and the pledge of all that followed. In Andronicus and Junia we have firstfruits of the gospel during its yet earlier triumphs, while Saul was breathing out slaughter against the name of Jesus. Were they among the "strangers of Rome" converted at Pentecost? It appears so, and as "apostles" in the broader acceptation of the word they were noted for their energy and success. They were "fellow-prisoners" also; the trials as well as the labours of the kingdom they had bravely borne. (8) The best-known names are Priscilla and Aquila. Comrades, "helpers in Christ Jesus," at whose side Paul had so often sat stitching the tough hair-cloth, and, when work was laid by, had so joyfully bent in prayer! He thought of all that fellowship; but here his most vivid recollection is of some extremity of danger, when that gallant pair interposed at the risk of limb and life to save "the light of Israel." Paul never forgot a kindness or forsook a friend. (9) We must not fail to glance round the group that surrounds the apostle as he dictates these last sentences. They are waiting to add their salutations. There are his brother-missionaries; first, Timotheus, specially singled out as "my workfellow," then Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, strangers to him a few years ago, but now his very "kinsmen" in Christ. There sits the scribe, interrupting the writing, and inserting his own greeting in his own name (ver. 22). The hospitable Gaius, under whose roof they all gathered, next breathes his brotherly blessing. And finally occur the names of two Corinthian Christians who would seem to have come in by accident. Both Erastus, the "chamberlain of the city," and Quartus, probably a slave, in Christ Jesus are on the same level; one sentence serves to carry word from both. II. THE GENERAL IMPRESSIONS WHICH THE SALUTATIONS ARE FITTED TO LEAVE. Note—1. Their heartiness. There are those who hold that either to bestow praise, or to accept it, is inconsistent with Christian simplicity. No doubt there is a danger lest we become elated with a sense of our usefulness. Yet as the Lord Himself hath need of us, welcomes every earnest effort, and says of it, "Well done!" He will scarcely deny us the privilege of saying "Well done" to one another. Let the eye run down this single page and mark how well these saints did. Let us be by all means honest and candid, where it is needful, in censuring our brethren's faults, but shall not honesty carry us also in the opposite direction? 2. Their earnest and affectionate friendliness. The apostle sits down, as an elder brother might, and is on the warmest terms with every one—the slaves no less than the masters, simple "brethren" equally with chamberlains. What was this but treading in the track of the Master who had said, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father in heaven, the same is My brother and My sister and mother"? No one can urge that we have too much of that spirit in our modern churches. And yet how many of our social and ecclesiastical troubles would pass if it more generally prevailed! 3. If these Christians really loved one another with so ardent an affection what did they do to prove it? The answer is that they "laid down their own necks" for one another; they "bestowed much labour" on their brethren. They threw their houses open for hospitable entertainment and united worship. They stood ready to help a foreign sister in whatever business she might have in hand. The poor, the sick, the friendless, became the special objects of their care. That can have been no hollow profession which inspired the confession from their enemies, "Behold how they love one another!" Conclusion: The Epistle closes in an atmosphere of warm and genial affection. We too wish one another well. Is it not enough? Nay; there is another voice to be heard, and a more gracious greeting to be bestowed, and a dearer fellowship to be enjoyed (ver. 24). (*W. Brock.*) *The salutations to the Church at Rome* prove that Christianity —I. NOT ONLY TEACHES FRIENDSHIP, BUT SANCTIFIES IT. II. NOT ONLY REQUIRES THE PROPRIETIES OF LIFE, BUT BEAUTIFIES THEM. Here are—1. Salutations to friends. 2. Commendations of merit. 3. Tokens of respect for the aged and experienced. 4. Kind words for all. III. NOT ONLY INCULCATES LOVE, BUT ENFORCES THE PRACTICE OF IT. 1. Some succoured the Church. 2. Some helped the minister. 3. All loved one another. IV. NOT ONLY INSISTS UPON LOVE AND PIETY, BUT RIGHTEOUSLY REWARDS THEM. Consider this honourable record. 1. Mark the

special distinctions it exhibits. 2. Be sure that the same will be the case in the entries made in the book of life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The salutations of St. Paul:* —I. THROW LIGHT UPON THE APOSTLE'S CHARACTER. We are at once reminded of "the care of all the churches" which rested upon him. He had not founded this Roman Church, and yet with what a warmth of Christian affection does he regard it, while there are some in it whom he mentions with an emphasis of special regard whom he had known in other Churches. With the burden of all the Churches weighing upon his heart every hour he forgets no act of kindness. II. REFUTING THE PETRINE ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CHURCH, upon which the assumptions of the Papacy are based. There is no well-authenticated evidence that Peter ever lived in Rome at all. He is spoken of as "the apostle of the circumcision," just as Paul was "the apostle of the uncircumcision," and we expect to find him exercising his pastorate at Jerusalem rather than at Rome, and accordingly it is to Jerusalem that Paul goes, and there he repeatedly finds him. But on the supposition that he presided over this Church, it must have been by the time that Paul wrote this Epistle. And if so, could Paul have omitted his name from these salutations? And if Peter had ever been there at an earlier period, would there have been no grateful reference now to the good which he had done? The truth is that the first link in the chain of argument for the papal supremacy is wanting, and this makes the rest worthless. III. GIVE US INFORMATION AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH MEMBERS WERE TRANSFERRED FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER. Phebe was a deaconess in the Church at Cenchrea, and probably a widow possessed of considerable worldly substance, whose business now carried her to Rome. And so she brings with her, written by Paul in his own name and in that of the Church, a certificate, in which not only her Church membership is attested, but witness is borne to the many good services she had performed in her native Church; and her brethren at Rome are asked to recompense her in some degree for her ministries of love. Note two valuable and interesting facts—the oneness of all the Churches in those primitive times, and the fact that membership in one at once secured a loving welcome into every other. Phebe was to feel that she was really passing from one home to another. What a lesson, if not a rebuke, to our Churches in this matter! The transference of members is too much a mere cold formality, alike in giving and receiving, and hundreds of persons change their residences without a letter of commendation at all. Is it any wonder, then, that so many pass out of sight altogether? IV. INDICATING THOSE WHO ARE WORTHY OF SPECIAL COMMENDATION. 1. There are those of whom Paul speaks with great warmth, because of their general Christian excellence and eminence. Such were Epenetus, Stachys, Amplias, and Apelles. 2. Then there were others who stood forth as specially distinguished by one particular excellence. (1) We distinguish among the givers Aquila, Priscilla, and Urbane his helpers, and Phebe, "the succourer," &c. The form which this liberality took was doubtless shaped by outward circumstances, but the relief of the poor, the orphan, and the widow, defraying the expenses of a constantly extending evangelism, and the hospitable entertainment of Christian strangers, were prevailing forms of goodness. We know that one great aim of the early teachers was to educate its members to habits of giving, so that it should not be a mere fitful effort. It was the gospel that first did earnest battle with the selfishness of man, and turned beneficence into a system. And when Julian tried to engraft such beneficence upon the sapless tree of paganism, he complained that while the heathen did nothing for the support of their own poor, the Christians ministered to the wants of all. (2) Then how many an earnest worker there was in that Church, such as Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa, and Persis! The form of their sacred labour would also be shaped by their natural capacities, by the wants of the Church and the community, and also by the advice of pastors. Many would teach, and others would be found lodging strangers, relieving the afflicted, and diligently following every good work. (3) And there were earnest sufferers too, such as "Andronicus and Junia," who had been Paul's companions in prison; and "Priscilla and Aquila, who for his life had laid down their own necks." Thus did the spirit already begin to show itself which was afterwards to shine forth in many a glorious martyrdom. V. SHOW THE IMPORTANT PLACE WHICH CHRISTIAN WOMEN HELD IN THE EARLY CHURCH, and which we may therefore conclude they were intended to hold as workers in all ages in the Church of Christ. In this brief enumeration of sixteen verses nine or ten women are named as having been fellow-helpers with the apostle, and having consecrated themselves to "the fellowship of the ministry to the saints." No doubt the peculiar condition of society, which to

a great extent isolated women, rendered the labours of Christian women indispensable. And it would seem as if a splendid sphere of usefulness were at this hour opening up before Christian women in connection with missionary enterprise in the East. There are more than fifty millions of women in India who are only accessible by the gospel through women. VI. ILLUSTRATE THE DOMESTIC CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY. On one occasion at least, when mentioning a husband and wife, the apostle speaks of "the Church which was in their house." It may be that a number of the Christians were accustomed to come together in a private house for social worship. But the kernel-thought around which all the others gather is that all the members of that family were Christian believers, and that they therefore formed a little Church, as every such family does, with its worship, its Christian teaching, its mutual oversight, and its unity and love. Conclusion: 1. Suppose the apostle were now on earth, and were to write a letter to this congregation, should I be spoken of as one who had "succoured the saints"? &c. 2. In Paul's later Epistles his salutations become fewer and fewer—the greater number of those whom he had known having died. It is a solemn thought, "The night cometh wherein no man can work." (*A. Thomson, D.D.*) *Apostolic commendations and cautions*:—For many reasons this chapter is a fitting conclusion to the Epistle. For—(1) It indicates to us that doctrine is subservient to personal piety. (2) That very sacred social ties should exist between a pastor and his people. (3) That right relationship to Christ creates a right mutual relationship between men. Note—I. THE COMMENDATIONS AND GREETINGS OF THE APOSTLE. The commendation of Phebe, who is as a sweet flower in the landscape where the apostle himself is a majestic oak, and all the commendations and greetings that follow, lead us to look at true Church fellowship—1. In its variety. There are men and women of varied (1) stations, (2) characters, (3) services. There is the chamberlain and the slave; the active and passive temperament, the laborious and the hospitable. 2. Its common elements. Common—(1) Relationship, "Our sister." (2) Service, "Succourer of many." (3) Principle, "As it becometh saints." II. HIS CAUTIONS. The saddest fact in this, and in all these early letters, is the tone in which the apostle has to speak to many professed Christians. In his words of caution about one and another we notice—1. The mournfulness of the fact that professed Christians have to be so spoken of. 2. The discernment and courage needed rightly to deal with such characters. III. THE GREETINGS FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER. Here Corinth greets Rome. Christianity creates relationships that are—1. Cosmopolitan. The inherent element of a Church is that it is Catholic. 2. Cordial, "Holy kiss." 3. Practical, "Receive." (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Personal messages*:—1. If a modern clergyman were writing to his old parishioners, what would be more natural than at the end of the letter he should add affectionate remembrances to any poor pensioners and aged widows whom he had known? Felix Neff, the Apostle of the High Alps, two days before his death, being scarcely able to see, traced the following lines at different intervals, in large and irregular characters, "Adieu, dear friend André Blanc, Antoine Blanc, all my friends, Pelissiers whom I love tenderly, Francis Dumont and his wife, Isaac and his wife, beloved Deslois, Emilie Bonnet, &c., Alexandrine and her mother, all, all the brethren and sisters of theirs, adieu, adieu." 2. Doubtless when Paul's greetings were first read in the little churches they would have been listened to with the deepest interest. The slave or the poor woman who heard his or her name mentioned, "How kind, how good it was of Paulus to remember me! What a help it is to me to know that the dear and holy apostle, with the care of all the churches upon him, and living as he does in the midst of plots and of perils, yet thinks of and prays for me! If I be dear to him, must I not also be dear to his Lord and to mine?" 3. But why should it be to us a part of our public worship to hear these salutations read to-day? There is no more in these names of Amplias, &c., than in the names of Brown, or Jones, or Smith. They were just the names of poor, ordinary persons, on whom the nobles or the careless women would have looked down with scorn. And yet very genuine lessons may be learned from these lists of names. Note—I. THE OVERFLOWING AFFECTIONATENESS OF THE HEART OF PAUL, which should teach us the lesson of kindliness, the family affection of the Christian life. Christians needed each other's help in those days. They were as lambs among wolves. "See how those Christians love one another," said the envious heathen then. Alas! they would have little cause to say so now. But these lists of names may at least serve to remind us of the beauty of the lost ideal. II. HIS REGARD FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN, which should teach us the glory of Chris-

tian womanhood. The world has never recognised the vast debt it owes to Christian women. Even in this day, though women do more than men in the great works of quiet, unobtrusive charity, and are incomparably more thorough, patient, tender, skilful, and self-denying than the vast majority of men, yet they might well complain that they are far less cared for in our public exhortations than men. Well, it was not so with Paul. In this chapter alone seven Christian women are recognised with words of gentleness and praise. In this day the minds of holy and noble women may well be pained by the mock deference and hypocritical compliments which are paid them. There is not the faintest trace of this in Paul. For foolish and unworthy women he had words of deserved scorn. In days when women lived for the most part in unavoidable ignorance and seclusion, and were shamefully regarded as the mere chattels and servants of man's caprice and wickedness, Paul's illuminated soul had recognised the sacred and beautiful type of Christian womanhood. III. HIS HONOUR FOR SLAVES, which should teach us the dignity of man as man. MANY WHOM PAUL HERE SALUTES ARE SLAVES AND MEN OF POOR AND MEAN CONDITION. It is the nature of the world to fawn upon the great; they are ashamed to know the poor. A slave was as great as a Cæsar, because for slave and Cæsar Christ had died. Nay, a despised slave might be much more to him. For man in himself is less than nothing; he is great in God only, if he is great at all. A few short days both emperor and slave would die, and then the one might be wailing in outer darkness, while the other, amid acclaim of angels, might tread "the heavenly Jerusalem's rejoicing streets." IV. HIS DISCRIMINATING EULOGIES. Being addressed to Christians—in days when to be a Christian was to be persecuted—he was writing presumably to good men. Yet even between good men there is a difference, and Paul uses only the language of deserved praise. What comfort there is in the thought that, as God bestows on us different gifts, so also He expects from us different forms of service! All branches cannot bear the same fruit; "all members have not the same office." Mary has her work, and Phebe hers; Urbane has his work, and Apelles his; and some of us, perhaps, think with a sigh that we do little or no work. Well, if we are but trying to do what little we can, let us be content. We may then be like Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Hermes, and Patrobas, of whom nothing is said. Better to be the nameless ciphers of Christianity than to be of the world's guilty kings. V. THE MERE CASUAL MENTION OF THESE NAMES BY PAUL HAS GIVEN THEM A SORT OF IMMORTALITY. Horace might have sung of them—he does actually mention one or two of the same names; Seneca might have mentioned them among his brilliant aphorisms; Tacitus might have introduced them in his histories, yet they would still have been incomparably less eternised. Little thought those slaves and poor women that their names would be on our lips to-day, in what was then a remote and savage island. Centuries after they are dead we still speak of them, and yet, grotesque their names certainly are—Phebe, Hermas, Hermes, Nereus—names of heathen gods and goddesses in which people had quite ceased to believe, half jocosely given to the slaves of their families; Stachys, a corn ear; Asyncritus, the incomparable; Persis, the Persian woman, known only by her nationality; Tryphena the "wanton," and Tryphosa "the luxurious"—names perhaps once insultingly given to a class, now meekly borne. They had other names, new names, in heaven. Five, ten, fifteen years hence, and how many of you who hear me will be utterly forgotten! Fifty years hence, all but one or two of us, it may be, will be lying in our coffins, our names perhaps already illegible on the worn stone, and nobody knowing or caring who lies below. No Paul will mention us. And what does it matter if our names are written in "the Lamb's Book of Life"? (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Apostolic greetings*:—I. THEY ARE VALUABLE AS—1. A source of gratification to the persons named. 2. A stimulus to themselves and others. 3. A tribute to the Christian community at Rome. 4. A corroboration of the genuineness of the Epistle. 5. A means of promoting union between the Jews and Gentiles, and both and himself. II. TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS CHARACTERISED BY—1. Whatever is tender and amiable in human nature. 2. The graceful proprieties of an advanced civilisation. 3. The gentle charities and delicacy of refined friendship. Grace sanctifies the courtesies of life and refines the manners. It is quite friendly to the graces and amenities of social intercourse. Forms of politeness are most beautiful when animated by spiritual life. III. THERE ARE FIVE CLASSES MENTIONED IN THESE GREETINGS. 1. Helpers and fellow-labourers, as Aquila, Mary, &c. 2. Relatives and countrymen, as Andronicus, &c. 3. Paul's own converts and well-known friends, as Epenetus, &c. 4. Societies, as the church

in Aquila's house. 5. Households, or parts of such, as that of Aristobulus, &c. IV. IN THESE GREETINGS MAY BE NOTICED—1. The kindness of Paul in naming so many. 2. Special regard to individuals, combined with love to all. 3. Grateful remembrance of past kindnesses. 4. Those specially distinguished who laboured most. The care of the Churches did not efface remembrance of persons. Believers least likely to forget their friends. Their mutual remembrance lively because—1. Founded in a spiritual, therefore deep affection. 2. Kept always fresh at the throne of grace. Those are well remembered who are remembered before God. V. IN THOSE GREETED WE HAVE—1. A group of star pictures of apostolic times. 2. A lovely representation of living Christians. 3. A splendid testimony to the riches of Divine grace. Roman, Greek, and Hebrew names promiscuously introduced. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The true aristocracy:*—Many names in "The Peerage" have won their distinction by intrigues and base services rendered to bad kings, and there are many who study and prize such books more than the Book of books. The register before us is given by a man before whose intellectual and moral greatness the most brilliant names in worldly peerages sink into contempt. The names that this great man enrols are those of poor women, obscure men, and slaves. I. THE CHIEF INTEREST WHICH A TRULY GREAT MAN HAS IN OTHERS IS IN THEIR CHARACTER, RATHER THAN IN THEIR CONDITION. In this list of twenty-six names there are those who differ in their sex, age, worldly position, &c., yet the apostle overlooks all these differences, and expresses an interest only in their character. Why? Because this is—1. The only real property. It is the only thing that a man can call his own. 2. The only property man can carry with him. Everything else—houses, lands, gold, and silver—he leaves behind. But his moral character he carries over Jordan. 3. That which determines his destiny. From it must bloom his paradise or flame his hell. II. THE CHARACTER WHICH ENLISTS THE PROFOUNDEST INTEREST OF A TRULY GREAT MAN IS THE CHRISTLY ONE. "Who labour in the Lord." 1. Living and working in—(1) The Spirit. (2) Purpose. (3) Character, and (4) Moral temper of Christ. 2. Why should a Christly character command such tender sympathy? Because it is—(1) The highest reflection of his Master. Good men are incarnations of Him whom all heaven adores. (2) The highest organ of usefulness. It is in itself the strongest argument against all infidelities, and the strongest proof of the Divinity of the gospel. III. THOSE WHO ENLIST THE CHIEF INTEREST OF A TRULY GREAT MAN ARE THE MOST HONOURABLE OF THEIR AGE. Who will deny or question this? Parasites and sycophants have always shown more sympathy of their miserable natures for martial pageantry, official pomp, than for Christly character. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Whom does the apostle distinguish as worthy of the highest estimation:*—Those who, like—I. PHŒBE, are succourers of many. II. PRISCILLA and AQUILA, helpers. III. EPÆNETUS, ANDRONICUS and JUNIA, have long and faithfully served Christ. IV. AMPLIAS and APELLES, beloved and approved in the Lord. V. PERSIS, labour much in the Lord. VI. ASYNCRITUS, and others, steadfast in Christian fellowship. In a word, all who are eminently distinguished by Christian love. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Romans, but not Romanists:*—The text—I. ILLUSTRATES THE VARIOUS RELATIONS OF FAMILIES TO THE CHURCH. 1. In ver. 3 you have a household in which the husband and the wife were joined to the Church. When two loving hearts pull together they accomplish wonders. What different associations cluster around the names of Ananias and Sapphira! I do not know why Paul placed the wife first, for in the Acts it is the reverse. Perhaps it was because Priscilla was first in energy of character and attainments in grace. Whether the wife be first or second matters little if both be truly the servants of God. Pray unceasingly that your life-companions may be converted to God. Paul spoke of the Church that was in their house. It is well when a Christian family judge that the parlour will be honoured by being used for a prayer meeting. Such a dwelling becomes like the house of Obededom. 2. In ver. 7 Andronicus and Junia represent part of a very remarkable household, for they were kinsmen of Paul, and they were converted to God before Paul was. I have wondered whether the conversion of Adronicus and Junia excited in him his fury against Christ; but it is more than probable that their prayers were part of the means of his conversion. This should act as a great encouragement for all who desire the salvation of their households. Out of persecutors God can make apostles. 3. In ver. 10 we have a family whose head was not a Christian. Why leave Aristobulus out? Because he had left himself out; he was no believer, and therefore there could be no Christian salutation sent to him. The kingdom of God was in

his house, and yet he was unblessed by it. Where are you, Aristobulus? The Lord sends a message of grace to your child and wife, but not to you, for you have not given your heart to Him. Another instance, and a worse one, is in ver. 11. There was a Narcissus at this period who was extremely rich, and as bad as he was rich. Yet while blasphemous songs, gluttony, and licentiousness made his mansion a very hell, there was a saving salt in the slaves' dormitory. He who blacks your shoes may be one of the beloved of the Lord, while you who wear them may be without God and without hope in the world. 4. In ver. 12 we have, I suppose, two sisters: where were their brothers, their father, their mother? How often there are in the Church two humble, faithful women, and all the rest far off from God! Brother, let not your sister go to heaven alone. Father, if your daughters be children of God, do not you remain His enemy. 5. In ver. 15 we have a brother and sister. It is pleasant to see the stronger and weaker sex thus associated. But had they no other relatives? Depend upon it, they often prayed together for all the rest. 6. In ver. 13 there are a mother and her son. When a godly woman is a tender mother, it is no wonder if her sons become believers, for the mother's love and example draw them towards Jesus. There is a legend connected with Rufus and Alexander, that when their father Simon was compelled to bear the Cross, one carried his father's pick, and the other his spade. If they cannot bear the Cross, they will at least help their father by carrying his tools. Who marvels if Alexander and Rufus saw their father carry Christ's Cross so well, that they, too, should afterwards count it their glory to be followers of the Crucified. II. SHOWS WHAT ARE POINTS OF INTEREST AMONG CHRISTIANS. In a worldly community the point of interest is, how much is a man worth? Now Paul does not make a single reference to any one on account of his position, property, or office, except so far as those may be implied in the service which each person rendered to the cause of God. The points of interest with Paul are—1. Their service for the Church (vers. 1, 2). It is a distinction among Christians to be allowed to serve, and the most menial employment for the Church is the most honourable. So Phebe shall have her name inscribed in this golden book of Christ's nobility, because she is the servant of the Church, and because, in being such, she succoured the poor and needy. 2. Their labour (ver 6). Mary was one of those useful women who took personal care of the preacher, because she believed the life of God's servant to be precious. Then fellow Tryphena and Tryphosa, "who labour in the Lord"; and Persis, who "laboured much in the Lord." I do not suppose Tryphena and Tryphosa were angry because the apostle made this distinction, but it is certainly a very explicit one. Degrees in honour among believers are graduated by the scale of service done. 3. Their character. Ver. 13 cannot allude to Rufus' election, since all the rest were chosen too, but must mean that he was a choice man in the Lord. Apelles was "approved in Christ," a tried and experienced believer. Epænetus (ver. 5) is singled out because of the time of his conversion. While every minister feels a peculiar attachment to all his converts, he has the tenderest memory of the first ones. What parent does not prize above all others his first child? III. REVEALS THE GENERAL LOVE WHICH OUGHT TO EXIST IN THE CHURCH OF GOD. 1. The whole passage shows the love of the apostle towards the brethren at Rome. He would not have taken the trouble to write all this to them if he had not really loved them. And it shows that there were Christians in those days who were full of love to each other. The holy kiss marked their fervour of love. 1. The early Christians were accustomed to show their love to one another—(1) By practical help. I do not think that the apostle alluded to any Church business, but to her own. I do not know what it was, and it was no part of an apostle's commission to tell us other people's business; but whatever business it was, if any Christian in Rome could help her he was to do so. (2) When it involved great sacrifices (ver. 4). 2. Christian love in those days—(1) Had the great respect for those who had suffered for Christ (ver. 7). (2) Honoured workers (ver. 6). Paul speaks of the labourers over and over again with intense affection. (3) Had its specialities. "My well-beloved Epænetus," "Amplias my beloved," &c., &c. There were some whom he liked better than others, and even the Lord had a disciple whom He loved more than the rest. There are Christian people whom you could live with in heaven comfortably enough, but it is a severe trial to bear with them on earth; but since God puts up with them, so ought you. (4) Was wont to respect seniority in spiritual life; for Paul speaks of some who were in Christ before himself. (5) Did not overlook the most obscure members of the Church. "Salute Asyncritus,

Phlegon, Hermas," &c. We know nothing about those good people. They were like the most of us, commonplace individuals; but they loved the Lord, and therefore Paul sent them a message of love which has become embalmed in the Holy Scriptures. It were better to be the meanest Christian than to be the greatest sinner. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The truly honourable in the Church of Christ:*—I. THEIR DISTINCTION. 1. In general they are all recognised as brethren in Christ. Are we? In particular they are distinguished by—(1) Faithful and zealous service. (2) Patient suffering. (3) Long and consistent attachment to the cause of Christ. (4) Eminent piety and Christian love. Do any of these features apply to us? II. ITS VALUE. 1. Their names—(1) Are in good report; are ours? (2) Are immortalised, and will endure as long as the Word of God; will ours? 2. This record of them is the guarantee that their names are in the book of life; are ours? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian love* is—1. Large in its comprehensiveness. 2. Kind in its expressions. 3. Just in its acknowledgments. 4. Tender and affectionate to all. (*Ibid*).

Vers. 1, 2. **I commend unto you Phebe.**—*Phebe of Cenchrea:*—1. Cenchrea was a thriving sea-port town about eight miles from Corinth, from which the Corinthian commerce was carried on with the East. Thence Paul had sailed for Jerusalem on a former occasion, and had established a Church there. Phebe, travelling westward, would pass through Corinth, and embark from the opposite shore at Lechæum, whence ships sailed for Italy. 2. There are indications that she was a person of considerable influence, and even wealth. She had "business" on which it was necessary to travel to the capital. She was "a succourer of many"; and the original word implies the ideas which we connect with patronage and protection. Add to this that she was probably a widow, since only in that character could she have travelled so independently. 3. Her Christian character is very distinctly brought out. The apostle guarantees this when he calls her "our sister." The Roman brethren may receive her with perfect confidence as one with them "in the Lord." At Cenchrea she was not only a recognised member, but an active and useful "servant of the Church." Many would translate, "a deaconess." The letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, written early in the second century, speaks of two Christian women, "who were called ministers," having been examined by torture. This looks as if a female order of some kind existed in the Churches of Asia Minor at that time. In the New Testament itself, besides this passage, the only similar indications are in 1 Tim. iii. 11, where for wives some would read women, *i.e.*, women deacons; and Titus ii. 3. But these are too vague to sustain any very definite conclusion. The probable fact is that there was no actual order of deaconesses, but that wherever a Christian woman showed capacity and enjoyed sufficient leisure, she was joyfully accepted as a fellow-labourer. She would do such work as elders and deacons failed to do so well, or could not do at all, and perhaps would be entrusted with the relief of the poor. A glorious sphere is opened by the gospel to women. Those of them who are without domestic ties may find a place in the very van of the Christian army. In the most dangerous districts of Paris, in India and China, English ladies labour with a devotedness and a success never exceeded by the stronger sex. Without neglecting her home, the matron may have her class or district, and shed a heavenly influence round. The cry for woman's rights finds its best satisfaction here. Happy are those Churches where the gentler gifts and graces set themselves to the sterner qualities of the other. 4. Phebe, then, is about to sail for Rome, and will arrive a stranger in the mighty metropolis. Paul asks that the necessary attentions may be bestowed on her. I. HE PUTS HIS REQUEST IN A VERY PRACTICAL FORM. The errand on which she goes is one connected probably with law. Now a foreigner would be at a terrible disadvantage. She might readily become a victim of some unprincipled practitioner. Bribery or intimidation might be used against her. "Assist her," therefore, is Paul's entreaty to the brethren. Make her cause your own. Counsel her as to the wisest procedure to adopt, and see that she is not wronged. Would that our sentiments were reduced to this form. It is comparatively easy to give alms, and kind words, and prayers. What is often most wanted is a little trouble. Here, for instance, is a man in want of a situation; can we not procure one for him? There is a sick woman without medical attention; can we not provide it? Here some young man is beginning business; how much would a little sound advice be worth to him! II. CONSIDER THE MUTUAL CHARACTER WHICH IS TO DISTINGUISH OUR CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. Phebe had done nothing for the brethren

at Rome. Why, then, should they be summoned to her side? Because she has helped others. Now let her be helped in turn. The cup of cold water is to go round from hand to hand. Some fainting brother seeks your counsel or comfort. Do not refuse him; your own turn will soon come. Or perhaps your turn has come. Take freely what your friends offer; you will have ample opportunity to repay it. For there is a freemasonry in the kingdom of Christ which we should never fail to recognise. III. ALL OUR ATTENTIONS TO ONE ANOTHER ARE TO SPRING FROM OUR ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST. "Receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints." There ought to be a certain characteristic warmth and unction in Christian kindness, distinguishing it from all other. How should we welcome our King, if He Himself landed on our shores, and came to our house-doors, and sought our hospitality, or desired our aid? So are we to receive and succour one another. (*W. Brock.*) *Phebe, a true sister of mercy*:—I. HER COMMENDATION. 1. A servant of the Church. 2. A succourer of many. 3. Especially of the apostle. 4. Prompted not by fee or reward, but by faith and love. II. HER RECOMMENDATION. 1. By inspired authority. 2. To the Church in Rome as worthy of help. 3. In everything. III. HER CREDENTIALS AND CLAIMS. 1. The Epistle which she bore. 2. The general rule of Christian charity. It becometh saints to help such. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Phebe's Church certificate*:—We discover in this letter of commendation—I. A PRACTICAL EXHIBITION OF TRUE THEOLOGICAL GREATNESS. All are bound to confess that the apostle had a mind of the highest type. In this letter he had gone into deeps and soared to heights of thought overwhelmingly solemn and grand. Yet, notwithstanding this, he comes down to write a certificate of the character of a pious woman, who belonged to a little Church. He was not one of those theologians who consider it almost beneath them to be courteous and kind to the private Church members. Nor was he one of those who scarcely condescend to notice anything in people but their beliefs; he notices the kindness and the social usefulness of this woman. Theology must not be substituted for kindness; nay, the theology which does not make us amiable is not the theology of the gospel. II. A RECOGNITION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM. The language of this Church certificate implies—1. Common relationship. "Our sister." The universal Church is a family of which Christ is the head. 2. Common service. The service which she had rendered in Cenchrea was of interest to those good people in Rome. You have a son in some distant part; a friend of his calls upon you with a letter from him, introducing him to your confidence and regard; in that letter you are told that the bearer had rendered signal service to your son more than once; will not love for the writer induce you to regard the service as done to yourself, and to treat the bearer as your friend? It should be so in the Church. 3. Common principle. "As it becometh saints." Saints profess to be concerned for the good of their fellow-men—not their own. Act becoming that. Saints profess to love all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Act worthy of that, &c. III. AN INSTANCE OF THE POWER OF ONE HUMBLE INDIVIDUAL TO RENDER SIGNAL SERVICES TO A WHOLE COMMUNITY. In the Apostolic Church there were female officers, deaconesses, whose work was to minister to the necessities of the saints (1. Tim. v. 10); and if ever they were needed it is now. The men are so absorbed in business that in most cases they can only be mere nominal officers. Why should there not be appointed in every Church women who, being free from the pressure of secular engagements, can devote their time and energies to works of usefulness? We do not know how Phebe "succoured Paul"; but we see that a humble woman could inspire an apostle. Every person has some power of usefulness, and should use his talent. IV. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE EVEN IN THIS WORLD. In this case—1. It secured the approval of Paul. Perhaps, as now, many sneered at or misrepresented this woman as she toiled on in works of usefulness; but Paul observed her. 2. It secured from the apostle an introduction to the good. What a blessing was this! Better have the sympathy of one noble soul, than the hosannas of thoughtless millions. V. AN INTIMATION OF THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO REGARD THE SECULAR CLAIMS OF ITS MEMBERS. "That ye assist her," &c. Paul wishes to excite the same interest towards her as he felt himself. We are commanded to "bear one another's burdens," &c., because secular anxiety is—1. A temptation. 2. Suffering. 3. A hindrance to usefulness. VI. A SUGGESTION AS TO THE KIND OF PERSONS THAT SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER. Paul recommended Phebe because of her undoubted excellence and great usefulness. We know, from painful experience, that many "letters of dismission" are empty formalities and

tacit falsehoods. Persons are thus introduced from one Church to another, who, instead of being helps are hindrances; who, instead of "succouring" their ministers are their torment. It is time for this imposture to be exposed. Worthless and troublesome members we will dismiss with pleasure to any pastor that applies for them, and the good and valuable, like Phebe, we will cordially recommend. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 3–5. **Greet Priscilla and Aquila.**—*Priscilla and Aquila, Paul's helpers*:—I. THEIR SERVICE. 1. Toil. 2. Sacrifice. II. THEIR MOTIVES OF ACTION. 1. Faith. 2. Love. 3. Hope in Christ. III. THEIR REWARD. 1. On earth—the thanks of the apostle. 2. In heaven, life everlasting. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *A Christian family helping their minister*:—Aquila was a Jew of Pontus who had made his residence in Rome. But a company of thieves in Judæa, having fallen on one Stephanus, a servant of the emperor, robbed his baggage, and slain the soldiers who guarded it, an edict was passed requiring all Jews to leave that city. In consequence of this edict, Aquila, with his wife, came to Corinth, and there wrought in his occupation, which was that of a tent maker. Paul coming from Athens to Coriuth, meets with them and takes lodging in their house, working at the same occupation. It was probably at this time that they first gained the knowledge which they were able to impart to Apollos. Paul's residence with them laid a foundation for a friendship which lasted till death (2 Tim. iv. 19). How worthy they were of his affection and esteem we learn from the text. I. THEY WERE HAPPILY UNITED IN ALL THEIR CONCERNS, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE GREAT CONCERNS OF RELIGION. On all occasions they are both mentioned together, and appear patterns of conjugal union. They dwelt together in days of tranquility, and jointly shared in the calamities of banishment. With united hands they laboured in the occupation by which their household was supported. As this is the most important relation in life, they who sustain it ought, above all things, to study mutual peace. The Christian pair, animated by one soul, will readily participate in each other's labours and sorrows, and will cheerfully communicate to each other their own pleasures and joys. Little differences of opinion will be composed by mutual condescension. Unavoidable infirmities will be viewed with the comforting eye of pity, not with the insulting eye of disdain. In the important concerns of religion, they will walk, as being heirs together of the grace of life. A family, educated under the care of heads thus united, will, by the smiles of heaven, grow up in knowledge and piety, and become a little Church of Christ. II. THEY WERE THE APOSTLE'S HELPERS IN CHRIST JESUS. 1. By their hospitality. For a considerable part of the time that he preached in Corinth, he abode in their house. The minister is to preach the gospel, not for filthy lucre; but then, they who are taught must communicate to him who teacheth, so that he may wait on his teaching without distraction. 2. By a faithful attendance on his ministry. Heads of families in this way greatly assist their minister. This shows a good example to their children, and invites others to accompany them. Thus they animate their minister and raise his hopes of success. But then let your attendance be grave and devout, and on what you hear let your remarks be made at the proper time and place. 3. By their conversation and example (Acts xviii.). 4. By their prayers. 5. By their self-sacrifices (ver. 4). III. THEY HAD A CHURCH IN THEIR HOUSE. We, then, who have the care of families, ought to make them Churches. For this end we must dedicate our children to God, and bring them up in His fear. Greater societies are formed from smaller; Churches grow out of families; and the spirit and complexion of the latter will be transfused through the former. (*J. Lathrop, D.D.*) **Who have for my life laid down their necks.**—*The unbounded affection of Priscilla and Aquila for Paul*:—I. PAUL DESERVED IT. He had rendered them the greatest service which one human being could render to another. Through his instrumentality they had been won to Christ, trained for usefulness, built up in their most holy faith. And the same may be said of thousands of ministers. If the debt of love be owing at all it is surely to those who have rendered others soul service. II. THEY SHOWED IT. Not by amiable feelings, graceful compliments, or even faithful service. All these were and are done. But so is something more. The expression "placed their neck under" the sword or axe, is figurative, but implies the act of exposing one's life, and occurred either at Corinth (Acts xviii. 12–17) or at Ephesus (1 Cor. xv. 32; 2 Cor. i. 8, xii. 23). This extreme form of service is not now required except in the case of missionaries, to whom it has often been rendered. But ordinary ministers need protection and should have it. 1. Their character is assailed by

venomous slander. Let not chivalrous defence be wanting at whatever cost. 2. Their peace of mind is endangered by cantankerous opposition. Let no member of the Church absent himself from a stormy meeting lest his own tranquility be disturbed. 3. Their health is often threatened by overwork, under pay, vexatious conditions of labour and unsanitary dwellings. This is often only for want of thought. But love not only "thinketh no evil," it should stimulate thought and sacrifice for the pastor's good. Conclusion: 1. If your minister is set for the defence of the gospel, the least you can do is to defend him. 2. You need not boast that you would be willing to lay down your necks for him if required. This will never be required. But he needs protection for his character, tranquility and health. In rendering this you will do nothing heroic, but you will do what is useful and acceptable, which is better. (*J. W. Burn.*) **Likewise greet the Church which is in their house.**—*The Church in the house*:—I. ITS FORMS. 1. The cottage meeting. 2. The social Christian circle. 3. The pious family. II. ITS ADVANTAGES. 1. God's blessing. 2. Domestic happiness. 3. Anticipated union in heaven. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Church in the house*:—A Church is a company of believers, meeting statedly in Christ's name, more or less fully organised with office bearers, with the ordinances of Christ duly administered among them, and is not dependent on numbers (Matt. xviii. 20). There were various such Churches already at Rome (vers. 14, 15). The meeting-place of a Church will be dependent on circumstances. The house of Aquila being sufficiently commodious, although destitute of most of the accessories with which we are familiar, was a meeting-place of the Church. Private houses (Acts ii. 46) were the birthplaces of Christian worship, and public buildings were not erected till the third century. When it became dangerous to meet even in private houses the Christians assembled in the catacombs. Aquila's house became a Church wherever he went, which shows us that zeal for Christ's cause should be carried about with us. Mere professors often leave their religion behind them. Grace in a family converts a household into a Church. Religion is to be manifested in the family as a household thing. Wherever Abraham had a tent Jehovah had an altar. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **Salute my well-beloved Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.**—*Epænetus, the first convert of Achaia* (Asia is the reading preferred by the best authorities):—This honourable distinction implies—I. PRIVILEGE. II. A READY RECEPTION OF CHRIST. III. RESPONSIBILITY. IV. HONOUR. V. PROMISE OF SUCCESS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Firstfruits unto Christ*:—The firstfruits under the law were an offering made to God of the first ripe fruits before the harvest was begun. In allusion to this Christ is called "the firstfruits of them that slept," because His resurrection is an earnest and pledge of the resurrection of believers. The sanctifying and comforting influences of the Spirit are called the firstfruits of the Spirit, as earnests of heavenly happiness. James tells us that God hath begotten us "that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Rev. xiv. 4). By a like allusion the apostle calls the first converts in a particular place the firstfruits of that place unto Christ. Now consider this man, dwelling in the midst of heathen, on the preaching of the apostle, coming out from among a corrupt and idolatrous multitude, and, by his example and conversation, inviting his fellow-citizens to turn to the living God; and will you not admire his integrity, zeal and fortitude? Note—I. HOW A FORWARDNESS IN RELIGION MAY DISCOVER ITSELF. In—1. Early religion. Epænetus enjoyed not your early advantages, but it seems probable that he accepted the first invitation to Christ. He gave to Christ the firstfruits, if not of life itself, yet of that part of life in which he was favoured with the heavenly call. All have now this call in their youth. 2. An open profession of it, and a diligent attendance on the means of it. 3. A maintenance of the profession and practice of it, though it should involve the charge of singularity. Epænetus professed the religion of the gospel when all around him were in a different sentiment and practice. 4. A zeal for great and essential things. There are many who are forward in little matters; zealous for or against opinions, forms, &c., but this is only forwardness in a party design. The Christian is zealous to maintain good works, and abounds in the proper fruits of the Spirit. 5. Labours to promote it among others. When Paul calls his beloved Epænetus the firstfruits, he intimates that a rich harvest followed. This forward Christian doubtless assisted Paul greatly. 6. Aspirations after greater eminence in religion. II. THIS FORWARDNESS IS COMMENDABLE. 1. As an evidence of sincerity. 2. On account of its usefulness. The slothful, negligent Christian emboldens sinners in their transgressions, and confirms them in their stupidity. 3. As it is honourable to Christ. To Him belong the firstfruits of your lives. He

is honoured by the increase of His subjects. By your forwardness you will contribute to this increase. 4. As an imitation of Christ. He was in early life about His Father's business. 5. Because it is in the highest degree rational. It is regarding things according to their nature and importance. 6. We have no promise of success on any other condition. (1) This is the command of Christ. "Seek first the kingdom of God." Strive to enter in at the straight gate. (2) This is the direction of the apostle. The promise is only to those who give diligence to make their calling and election sure. (3) It is by forwardness in religion that you become entitled to the constant aids of God's grace. (*J. Lathrop, D.D.*) *A first convert remembered*:—Epænetus was the first convert in Achaia, the richest of all the Greek provinces. Chalmers in his fascinating book on New Guinea gives us the name of the first female convert in New Guinea. If you and I were sent to labour in a country like that we would take special note of our first convert. I knew a person who when he began his work had but one person to sit at his feet. Did not he take note of that person? He has never forgotten her and never will. A true missionary never forgets his first convert, never forgets any convert, and Paul did not forget Epænetus, the first convert to Christ in Achaia. (*D. Stuart.*)

Vers. 6, 7. **Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.**—*Mary's service*:—1. Well directed. 2. Diligently performed. 3. Rightly dictated. 4. Abundantly rewarded. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Marys of the New Testament*:—I. TWO WERE RELATED TO CHRIST—Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary her sister. II. TWO MINISTERED TO CHRIST—Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene. III. TWO SHOWED KINDNESS TO CHRIST'S SERVANTS—Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, and Mary of Rome. (*Ibid.*) *A working woman*:—Have you the slightest desire to be loved, would you have your presence a welcome one in palace and cottage alike, would you be admired, respected, revered, would you feel all sweet human sympathies clustering around you while you live, and know that the tears of a multitude of friends would be shed upon your grave when you die, you must be a working woman—living and working for others, denying yourself for others, and building up for yourself a character, strong, symmetrical, beautiful. If I were you I would rather be that impalpable and quietly gliding shadow which the wounded soldier kissed as the noble Florence Nightingale passed down between the hospital beds, than the golden calf of luxury who has no thought above her personal ease and nourishment. (*Great Thoughts.*) **Salute Andronicus and Junia.**—*Andronicus and Junia*:—Probably husband and wife, or brother and sister. Grace adorns, sanctifies, and sweetens every relation of life. Natural relationships not absorbed by union with Christ. The distinction of these persons was that they were—I. KINSMEN OF PAUL, either in the wider or more restricted sense. Paul's nephew at Jerusalem warmly attached to his uncle. Grace recognises the ties of kindred. These ties drawn still closer by a common faith. II. PAUL'S FELLOW PRISONERS. When and where unknown. Valuable undesigned coincidence with 2 Cor. vi. 5, xi. 23. Paul had been often in prison, but the history speaks only of one imprisonment (Acts xvi. 23) before the date of this letter. Others mentioned afterwards as his fellow prisoners (Col. iv. 10; Phil. ii. 2, 3). Chains for Christ greater honour than chains of office. III. OF NOTE AMONG THE APOSTLES. They were not, of course, apostles in the strictest sense, viz., of the company appointed by Christ Himself (Matt. x. 2), but in the wider sense, viz., messengers (2 Cor. viii. 23). Amongst these Andronicus and Junia were highly distinguished. There are different ranks among believers, as there were among David's worthies who were honoured according to bravery and zeal. Not only sincerity, but eminence in grace to be desired. Grace distinguishes more than gifts, but the best gifts are to be coveted. Paul's relations apparently lived in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii. 16). Andronicus and Junia therefore in circumstances to be well known to apostles. Possibly the gospel was brought by them to Rome. IV. IN CHRIST BEFORE PAUL. The distinguishing characteristic of a true Christian is to be in Christ. The believer is in three positions—in Adam by nature, in Christ by faith, in the Church by baptism. To be in Christ is to be one with Him as a member of His body. Note Paul's humility. He readily accords pre-eminence. These kinsmen may have been among the converts at Pentecost. Priority of union with Christ to be regarded as an honour. Age in Christ makes venerable. Paul delights to refer to his conversion. The time of our union with Christ never to be forgotten. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Andronicus and Junia*:—I. THEIR RELATION TO CHRIST. This includes three things. 1. An impressive knowledge and belief of His

character and work. 2. An interest in the blessings possessed by Christ. 3. A likeness to Christ. II. A DISTINGUISHING CIRCUMSTANCE OF THEIR SUBJECTION TO CHRIST. Paul's friends were Christians before himself. Note the importance of an early relation to Christ. 1. How many evils are avoided. (1) An awfully deluded mind. (2) Inveterate habits in sin. (3) Much of poignant regret. (4) The awful danger of being taken away in a state of enmity against God. 2. How many positive advantages are gained. (1) The pleasures of religion are enjoyed through life. (2) There is the present satisfaction of being under the promised care and blessing of the Divine Redeemer. (3) There is the elevating hope that death will be gain. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *A fourfold fellowship*:—1. Of family. 2. Of suffering. 3. Of service. 4. Of grace. **Who also were in Christ before me.**—*In Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO BE "IN CHRIST"? 1. We are in Christ—(1) By virtue of the Divine plan and purpose (Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9). (2) When our sins are forgiven (Col. ii. 11–14). (3) By regeneration (2 Cor. v. 17). And in connection with this Christ is said to be "our life." (4) When we are justified (chap. viii. 1). (5) When we make profession of faith in Christ's name. (6) By holy walking (Col. ii. 6). (7) At His coming. 2. This union is—(1) Deep and indestructible. (2) A union which is the source of reciprocal delight. II. WE MAY BE "IN CHRIST," AS FAR AS THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVIDENCE OF IT IS CONCERNED, AT DIFFERENT PERIODS. Andronicus and Junia were in Christ before Paul. 1. When we are young, as soon as the truth of Jesus can be received into the understanding and the heart, the child may be "in Christ." We have instances in Holy Scripture of early piety: Joseph, Moses, David, Josiah, Daniel and the three Hebrews, John the Baptist, and Timothy. When we enter upon the serious businesses and occupations of life: Christ says, "Take My yoke upon you"; and if you receive Christ's yoke and bear His burden, you are "in Christ." 2. When we are married. We read that marriage is to be only "in the Lord." Are you going to be "heirs together of the grace of life"? 3. Are you forty, and not "in Christ"? Your peril is extreme. It is a rare thing for a person to be converted after forty. 4. I come to age. We deny not that a man may be brought unto Christ, just when he is about to expire, as the thief upon the cross was; but I beg of you that you leave not a question of such profound importance to such a conjuncture as that. Augustine said, touchingly—"I was too late in knowing Christ." "'Twill save us from a thousand snares to mind religion young." III. IT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE TO BE "IN CHRIST." The apostle speaks of that which was of first advantage, and it is compared with other advantages. In Phil. iii. Paul gives an account of all his Hebrew advantages, and counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. But let me advert to other privileges. 1. National privileges. It was a privilege to be a Roman, and the apostle valued that privilege. It is a privilege to be an Englishman, and there are peculiar privileges belonging to some positions in our country, but all of them put together, in comparison with the advantage of being "in Christ," are as nothing. 2. What a privilege is the sight of the eye, and the brightness of the sun! Is there no privilege in the spiritual vision and the glory of the Sun of Righteousness? 3. What a value in life! What is the spiritual life worth? 4. And especially viewed in the light of eternity. If not "in Christ" when you die, you will die in your sins. "In Christ," or no resurrection of glory at the last day, but a resurrection of judgment and condemnation. (*J. Stratten.*) *The common bond*:—This passage furnishes an interesting illustration of the Christian love of those early days, and how the gospel knit men's hearts together across the earth at a time of the world's history when the intercourse of man with man was small, and travelling dangerous, laborious, and slow. Yet the number of names mentioned shows how largely, even then, the tenderness of Christian love could draw heart to heart, and unite even personal strangers in a true brotherhood. I. The phrase "in Christ" implies THE ATTAINMENT OF SAFETY IN CHRIST. The language is founded on the idea of a refuge, as if a man surrounded with foes and in danger of his life should fly to some stronghold, and be in safety. It may be that the devil attacks you with some strong temptation; it may be that God has visited you with solemn convictions, and you know not where to find peace. It may be that life is slipping swiftly by; health failing you, death drawing near, whither shall you look for help? There is but one refuge; one, where the power of sin will be broken; one, where the tormenting sense of guilt will be removed by the atoning blood of Christ; one, where declining life will cease to alarm you, where death itself will lose its fears. II. The words "in Christ" imply UNION WITH CHRIST. Here

the living idea which naturally occurs is that of a vine branch, living by union with the root and partaking of its life, just as our Lord said, "Abide in Me. He that abideth in Me, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Here we take a step farther than mere safety. It is not from the punishment of sin alone we need to be saved, but from the stain of its pollutions. Why, what is religion but life? and life is joy. There is joy in the state into which we enter when we become children of God, and look up to the great Being who made the heavens and the earth and all things therein, and call Him with happy confidence, "Our Father, which art in heaven." It is not all over with us when we die; the best is to come in the cloudless heaven prepared for those who love God. III. To be "in Christ" implies THE REST OF THE SOUL when it has found Him, and the satisfaction with which it dwells content in Him. Here we have the idea of search. Like the merchantman in search of goodly pearls, we look for the object of our desire in every direction, and pursue eagerly our search till, in some happy moment, we find the precious thing for which we are seeking, and then we rest. It would be as easy to satisfy a man with the playthings of a child, as to satisfy with things perishing a soul that will live for ever. We search and are disappointed. How often in common life we use the phrase of a person or of a thing that has disappointed us, "I did not find what I expected in him or in it"? But we may find all in Christ. (*Canon Garbett.*) *In Christ*:—These words were very familiar and very precious to the early Christians. So much so, that they inscribed them on the tombs of their departed friends, as the catacombs in Rome and other ancient burial places still show you. And it was thought enough to wipe away a mourner's tears to see on his friend's grave the inscription, "In Christ." The preposition "in," as found in our New Testament, has a variety of significations in accordance with the various meanings of the word which it translates. It is here employed to represent presence, or inclosure; as, when we say, "in a kingdom," "in a family," "in a house," "in the body." Not as when we say "in a valley," meaning upon the surface; thus, you say, "a house in a valley," meaning upon the surface of the ground constituting a valley; but, as when you say, "in a mountain," or "in a river," representing the idea that the thing of which you speak is contained or inclosed. "In Christ," is used in our New Testament not unfrequently with this signification; as, when we read of "faith in Christ," "hope in Christ," "truth in Christ." And persons are said elsewhere to be in Christ—thus, "babes in Christ"—"fallen asleep in Christ." There you see the word can have no other idea connected with it than that of inclusion—that of being contained; it cannot be by Christ, or after Christ, or before Christ; "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." You will observe that this is distinct from, and something in advance of, faith in Christ, and truth in Christ. Although the two things in reality are connected, yet you will see that there is a distinction between saying that a man's faith rests in Christ, and that the man himself is in Christ. The two things we know are in reality connected, but you will observe that the ideas are distinct. The words, "In Christ," represent some personal relation and connection; for you will observe the phrase is not "hope in Christ," or, as elsewhere, "faith in Christ." The idea is not that of any particular faculty or susceptibility having Christ for its object. The idea is that of the individual, in all his life, being intimately connected with Christ. Notice that this connection is begun in time. There was a time when, according to Paul's own idea, he was not in Christ. Now, very close union is indicated by Christ Himself, as existing between Himself and His disciples. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye," mark, "ye in Me." Elsewhere, by His apostle, Christ teaches, "He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit, for," he adds, "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." There are certain analogies which will here assist us. You know that Christ is called "the last man"; "the last Adam"; "the second Adam." Adam was a representative man. And there are particular ideas involved in these general thoughts. For example, as an advocate, Christ represents us; and, if Christ as an advocate represents us, we appear before God in Him. Again, Christ is called "the chief corner-stone." As the several stones are one in the corner, so are believers one in Christ; and the same thought, you observe, is involved in Christ being the "Head." Again, He is called "the true vine"; and His disciples "are the branches." But there are certain doctrines which throw light upon this expression. Let me just remind you that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; and, except we are redeemed by the Saviour, we are ungodly. We are not in the spiritual, and in the most blessed, sense living in

God. In the lowest sense we all "live, and move, and have our being" in Him—just as plants, and trees, and flowers, the grass of the field, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, live in Him; but in the highest sense, the ungodly cannot live in Him while they are ungodly. Instead of being of the Father, they are of the world. Their element is not God. And this is our great fault; this is the source of our wretchedness; this is the root of all our wickedness. Look further. God loves the world, and desires, in the most blessed sense, that men should be brought back to Him. Then, to restore them to union with Himself, He gives His Son to be a Mediator. Now suppose that I receive this truth, what have I done? I have not my own case in hand as a suffering, sinful man. I am not trying to be my own advocate. My case is in Christ; it is entirely represented in Him. It is not only in His hand, but it is involved in His very position; because unless there were sinners there could not be a Mediator. "In Christ"—then your iniquities are forgiven, and your transgression is covered. "In Christ"—then by His obedience you are accounted righteous. "In Christ"—then the Spirit of Christ dwells with you. "In Christ"—then you are joint heirs with Christ. "In Christ"—then your life is hid with Christ, and it cannot be taken away. (*S. Martin.*) *The blessedness of being early in Christ:*—I. IT MAKES OUR WORK EASIER. How easy to bend the pliant twig! How hard to move the sturdy tree! An old man, one day taking a child on his knee, entreated him to seek God now. With artless simplicity the little one asked, "Why do not you seek God?" The old man answered, his utterance half choked with tears, "I would, child, but my heart is hard—my heart is hard!" II. OUR WORK IS BETTER DONE. He who invites us to remember Him "in the days of our youth," will show His love by affording abundant help. III. LIFE IS MADE MORE HAPPY. Conscience testifies that we have chosen the "good part," and that God is our Friend. The power of temptation is weakened. The growth of graces is promoted. Unreasonable doubts and fears are removed. The sting of death is effectually plucked away. Religious ways are ways of pleasantness and peace. Great peace have they who love God's law. IV. IT SAVES US FROM BEING DESTRUCTIVE EXAMPLES TO OTHERS. When Lord Peterborough was the guest of Fénélon, he exclaimed, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." A young man, who was about to be ordained to the ministry, stated that at one period he had been nearly betrayed into infidelity. "But," he added, "there was one argument in favour of Christianity which I could never refute—the consistent conduct of my own father!" In contrast with such examples for good, imagine the terrible, soul-destroying influence of evil men! V. IT FITS ONE FOR AN EXALTED POSITION OF USEFULNESS IN GOD'S KINGDOM. "Early piety," says Henry, "it is to be hoped, will be eminent piety. Those that are good betimes are likely to be very good." Take an old, time-wrinkled man, and endeavour to teach him the arts of a soldier, or to make a scholar or tradesman of him. What painful plodding, and, oftentimes, what unavailing effort! But the young can master anything. VI. WE ARE CERTAIN OF A HEAVENLY REWARD. As in a well-appointed army the soldier's pay is regulated by the time of service, so is it with the followers of Christ. Long years of "patient continuance in well-doing" will be recompensed with the highest seats, the brightest crowns, and the most ecstatic enjoyment. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *The privilege of being early in Christ:*—Everything is beautiful in its season. What spring is in the natural year, youth is in the life of man. If that precious season is lost, it is a dreadful thing; rather there should be the sowing to the Spirit, that we may reap life everlasting. It is therefore a beautiful order that the young should remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Hence it was that Paul spake of himself as "one born out of due time"—not born at the right season. And hence it is that he attaches such distinction to Andronicus and Junia. I. WHAT IS IT TO BE IN CHRIST? Probably the common answer is—"To be a Christian." But what is it to be a Christian? To be baptized? Then indeed the whole baptized population of our land were in Christ. But is there any man in his senses that dares to affirm that? There is a sense, indeed, in which all who are baptized are in Christ: they are under solemn obligations to Christ; they have His name upon them; they have the symbol of His service traced upon their brow. But this will only enhance their guilt and aggravate their condemnation, if this be all. And yet there is a sense in which being baptized into Christ is being in Christ, but that is when the sign of the water poured on the child is authenticated by a new birth unto righteousness. Baptism is the outward and visible representation of the grafting of a soul into

Christ. Now when the gardener wishes to graft a scion from one tree into another, he inserts it into a little aperture, and afterwards surrounds it with clay and straw, and binds the whole round with strong bands. And thus the grafting, as far as man can accomplish it, is done. But in order that the grafting may take effect, the bark of the stem must grasp and coalesce with the little slip, and that little slip, putting forth its fibres and its stems, must also grasp the bark of the stem, and so there must be a reciprocal union. Then the grafting is effectual. Even so it is in the grafting of a soul into Christ. Baptism and all the means of grace are what men can use and ought to use; but in vain are all the means of grace, except the union of the soul with Christ takes place. That union is accomplished on the part of Christ by putting His own Spirit into the soul, and on the part of the soul by believing in Christ. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, however duly baptized, however moral, he is none of Christ's. Therefore to be in Christ is represented by every figure of adhering union. II. WHAT IS THE INESTIMABLE BLESSING OF BEING THUS IN CHRIST? And here all thought fails us; for, if a man be out of Christ, he is under sin and the power of Satan; but he that is in Christ is delivered out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"; all things are his—"whether Paul or Apollos," &c. He is safe from every peril, secure from all evils: God is his Father, angels are his attendants, and all things work together for his good. III. THE UNSPEAKABLE BLESSING OF BEING FOUND EARLY IN CHRIST. To be early in Christ—1. Is to be in Christ. At the right time, as Christ Himself designs that we should be. For I have no doubt that infant baptism is of Christ. Circumcision was enjoined upon every child of God's professing people, so that the child who was not circumcised was to be cut off from Israel. 2. Will save from thousands of evils and dark stains. Out of Christ the child knows not what may become of it, how he may, like the prodigal, debase himself until he is feeding the swine. But to be early in Christ is to be early in the ark, in the stronghold, out of the reach of Satan. 3. Will augment usefulness. The stream that runs a little way to the ocean can leave but little greenness and beauty on its banks; but the river that winds its crystal way through many a valley and over many a plain—oh! what rich blessing it scatters along its course! And so it is in comparison with the man who has but a little course in which to serve God, when he has wasted his best years in sin. (*Canon Stowell.*) *Early consecration*:—I. IN ITS RELATION TO GOD. 1. Our first clear duty is to know and glorify God. He has made, preserved, and redeemed us. It is, therefore, utterly ignoble to ask with how little we may satisfy His claim. A duke of Brittany during a long imprisonment vowed that if he regained his liberty he would give to the Church his weight in gold, and did so conscientiously, for he went into the balance clad in all his armour. When Don Carlos, the son of Philip II., lay ill, he made a like vow, but on his recovery placed himself in the scale clad in damask and fur. We see at a glance which is the more excellent way. 2. We glorify God the most when we come to Him soonest (Eph. i. 12), with the free-offering of a life unviolated, fresh, and full of all glorious possibilities—far more than we can by laying fortunes at His feet in distant years (Micah vii. 1). II. IN ITS RELATION TO OUR OWN LIFE. It is our business to make the best of our life throughout, and early consecration gives perfection—1. To our youth. It secures to the full—(1) The grace of early days. Like the firefly on a flower, or the rainbow above a waterfall, what was already beautiful the grace of God makes doubly so. (2) The joy of youth. The light-hearted, free joyousness of life's golden dawn is not damped by the fear of God, only conserved and raised. (3) The spirit of youth. So far from destroying enthusiasm, the love of God only renders more intense and pure the generous fire. (4) All the beautiful characteristics of youth. The angel John saw in the sun would not dim the light: religion in youth is that angel giving new splendour to life. 2. To our manhood. A wasted youth tells injuriously on the later stages of life. When the trees in the spring-time are nipped by the frost they never quite recover. But early in Christ means a strong, pure, blessed manhood (Lam. iii. 27). It is an unspeakable advantage to serve the apprenticeship of life under Christ. He can make us workmen needing not to be ashamed in that most difficult art—the art of living. 3. To our age. Andronicus and Junia were admirable people to the last. Age is much what we make it, desolate old age being the bitter fruit of self-will and indulgence, a bright old age the fruit of discipline. The French artist Millet used to say to his pupils, "The end of the day is the proof of the picture." That which will bear the test of the twilight hour is true in character as well as in art. III. IN ITS RELATION TO SOCIAL DUTY. 1.

Early in Christ we best serve our generation. Andronicus and Junia were famous workers in their generation. As a rule the world can owe but little to men saved in the eleventh hour. At eventide we hear men say, "Well, it is too late to make a good day's work of a bad one." 2. None who in early life devote themselves to Christ ever live to regret having done so. Protracted investigation only shows them the reality of the rock on which they have built; the experiences of life only prove the preciousness of Christ's truth and grace; the sorrows of life only cause them to cherish with profounder satisfaction the consolations and hopes of faith. 3. None who in later life devote themselves to Christ but wish they had done so earlier. Was not this really the wish of Paul here? Andronicus and Junia were rejoicing in Christ while he was haling men and women to prison. 4. That portion of our life which had no spiritual experience in it we feel was lost, no matter our worldly delights, knowledge, wealth, social triumphs. Pontius, the biographer of Cyprian, passes by the early period of his history with the remark that a man's actions should be recorded not from the time of his first, but of his second birth (chap. vi. 20, 21). 5. Few who finally fail to devote themselves to Christ but feel that the fatal mistake of their life was their early neglect of Christ. (1) The external difficulties of beginning multiply with time, until in the course of years they become apparently insurmountable. The aged sinner is conscious that the gossamer thread which once held him from Christ has become an iron fetter, and the rivulet separating from the great inheritance a river. (2) The internal difficulties increase—the failure of sensibility, will-power, &c., renders the beginning of a new life almost incredible to him who has for years resisted the Holy Ghost. It is always difficult to make the great renunciation, but the initial difficulty is never less than in life's opening years (1 John ii. 14; Prov. viii. 17; Isa. xxvi. 9). (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Early piety, beauty of:*—Early in the morning the dew still twinkles on the leaves, the maiden blush of dawn remains and reveals an opening beauty, which is lost to those who rise not to see the birth of day. There is a beauty about early piety which is indescribably charming, and unutterably lovely in freshness and radiance. We remark in childhood an artless simplicity, a child-like confidence, which is seen nowhere else. There may be less of knowing, but there is more of loving; there may be less of reasoning, but there is more of simply believing upon the authority of revelation; there may be less of deep-rootedness, but there is certainly more of perfume, beauty, and emerald verdure. If I must choose that part of the Christian life in which there is the most joy, next to the land Beulah, which I must set first and foremost by reason of its lying so near to Canaan, I think I would prefer that tract of Christian experience which lieth toward the sun-rising, which is sown with orient pearls of love, and cheered with the delicious music of the birds of hope. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Early piety, importance of:*—If the tree is permitted to grow up and to grow old, with the intention of making it new then, there is danger, lest, through storms or fire or war, it may be suddenly destroyed. And, even though it were protected from all these risks, it is strange that any one should deliberately desire that the soil and sun and air should be enjoyed by that tree, and wasted in bearing bitter fruit all the days of its strength, and only make a good tree in its old age, when it scarcely has sap sufficient in its veins to bear any fruit at all. See, reader, in this plain parable, how foolish, how false, how blasphemous, is the desire that throbs cowardly and covertly in many young hearts, to waste the broad sunny surface of life in sin, and throw a narrow strip of its withered, rugged edge at last as an offering to God! If you have no desire to be good and do good throughout the life on earth that lies before you, how can you desire to be good and do good in the eternity that lies beyond? Be not deceived. He who is weary of sin wants to be quit of it now, and instantly to enjoy a new life. He who says he wants to be holy, but would rather put off the date of the change, lies to himself, to the world, and to God. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Early piety, enduring:*—As a vessel will long retain and keep the savour of that wherewith it is first seasoned; even so, if children be taught good things while they be young and tender, they will abide the longer with them. (*Cawdray.*) *Youth, the root of age:*—It should be borne in mind that in old age it is too late to mend, that then you must inhabit what you have built. Old age has the foundation of its joy or its sorrow laid in youth. You are building at twenty. Are you building for seventy? Nay, every stone in the foundation takes hold of every stone in the wall up to the very eaves of the building; and every deed, right or wrong, that transpires in youth, reaches forward, and has a relation to all the afterpart of man's life. A man's life is not like the contiguous cells in a bee's honeycomb; it is more

like the separate parts of a plant which unfolds out of itself, every part bearing relation to all that antecede. That which you do in youth is the root, and all the afterparts, middle age and old age, are the branches and the fruits, whose character the root will determine. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Priority in Christ*—1. Is a privilege. 2. Confers honour. 3. Demands proficiency. 4. Should guarantee usefulness. 5. Commands respect. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The blessedness of being betimes in Christ*:—I. WHAT IS THE IMPORT OF BEING IN CHRIST? 1. Some are in Christ only externally, as by baptism entered into His Church. 2. Some are also in Christ by vital union (Eph. v. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 17; John vi. 56). II. THE BLESSEDNESS ANNEXED TO THE BEING THUS IN CHRIST. You may see this—1. In the union itself, as it is—(1) Most intimate and endearing. Christ is compared to a foundation for our support, a vine for our fruitfulness, a head for vital importance, a husband for the most tender love. This is the ground of that sympathy that there is between Christ and His members (Heb. iv. 15; Col. i. 24; Acts ix. 4). (2) Most honourable. No title among men is comparable to that of being a member of Christ. Angels are subject to Him, but are not styled His body (Eph. i. 23; Heb. ii. 16). How great is their dignity who are thus allied to the Lord of glory (1 Cor. ii. 8). (3) Most enriching (Eph. iii. 8; Col. i. 19; John i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 30, iii. 21, 23). (4) Most comfortable. Nothing can be wanting to their support who are taken into it. (5) Immediate. Every member stands equally near the Head: they are all in Him (1 Pet. iv. 5, 6; Eph. ii. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Col. ii. 19). (6) Inseparable. 2. In some instances of the happiness that belongs to those who are found in Christ. They—(1) Have their sins pardoned (Psa. xxxii. 1; Col. i. 14). (2) Are freed from sin's reigning power (chap. vii. 24, 25, viii. 2). (3) Are rescued from the tyranny of Satan (Eph. ii. 2). (4) Are delivered from the curse and condemnation of the law, and so from hell (John iii. 18; Rom. viii. 1; Gal. iii. 13). (5) Are brought into a state of favour with God whose lovingkindness is better than life (Psa. lxiii. 3; Rom. v. 1). (6) Are adopted into His family, that of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the head (John i. 12; Eph. ii. 19; Rom. viii. 17). (7) Have the privilege of free access to God and are always welcome, being made accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6). (8) Have their perseverance secured while they live; the reception of their souls to heaven at death; a glorious resurrection of their bodies, and a blessed eternity. III. THERE ARE SPECIAL ADVANTAGES OF BEING EARLY IN CHRIST. 1. This is the best preservative from sin, so displeasing to God, and which will fill the guilty with so much horror in the review. 2. Hereby you will be saved from being destructive examples to others; drawing them on in sin together with yourselves. 3. You will be fitted for more eminent service for God and your generation; be common blessings in helping to keep off judgments, and bring down mercy upon the places of your abode. 4. You will be especially dear to heaven; in the number of those whom God and Christ will delight to favour and honour. 5. This will speak you signal instances of the sovereignty and riches of grace that may be matter of comfortable reflection to you all your days. 6. You will be most like to attain a comfortable evidence of the sincerity and truth of grace, and so that you are the objects of God's eternal choice. 7. Your great work upon earth will be over, being early provided for a blessed eternity. 8. If you are longer spared you will have a fair advantage of making a greater proficiency in grace, and so enlarge your capacity for greater glory. IV. APPLICATION. Is it the happiness of some to be in Christ before others? Hence learn—1. That a state of nature is a Christless state, and so a very miserable one (Eph. ii. 12). 2. How dangerous must it be to rest in a mere profession, and what multitudes are like to perish as looking no farther! (Matt. vii. 21; 1 John iii. 23). 3. How unreasonable is the backwardness of sinners to close with an offered Saviour! And yet how commonly is it discovered! 4. With what seriousness should every one concerned about his everlasting happiness or misery take up and pursue the inquiry, Am I in Christ, yea, or no? (*D. Wilcox.*) *Old age in Christ*:—The date of this Epistle is A.D. 58; the apostle was converted in A.D. 34. So that Andronicus and Junia had been disciples for more than twenty-four years. They were therefore advanced in life. May we not suppose that they were known to Him when He was a persecutor? I. THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF AGED CHRISTIANS. 1. Stability in the faith. 2. Fertility in holiness. 3. Expectancy of blessings. II. THE ADVANTAGES WHICH THEY CONFER ON THE CHURCH. 1. They afford encouragement to the fearful. 2. They suggest caution to the inexperienced. III. THEIR SPECIAL CLAIMS TO OUR REGARD. They claim—1. Our veneration. 2. Our sympathy on account of their infirmities. 3. Our assistance. (*J. Blackburn.*) *Age, what*

men reap in :—A young man came to a man of ninety years of age and said to him, "How have you made out to live so long and be so well?" The old man took the youngster to an orchard, and, pointing to some large trees full of apples, said, "I planted these trees when I was a boy, and do you wonder that now I am permitted to gather the fruit of them?" We gather in old age what we plant in our youth. Sow to the wind and we reap the whirlwind. Plant in early life the right kind of a Christian character, and you will eat luscious fruit in old age, and gather these harvest apples in eternity. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The Christian sage* :—I. HIS PRIVILEGE. 1. Early conversion. 2. Experience. 3. Prospects. II. DUTIES. 1. To counsel. 2. Exhort. 3. Encourage. III. CLAIMS to—1. Respect. 2. Veneration. 3. Sympathy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 8-11. **Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.**—*Amplias* was probably one of Paul's converts. I. "MY BELOVED." 1. As his own son in the gospel, or—2. From special grace observed in him. 3. Warm attachment shown by him. 4. Eminent devotedness to the cause of Christ. Degrees of attachment consistent with Christian love. Of the twelve, Peter, James, and John most beloved (Matt. xvii. 1). Of these John especially beloved (John xiii. 23). II. "IN THE LORD." Beloved—1. Not after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16). 2. For Christ's sake. 3. As a member of the same body of Christ. Those truly beloved who are beloved in the Lord. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Amplias the beloved in the Lord* :—This description implies—1. His true conversion. 2. His lovely character. 3. His happiness—loving and beloved. 4. His final salvation—beloved by God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The tomb of Amplias* :—The archæological researches in Rome of recent years have thrown much light upon the life of the early Christians in that city; but no discovery has produced such interest as that just announced of the tomb of Amplias. Who was Amplias? Who were his friends? Why was he buried in this particular place? The answers to these questions are all furnished by the discovery of his tomb; and a flood of light is let in upon the times of the early Roman Christians. His tomb stands in one of the catacombs excavated in the time of Domitian, on the ground then belonging to Flavia Domitilla, his niece. Roman history preserves the fact that Flavia became a Christian. Amplias, the friend of Paul, must have been a distinguished man. Because he was buried in Flavia's cemetery, we judge they were personally acquainted. By Paul's greeting we imagine he was a minister of the New Word. Then the tomb is of such a character that only the possessor of great wealth could have constructed so remarkable a resting-place. Was this the work of Flavia, niece of the great Domitian? Was it erected at the cost of his family? or by the early Christians of Rome? These questions may be answered, for the investigations are not yet concluded. All that we know at present is that there is no tomb in the catacombs that equals it for the beauty of its adornments and the variety of pictorial illustrations. The frescoes in the Golden House of Nero, and the adornments of the house of Germanicus in the Palatine, are not to be compared, so it is reported, with the symbolic illustrations of the tomb of Amplias, the teacher of Flavia; the beloved of Paul. (*Christian Commonwealth.*) *Unknown Christians* :—Of Amplias and Stachys nothing is known except that they were "beloved in the Lord" by the apostle, the objects of his high Christian esteem and affection. The day is coming when it will be seen that to have been the friend of an apostle was really a higher honour than to be the favourite of a Roman emperor, and when the eulogiums of historians and poets, procured by a lavish expenditure of labour and suffering, would be gladly exchanged for the simple record that Paul loved them because they loved Christ. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) **Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.**—*Urbane and Stachys* :—I. THEIR NAMES. "Citizen" and "Ear of Corn," suggestive of—1. Town and country. (1) Urbanus may well represent a busy civic character, bringing all the qualities necessary for and exhibited in commercial and political life to the service of the Church. The modern Urbanus is the consecrated merchant or town councillor. (2) Stachys may represent the Lady Bountiful of some rural district whose temperament, unfit for the bustle and fashion of the city, is exactly suited to the quiet work and influence of the village church. 2. Polish and simplicity. (1) Urbane is a word that has become technical for refined manners, and we may imagine Urbanus combining business energy with gentlemanly deportment—two things which should never be separated certainly in church life. (2) In Stachys we miss much of the polish and suavity of Urbanus, but there is a charm about her natural homely manners that renders

her, in her sphere, no less useful. II. THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY. Who they were no one knows: yet every one would like to know. No unenviable position. There are many whom we know well that we wish we knew nothing about. A stroke of the pen, however, has made them immortal. There were those then living who would have given thousands of gold and silver for a similar record in a book far less widely circulated than the Bible. Urbanus and Stachys are known through the wide world eighteen centuries after their death, and learned men are making researches if haply they may find their names on some tomb or in some contemporary record. Why this? Simply because of their relationship with Christ and His Church. So millions to-day whom no historian would think worth mentioning are in the Lamb's Book of Life, and will be held forth for the admiration of a universe when many of the world's greatest names shall have perished. III. THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE APOSTLE. Urbanus was "*our* helper." Stachys was "*my* beloved." The one sustained a general relationship to Paul and to others beside Paul: but the other sustained a special relationship to the apostle himself. We have all a circle of acquaintances wide enough to include a great many; but we have also an inner circle where few indeed move. The former belong to others as well as us; the latter to ourselves alone. And so in the Church. There are scores perhaps that may be depended on to do general work for the common good, but there are only a few whom the minister may count as his own, and upon whom he may depend for special work out of peculiar regard for himself. IV. THEIR ENCOMIUM. 1. Urbanus with his masculine qualities is an active helper. Useful in many a good word and work he is a man to admire. He makes his mark, is always in evidence, and men wonder how the Church would get on without him. 2. But Stachys is a woman to be loved. She can only pray, give the apostle many a quiet word of encouragement, and do such unobtrusive work as her nervous shrinking temperament will enable her to do. Here we have Martha and Mary, Peter and John over again. Conclusion—1. Let each do what he or she can, each in his own way in the Church. 2. Let each receive timely and fitting encouragement. 3. Let each be sure of an appropriate reward. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Every Christian worker shall be recognised:*—Christian workers shall be like the stars, in the fact that they have a light independent of each other. Look up at night, and see each world shows its distinct glory. It is not like the conflagration, in which you cannot tell where one flame stops and another begins. Neptune, Herschel, and Mercury are as distinct as if each one of them were the only star. So, our individualism will not be lost in heaven. A great multitude—yet each one as observable, as distinctly recognised, as greatly celebrated, as if in all the space from gate to gate, and from hill to hill, he were the only inhabitant. No mixing up; no mob; no indiscriminate rush. Each Christian worker standing out illustrious. All the story of earthly achievement adhering to each one. His self-denials, and pains, and services, and victories published. Before men went out to the last American war, the orators told them that they would all be remembered by their country, and their names be commemorated in poetry and in song. But go to the graveyard in Richmond, and you will find there six thousand graves, over each one of which is the inscription: "Unknown." The world does not remember its heroes. But there will be no unrecognised Christian worker in heaven. (*Great Thoughts.*) **Apelles, approved in Christ.**—*Apelles* was preferred, found to be genuine after trial. This is the meaning of the word in Romans xiv. 17, 18; 1 Cor. ix. 27. Consider I.—THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS WHICH COMPOSE SO INTERESTING A CHARACTER. Unless we be "approved in Christ," it is but of little consequence by whom else we are approved. Note here—1. Sincerity of principle. The apostle prayed for the Philippians that they might be "sincere, and without offence," *i.e.*, pure, transparent. The idea is taken from holding up a substance to the light, to see if there be any flaw or defect in it. (1) There must be sincerity as to the principles we adopt, and the state in which we are found before Christ our Saviour. (2) This is most important to youth. Insincerity secretly corrupts, like a canker at the root of a tree, or a moth in a garment. 2. Self denial and fortitude in rendering those sacrifices and services which religion requires. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." It is recorded by the apostle, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." The young man whom Christ loved had one essential defect, he could not deny himself. 3. Stability, uniformity, and perseverance in the profession of religion. (1) The goodness of some is "like the morning cloud and the early dew." There is blossom, the flower expands—but the wind of temptation passes over, and all the beauty and vigour is gone. Under

strong excitement of mind, they make a profession of religion, but that profession is not stable. (2) There are many circumstances which tend to prove our stability —the reproaches of the world, afflictions, the falls of professors, &c. But why should these things shake you? Who was the most illustrious character—the man of sorrows, who was crowned with thorns, or Cæsar seated on his throne? 4. A temper and disposition of mind according with the gospel of Christ—humility, docility, moderation, devotion, benevolence. II. SOME CONSIDERATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE NOTICE WE HAVE TAKEN OF THIS CHARACTER. 1. It is a far more truly amiable and admirable distinction than the most splendid qualities which may otherwise be attained. It is natural, especially to youth, to seek for splendid qualities. But what are these compared with religion? Suppose it had been said, "Salute Apelles, who is eloquent, rich, learned," and so on—what would it all have been compared with this, "approved in Christ"? Let this make you content: covet not the riches and greatness of the world. There is not an individual in the world whom you need envy. 2. This character is attainable by every Christian, however humble his talent, and comparatively mean his circumstances. 3. If we be approved of Christ now, the day is coming when all will feel the value of this approbation. The day is coming when some will be disapproved. Notwithstanding all their pretensions, to some it will be said, "I never knew you, I never approved of you!" To others, who have been devoted to His service—who have walked in His ways, He will say before assembled worlds, "Come, ye blessed," &c. (*F. A. Cox, LL.D.*) *Apelles* was a *tried* Christian, *i.e.*, one who has been tried and has stood the trial. "Tribulation," says the apostle, "worketh patience," *i.e.*, perseverance, and this perseverance "worketh experience," *i.e.*, trial; it proves the individual; it is the test of the reality and strength of his faith, and if he abides the test he is an approved Christian. Many, alas! do not stand the test, and prove themselves "reprobates"—unapproved either of God or man. Tried Christians deserve to be honoured. (*J. Brown, D.D.*)

Vers. 10, 11. **Them which are of Aristobulus' household.** — *The households of Aristobulus and Narcissus*:—We do not know anything about these two persons, men of position evidently, who had large households. But learned commentators of the New Testament have advanced a very reasonable conjecture in regard to each of them. As to the first of them, Aristobulus—that wicked old King Herod, in whose life Christ was born, had a grandson of the name, who spent all his life in Rome, and was in close relations with the emperor of that day. He had died some little time before the writing of this letter. As to the second of them, there is a very notorious Narcissus, who plays a great part in the history of Rome just a little while before Paul's period there, and he, too, was dead. And it is more than probable that the slaves and retainers of these two men were transferred in both cases to the emperor's household and held together in it, being known as Aristobulus's men and Narcissus's men. And so probably the Christians among them are the brethren to whom these salutations are sent. I. THE PENETRATING POWER OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH. I think of the sort of man the master of the first household was if the identification suggested be accepted. He is one of that foul Herodian brood, in all of whom the bad Idumæan blood ran corruptly. The grandson of the old Herod, the brother of Agrippa of the Acts of the Apostles, the hanger-on of the Imperial Court, with Roman vices veneered on his native wickedness, was not the man to welcome the entrance of a revolutionary ferment into his household; and yet through his barred doors had crept quietly, he knowing nothing about it, that great message of a loving God, and a Master whose service was freedom. And in thousands of like cases the gospel was finding its way underground, undreamed of by the great and wise, but steadily pressing onwards, and undermining all the towering grandeur that was so contemptuous of it. So Christ's truth spread at first; and I believe that is the way it always spreads. II. THE UNITING POWER OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY. A considerable proportion of the first of these two households would probably be Jews—if Aristobulus were indeed Herod's grandson. The probability that he was is increased by the greeting interposed between those to the housholds—"Salute Herodian." The name suggests some connection with Herod, and whether we suppose the designation of "my kinsman," which Paul gives him, to mean "blood relation" or "fellow-countryman," Herodian, at all events, was a Jew by birth. As to the other members of these households, Paul may have met some of them in his many travels, but he had never been in Rome, and his greetings are more probably sent to them as conspicuous sections, numerically, of the

Roman Church, and as tokens of his affection, though he had never seen them. The possession of a common faith has bridged the gulf between him and them. Slaves in those days were outside the pale of human sympathy, and almost outside the pale of human rights. And here the foremost of Christian teachers, who was a freeman born, separated from these poor people by a tremendous chasm, stretches a brother's hand across it and grasps theirs. The gospel that came into the world to rend old associations and to split up society, and to make a deep cleft between fathers and children and husband and wife, came also to more than counterbalance its dividing effects by its uniting power. III. THE TRANQUILISING POWER OF CHRISTIAN RESIGNATION. They were mostly slaves, and they continued to be slaves when they were Christians. Paul recognised their continuance in the servile position, and did not say a word to them to induce them to break their bonds. Of course, there is no blinking the fact that slavery was an essentially immoral and unchristian institution. But it is one thing to lay down principles and leave them to be worked in and then to be worked out, and it is another thing to go blindly charging at existing institutions and throwing them down by violence, before men have grown up to feel that they are wicked. And so the New Testament takes the wise course, and leaves the foolish one to foolish people. It makes the tree good, and then its fruit will be good. But the main point that I want to insist upon is this: what was good for these slaves in Rome is good for you and me. Let us get near to Jesus Christ, and feel that we have got hold of His hand for our own selves, and we shall not mind very much about the possible varieties of human condition. IV. THE CONQUERING POWER OF CHRISTIAN FAITHFULNESS. It was not a very likely place to find Christian people in the household of Herod's grandson, was it? Such flowers do not often grow, or at least not easily grow, on such dunghills. And in both these cases it was only a handful of the people, a portion of each household, that was Christian. So they had beside them, closely identified with them—working, perhaps, at the same tasks, I might almost say chained with the same chains—men who had no share in their faith or in their love. It would not be easy to pray, and love and trust God and do His will, and keep clear of complicity with idolatry and immorality and sin, in such a pigsty as that; would it? But these men did it. And nobody need ever say, "I am in such circumstances that I cannot live a Christian life." There are no such circumstances, at least none of God's appointing. There are often such that we bring upon ourselves. And then the best thing is to get out of them as soon as we can. But as far as He is concerned, He never puts anybody anywhere where he cannot live a holy life. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Aristobulus' household*:—Aristobulus was probably Aristobulus the younger (Joseph. Antiq. xx., 1, 2), the grandson of Herod the Great, and brother of Agrippa and Herod, kings of Judæa and Chalcis, who lived in Rome in a private station (Joseph. Jewish Wars II. xi. 6), and died there not before A.D. 45. Being very friendly to the Emperor Claudius (Joseph. Ant l. c.) he may have bequeathed his slaves to him, and they thus become part of Cæsar's household, though still distinguished by the name of their late master. As servants of Aristobulus many of them would naturally be Jews, and so likely to become hearers of the gospel. (*Archdeacon Gifford.*) *Aristobulus' household*:—It deserves notice that Paul does not send his Christian remembrances to Aristobulus, but to his household. Perhaps he was dead, or not a Christian. A Christian man may not have a Christian household, and a family may be all Christians with the exception of its head. It is a happy thing when the whole of a family is Christian, not in name merely, but in deed and truth; when as in the case of Lydia and the gaoler salvation comes not only to the heads of a family but "to all their house." It is not always so; and when it is not so, Christians in unchristian families have a peculiar claim on the kind notice of Christian ministers. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) **Herodion my kinsman.**—*My kinsman Herodion*:—I. HIS PRIVILEGE. Relationship. 1. To an apostle. 2. To Christ. II. HIS CLAIM TO REMEMBRANCE. 1. Dear as a relative. 2. Dearer still as a Christian brother. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.**—*The household of Narcissus*:—As in the case of Aristobulus, the salutation is not sent to Narcissus, but to those of his household—not to all, but to that part of it which was Christian. This Narcissus probably was the favourite freedman of Claudius, a very rich but a very wicked man. Very good men may be domestics of bad men. Obadiah, who "feared the Lord from his youth" and "feared Him greatly," was a steward of Ahab, one of the worst of the Israelitish kings. A venerable Scotchman occupied a confidential place in the household of one of the most dissolute of our princes, and might be found at

midnight and after it in his little chamber reading Marshall on "Sanctification," or Boston's "Crook in the Lot," while waiting the return of his master and his companions from their midnight revels. Christians do not act like themselves when they place themselves in ungodly families; but as in the cases referred to, they may obviously be placed there by Providence, and when they are so, they have peculiar opportunities for "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour," and "holding forth the word of life," and are specially entitled to kind notice from their minister. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The household of Narcissus*:—Divided—I. IN THEIR VIEWS OF CHRIST—some in Christ—some not. II. IN THEIR OBJECTS AND AIMS. III. IN THEIR ENJOYMENTS. IV. IN THEIR ESTIMATION OF THE APOSTLE. V. IN THEIR PROSPECTS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord . . . the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.**—1. It is good to labour in the Lord. 2. It is better to labour much. 3. Best of all to deserve the Christian title "beloved." (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Tryphena and Tryphosa*:—Learn—I. THAT BAD NAMES NEED NOT HINDER GOOD SERVICE. "Tryphena" means wanton, and "Tryphosa" luxurious. We should hardly expect excellence of any kind from persons bearing such names as these; yet, notwithstanding their names, they laboured in the Lord. The worst names have been attached to the best men—Quakers, Methodists, Ranters, &c.; and the men thus designated have not taken the trouble to repudiate their designations, but have, through evil report, "laboured in the Lord." An evil name, however, is a serious disadvantage, and parents cannot be too careful in avoiding the selection of names for their children of which in after life they may be ashamed. II. SINFUL WOMEN MAY BECOME USEFUL SAINTS. It is not improbable that these names were deserved, and were used to designate a certain class. If so, note—1. The power of Divine grace. Rahab, the woman of Samaria, the woman in Simon's house, are proofs that, under the gospel, the most wanton may become pure; and the history of Christian enterprise teems with instances of those who, bred in the lap of luxury, have become the most laborious in the cause of Christ. They have had much forgiven, because they have loved much, and their much love has constrained them to a life of intense devotion. 2. The magnanimity and courage of the apostle. People of this class are usually shunned, even after strong and varied proof of change of heart and life; men and women are afraid of compromising their reputation by associating with them. But in Paul's ease the disciple was not above his Master, who gloried in the title of "the friend of publicans and sinners." III. COMPANIONSHIP DESECRATED BY SIN MAY BE CONSECRATED BY GRACE. These women, if not sisters, were doubtless friends before their conversion. If one sinner destroyed much good, two sinners, acting in conjunction, will destroy very much more—and sinners usually act in company. The same holds good in an opposite way, when converted men and women act in concert. "Two are better than one." Conclusion: 1. There is encouragement under the most discouraging circumstances for earnest Christians. 2. There is hope for the most abandoned. 3. Converted men and women should seek to make their companions in sin companions in Christian service. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The portrait of a Christian woman*:—Persis was—I. A CHRISTIAN. 1. She occupies a place in a list of Christians. 2. She must have been "in Christ," or she could not have laboured for Him. II. A LOVABLE CHRISTIAN. Not merely known to and esteemed by Paul, but one whose sweet disposition endeared her to all with whom she came in contact. Christians should manifest the power of grace in their tempers. The more real and deep the inner, the more sweet and lovable the outer life. Like Christ, because in Christ. III. AN ACTIVE CHRISTIAN. The words imply labour that brings weakness and weariness—not kid-gloved philanthropy, but genuine and persevering Christian toil. What a noble sphere for like-minded Christian women still. Let them, then, especially those free from absorbing domestic duties, seek to become followers of Persis. (*T. S. Dickson, M.A.*) *Labour in the Lord*:—This is the language of approbation. Persis is not warned lest she step behind the place assigned her in the Church, or lest she allow her zeal to make her singular. What was approved in Christians eighteen hundred years ago would be approved in Christians now. I. THE NATURE OF THAT LABOUR WHICH ST. PAUL COMMENDS IN PERSIS. 1. He is not speaking of secular labours. He does not praise Persis because she performed the ordinary duties of life in a conscientious spirit. This, indeed, she would do; but such is the case with all Christians. It does not distinguish one Christian above another. 2. Nor is he speaking of works of charity alone, or he would have praised Persis as one who was "glad to distribute," ready "to do good." 3. Labour in

the Lord was labour in promoting the knowledge and spirit of the gospel. Persis, like others who laboured with Paul in the gospel (1 Cor. xvi. 16), had become a teacher—that is, was able to declare to others what the Lord had done for her soul, and to lay those first principles of the doctrine of Christ which the simplest believer may communicate to his ignorant or sinful neighbour; which, in truth, he must be prepared to communicate before he can exercise the commonest duties of charity. Some, perhaps, may be of opinion that such work should be left to the appointed minister; but can, or should, anything withhold the Christian from imparting his own conviction or experience? How otherwise could Christians obey the precepts to warn, edify, exhort, and comfort one another? Every Christian makes one of a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation"; and it is his duty, as well as his privilege, to communicate "that which is good to the use of edifying." II. WHAT SHOULD INDUCE PERSIS TO UNDERTAKE THIS LABOUR? 1. As a disciple of Christ, she was actuated by those feelings which would not allow her to rest satisfied with having found for herself the way to heaven. Let those distrust their own state who can be so satisfied. Where there is love, there will be anxiety about the unconverted: love cannot exist without it (Acts xvii. 16; Prov. xxiv. 11, 12). 2. She was excited by the feeling of thankful love towards the Lord for whom she laboured. This love makes the Christian desire that fresh trophies should be added to His Cross, new jewels to His crown. And certainly that love must be very lukewarm, and such as Christ will not deign to accept, which will be outdone by the disciples of evil, and which takes the benefit but neither regards the honour of the benefactor, nor complies with his commands. III. THE BLESSINGS WHICH FOLLOW SUCH LABOUR IN THE LORD. It is truly "twice blessed." It blesseth him who works and him on whom the labour is bestowed. (*Abp. Sumner.*) **Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.**—*Rufus*:—I. HIS PLACE IN HISTORY. The son of Simon the Cyrenian, whom Mark mentions (chap. xv. 21), with his brother Alexander, as well known to the Church. Christ's Cross, laid on Simon, brought blessing to his wife and children. II. HIS DISTINCTION. 1. Chosen, *i.e.*—(1) Elected, as proved by his works (1 Thess. i. 4–6). (2) Choice. Excellent, as seen in his life and labours (2 John i. 13). It is good to be a chosen Christian; better still to be a choice one. 2. In the Lord—*i.e.*, in union with Christ (Eph. i. 4). (1) Union with Christ the evidence of election in Christ. (2) True excellence only attainable in union with Christ. III. HIS RELATIONSHIPS. 1. Natural. "His mother." He was the godly son of a godly mother. It is a double blessing when both parent and child are in the Lord. 2. Spiritual. "And mine." He owed his brotherhood with St. Paul probably to his mother's attention to the apostle. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Rufus*:—I. CHOSEN IN THE LORD. 1. Truly converted. 2. Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. 3. Hence a choice man. II. BLESSED WITH A PIOUS MOTHER, whose maternal kindness and Christian character are tenderly acknowledged by the apostle. III. PRIVILEGED WITH THE FRIENDSHIP OF PAUL. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas.**—*Asyncritus and his companions*:—Christian fellowship is—1. A necessity. 2. A privilege. 3. A safeguard. 4. A duty and an earnest of eternal happiness in Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Uncalendared saints*:—Asyncritus, Phlegon, and Hermas, to us are little more than empty names; but if we knew as much about them as their friend Paul did, it is quite possible that we would have given them the whole chapter. The servants of God do not write history after the fashion of the world. The sacred writer immortalises the obscure worker who sheds abroad the fragrance of a holy violet-life in the dingy alley or fever-haunted court; whilst the secular scribe reserves his greenest laurels for the man who dances on a tight rope or who floats down Niagara in a cask! The best part of the world's history is still unwritten. The profane historian would have buried Asyncritus and Phlegon in eternal oblivion; but wherever this Epistle is read, their names will be honourably mentioned. I. THE BIBLE IS RICHLY STOCKED WITH EXAMPLES WHICH ARE WELL SUITED FOR ALL CLASSES OF SOCIETY. It is not a Book for patricians, nor for plebeians, but for all without distinction. It sets before us extraordinary men as examples to extraordinary men—Moses as an example to national leaders, Joseph as an example to prime ministers, Elijah as an example to religious reformers, &c. But when we read of Asyncritus, &c., we see that the Bible is also full of examples for ordinary people. And it is right that it should be so, for the world is almost entirely populated by very ordinary people. II. OBSCURE MEN HAVE DONE, AND ARE STILL DOING, SPLENDID SERVICE FOR CHRIST. All our best men are not in the front. These

simple men lived in a city wholly given up to heathenism; yet they bravely held their ground against crushing odds, fearlessly upheld the Christian banner, and helped to drive back the tide of Paganism, and prepare a throne for Christ in the very centre of the world's power. Gold is no less gold because hidden in the bowels of the mountains, and courage is no less courage because sometimes veiled in obscurity. Our danger is to mistake noise for power and fanaticism for zeal. All the great powers are silent powers. The bugler is more noisy than the field-marshal, but he is not so indispensable on the field of battle. God was not in the thunder nor in the wind, but in the still small voice. The great merchant is almost entirely dependent on the labours of faithful men whose names are buried in obscurity. The ablest of our cabinet ministers mainly depend upon the obscure permanent officials for their information. And in religious circles the minister frequently gets all the credit, when it should be shared with the Church officers and the Church members who assist him. In eulogising Apollos, we must not forget Priscilla and Aquila. That unknown man who keeps the lights burning in his lighthouse has been the means of saving hundreds of lives. Obscure friends, your life is worth living. Like the coral insects of the Pacific, you are building better than you know. So was Luther, when translating the Bible in the Castle of Wartburg, and the Pilgrim Fathers, when they landed on Plymouth Rock. Let us work on, for the deed will be immortal, whether the doer's name is known or not. The name of the widow who cast her mites into the temple is forgotten, but her deed will live on throughout all eternity. III. PROMINENT MEN SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO OBSCURE MEN FOR THE PROMINENCE WHICH THEY ENJOY. Hills would be impossible without valleys. We may be only the pedestals for the statues, but the statues should not forget the debt they owe to the pedestals. The top-stone, resting in the glad sunshine, must not forget that it owes a debt to the foundation-stone which is buried out of sight in the dark, damp earth. Of what use would Wellington have been on the field of Waterloo without his men? Johnson without his Boswell would not be the power in England that he is to-day. Samuel was a splendid man, but his unostentatious mother, Hannah, had the making of him. John Wesley gets all the credit for the Methodist revival, but his mother should be a sharer in the glory. Where would Leonidas have been but for his three hundred Spartans? Who can tell how much our prominent men in Church and State owe to some village schoolmaster or country minister? Lord Shaftesbury confessed that his life was entirely moulded by a God-fearing nursemaid. Klopstock, in the very height of his popularity, strewed flowers over the grave of his old schoolmaster. Paul never forgot his debt to Asyncritus and Phlegon, who so faithfully witnessed for Christ in that hot-bed of idolatry called Rome. IV. OBSCURE MEN SHOULD NOT BE JEALOUS OF THEIR MORE FAVOURED BRETHREN. Asyncritus and Phlegon were not envious of Paul's power and influence. If we have only one talent, let us not be jealous of those who have five. Conspicuous people are not always happy people. The statesman may have the plaudits of his friends, but he has also the bitterest invectives of his foes. It is the loftiest tree that is exposed to the full force of the hurricane. What a pleasant thing it must be to be a Prime Minister of England or a Chief Secretary for Ireland in these times! "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." If you are only an ordinary man, do not grumble because you are not extraordinary. Think of a watch saying, "I will not keep time because I am not a town clock"! Think of a candle refusing to give light because it is not a Jupiter! Do not envy the five-talent men, but compensate yourself by using your one talent wisely until it becomes five. Carey could not do the work of Shakespeare, nor Luther the work of Melancthon, nor Bunyan the work of Milton. The eye cannot do the work of the ear, and the foot cannot do the work of the hand. V. OBSCURE MEN SHOULD NOT DRIFT INTO DESPONDENCY AND INACTIVITY. "I am nothing!" Quite so. But add God to the nothing, and the total will amount to something! Like Naaman, we all want to do some great thing or nothing. There are only a few men who can do anything great. Suppose a star were to say, "I will extinguish myself, for the heavens can well do without me"; or a sand-grain, "I am only a speck of dust; the vast ocean-shore can well do without me." Ah! but what if all the stars and sand-grains were to repeat the same story? All trifles are great trifles. A spoonful of water will set in motion the hydraulic power that will lift up many tons of iron, and a drop of faithful Christian service will send a movement through all the eternities. A rod with God behind it will divide the sea. A stripling shepherd with God at his right hand will vanquish the Philistine. Do not wait for great

occasions, for there are only a few men who can do anything truly great. In a church of 500 members, you will not find more than ten five-talent men, and if they double their talents the total will only amount to 100. Then suppose the remaining 490 have only one talent each, and that they double it, the total will amount to 980 talents. There you have 980 against 100. There is a tremendous quantity of unused power in the Church. The humblest acts of the humblest men often have the greatest events hinging upon them. A cordial hand-shake with a heart-throb in it may save a soul. A genial smile with a little of the angel in it may redeem a family. If you cannot handle the oar, do send a cheer to those who are battling with the breakers. VI. OBSCURE MEN WHO FILL THEIR QUIET SPHERES EFFICIENTLY WILL BE PROMOTED BY GOD TO WIDER SPHERES. Listen to the promise: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things." By improving present opportunities, you open the gate for wider service. Fill well the sphere you have, and you will fit yourself for a higher one. "To him that hath shall more be given." If you are only a tract distributor, do your work thoroughly, and the King will promote you. Because David was efficient as a shepherd, God made him a king. VII. AT THE GREAT DAY THE OBSCURE ONES WILL BECOME PROMINENT, AND MANY OF THE PROMINENT WILL BE CONSIGNED TO OBSCURITY. "Many shall be last that are first, and first that are last." If the granite does not keep your name conspicuous before the eyes of the world, God has registered it in heaven. Work on quietly in the shade, then, and your handiwork will one day be exhibited in the sunshine. Asyncritus and Phlegon may yet stand side by side with Paul and Apollos. (*J. Ossian Davies.*) **And all the saints which are with them.**—*Uncalendared saints*:—The Bible saint is a holy or godly person. Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, were not all the saints there were in Rome. Paul saw fit to mention these, but there were the unmentioned ones, who were saints nevertheless. The faithful Christians of to-day cannot all be mentioned among the leaders. Salute all! No one, however humble, is to be forgotten. I. THE BEST AND HARDEST WORK OF THE CHURCH HAS BEEN DONE BY THESE UNNAMED CHRISTIANS. I have often noticed in the hallway of public buildings one or more large tablets sunken into the wall. On the tablet are engraved the names of the architect, the mayor of the city, and a few other great names. Who laid the bricks to form that wall? Who wrought in wood and in metal the elegant finishing and sumptuous furnishing? Nay, whose hands carved in this marble slab the few names that are thus designed to go down to fame? The uncalendared workmen are many, but without them there could be neither foundation-stone nor key to arch. They laboured in the heat, and often in the rain; they laid the brick and lifted the stone into place; they laboured faithfully—and are forgotten! But these same uncalendared workmen did in their sphere as good work as did the architect in his. I have also learned that the uncalendared saints do the largest share of God's work, and, because they do that work for God, are willing to remain unknown and unsung. There never yet was a revival of the true sort for which God will not award praise to the uncalendared saints as well as to those whose names come prominently before the public eye. These uncalendared ones must do most of the plodding work. They must raise and disburse the money of the local church, visit the sick, care for the children. God bless the uncalendared saints who, because they work not for notoriety but for Jesus' sake, are willing to do everything and be nothing. These, not the great names, constitute the strength, the hope, of the Christian Church. II. AS A RULE, THE MOST DESERVING HAVE THE LEAST EXPECTED TO BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR. I imagine the people of our text were no exception. Paul was not the man to make this mention as a species of flattery, nor as a matter of policy. Philologus and Julia, Nereus and Olympas, never dreamed that their names were to be embalmed for ever in the Holy Word. It is not so difficult as many suppose to become a leader in a church or even in a denomination—to have one's name printed in the papers as the distinguished layman or minister Mr. So-and-so; not so difficult to get on the calendar the world looks at, if one is willing to use a few of the means that such a desire would suggest. Such was the desire and method of the Pharisees in Christ's time. They sought for a calendar fame and got it. But to be placed on the list of saints by loving hearts—hearts that have been helped by you—is quite another matter. I have my calendar of saints, those who have made themselves such to me. The fact is that when a Christian seeks to be known as one who ought to be placed on the calendar and known as an unusual saint, without the ordinary saint's failings, then that Christian is in the way of destroying the very

first qualification of a true saint—*i.e.*, humility, which will keep a true Christian from making any such claim. The almsgiving, the fasting, the praying, the whole Christian life and profession, are to be without ostentation, "and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Saints are found in the everyday life of every rank of society. For Jesus' sake they are doing and bearing, praying and hoping, unconsciously fitting themselves for the calendar which some soul is making out—for every Christian *is* seen and read of men. III. IT WAS A GREAT THING TO BE REMEMBERED BY PAUL IN ONE OF HIS LETTERS, EVEN THOUGH IT BE ONLY ONE OF THE NUMBER REFERRED TO AS "ALL THE SAINTS WHICH ARE WITH THEM." It will be an unspeakably greater joy when the uncalendared saint below becomes the calendared saint above. There the list will be made up of all, and not of a favoured few as in the Catholic Church. On that calendar we may all of us have our names written in characters that will never fade. What does it matter, then, if here we are uncalendared, if the great world does not know or care if we have honour and receive the recognition which is perhaps our due? In the end the world shall fade away, but enduring honour shall be given him whose name is enrolled on the heavenly calendar. (*J. H. Yeoman.*) *Valuable dust:*—Where goldsmiths are at work, the very dust is valuable. I stood, two days ago, in a room from the sweepings of the floor of which there is annually extracted more than two thousand dollars' worth of the precious metal; and if these had been carelessly thrown upon the dust-bin, there would have been just so much loss to the owners of the establishment. Now, in the Bible—which is more to be desired than gold—the portions that in other books may be accounted dry as dust, and hastily skipped over by the reader, have an element of value, not only because of their own importance, but also because very frequently there is found in them some suggestive expression which more than rewards for the patient perseverance that was required for their examination. Nothing can well be less interesting, in itself considered, than a genealogical table of names and dates and ages, yet we cannot forget that it is just such a place that we come upon the prayer of Jabez, which, by its very contrast with the details in the midst of which we find it, seems almost like a fountain in the desert, or like the well-known Alpine flower in the vicinity of the glacier. (*W. M. Taylor.*)

Vers. 17–20. **Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions.**—*A caution against schismatics:*—I. THEIR CHARACTER DESCRIBED. They—1. Cause divisions. 2. Occasion offences. 3. Pervert doctrines. II. THEIR PRINCIPLES EXPOSED. 1. Their motives are impure. 2. Their words deceptive. 3. Their victims the simple. III. THEIR INFLUENCE COUNTERACTED by—1. Obedience. 2. Wisdom. 3. Purity. IV. THEIR DESTRUCTION CERTAIN. Enemies of the God of peace, they will perish with Satan whom they serve shortly. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Divisions in the Church arise from a want of Spiritual life:*—Some of the old Roman walls are compacted with such excellent cement that it would be almost impossible to separate one stone from another; in fact, the whole mass has become so consolidated that you cannot distinguish one stone from another. Happy the Church thus built up, where each cares not only for his own prosperity, but for the prosperity of all. And yet, what are some Churches but semi-religious clubs, mere conventions of people gathered together? They have not in them that holy soul which is the essence of unity. The body would soon become disjointed if the soul were not in it; and if the Spirit of Christ be absent, the whole fabric of the outward Church falls to pieces; for where there is no life there can be no true union. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Danger of divisions:*—If two ships at sea, being of the same squadron, be scattered by storm from each other, how should they come to the relief of each other? If, again, they clash together, and fall foul, how should the one endanger the other and herself too? It was of old the Dutch device of two earthern pots swimming upon the water, with this motto, "If we knock together, we sink together." (*J. Spencer.*) *Danger from within the Church:*—"The disposition to grumble seriously threatened the well-being of the Church, it formed the gravest danger it had yet to encounter. The earth is exposed to two perils—the first arises from the storms bearing upon it from without; the second from volcanic forces assailing it from within. Of the two, the most dangerous is the volcanic force. Let the winds break as they will, the earth continues firm under our tread and steadfast in its orbit. But when internal fires burst forth, the earth quakes to its foundations, and the solid rocks shiver and split. The gravest danger to the Church arises from within; it is the spirit of discontent

in the members. (*S. Jones.*) *Danger of dissensions:*—The Jesuits who came to Germany were called "Spanish priests." They took possession of the universities. "They conquered us," says Ranke, "on our own ground, in our own homes, and stripped us of a part of our country." This, the acute historian proceeds to say, "sprang certainly from the want of understanding among the Protestant theologians, and of sufficient enlargement of mind to tolerate unessential differences. The violent opposition among each other left the way open to these cunning strangers, who taught a doctrine not open to dispute." (*Hallam.*) *Danger of dissension:*—It is said that when the cranes fall out among themselves, the fight is so fierce that they beat down one another, and so are taken as they fight. (*J. Spencer.*) **And offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**—*True doctrine:*—The question is not whether a doctrine is beautiful, but whether it is true. When we want to go to a place, we don't ask whether the road leads through a pretty country, but whether it is the right road, the road pointed out by authority, the turnpike-road. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *Contagion of false doctrine:*—Sin is like the bale of goods which came from the East to this city in the olden time, which brought the pest in it. Probably it was but a small bale, but yet it contained in it the deaths of hundreds of the inhabitants of London. In those days one piece of rag carried the infection into a whole town. So, if you permit one sin or false doctrine in a Church knowingly and wittingly, none can tell the extent to which that evil may ultimately go. The Church, therefore, is to be purged of practical and doctrinal evil as diligently as possible. That sour and corrupting thing which God abhors must be purged out, and it is to be the business of the Christian minister, and of all his fellow helpers, to keep the Church free from it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Danger of error:*—Let us beware of the first wrong direction of thought and feeling; however minute the degree, fearful may be the after-deviations. The voyager enters a current which seems propitious; there is no apparent diversion from his course; his bark speeds well; his oar does not toil, nor his sail strain; in his confidence all promises success. But, while he examines, scarcely does it seem that he has advanced. Much again and again reminds him of what he has noticed just before. A strange familiarity impresses his sense. Still, current flows into current; while onward and buoyant is his track. Soon he feels an unnatural vibration. Where he glided, he now whirls along. The truth seizes upon him; he is sweeping a whirlpool. Long since, he has entered the verge of a maelstrom, and he is now the sport of its gyrations. No power is left his helm or mast; he is the trembling, unresisting prey. He hears the roar; he is drawn into the suck of the vortex. Not only the circle lessens, the very surface slopes; the central funnel and abyss, dark-heaving, smooth, vitreous, yawns. The mariner shrieks, the skiff is swallowed up, where the waters only separate to close, where the outermost attraction was but the minister to the famine of this devouring maw. (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Separation: lawful and unlawful:*—To separate such as agree in the truth of Christ is an impious and sacrilegious divorce; but to defend a conspiracy for promoting lies and impious doctrines, under the pretext of peace and unity, is a shameless calumny. The Papists have no foundation for exciting, by artful guile, an unfavourable impression and low opinion of us believers, from this passage; for we do not attack and confute the gospel of Christ, but the falsehoods of the devil by which it has hitherto been obscured. (*J. Calvin.*) **For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.**—*Dividers and heretics:*—1. Their motive. 2. Their procedure. 3. Their victims. *Dividers and heretics:*—I. THEIR CHARACTERISTICS. 1. They serve not the Lord Jesus. (1) Their motive and profession was insincere. Our motive in religious matters to be carefully examined. Satan often served in Christ's uniform. (2) Christ is entitled to our service—(*a*) As God. (*b*) As Mediator. (*c*) From gratitude to Him and obedience to the Divine command. (3) To serve Christ is—(*a*) To aim at His glory. (*b*) To promote His interest. (*c*) To do His will. (4) Christ is to be served with all our powers. 2. They serve their own belly. Merely to get a living and for their own personal gain (2 Cor. xi. 12, 20; Phil. iii. 18, 19; Gal. vi. 12; Titus i. 10, 11). Private interests served under the pretence of Christian zeal. Men can make a gain of godliness instead of making godliness a gain. II. THEIR METHODS. 1. Good words. Pretending a great interest in your welfare (Psa. lv. 21). Satan transferred into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15). 2. Fair speeches, *lit.* blessing; a stronger word than the former. Speaking well of you; promising well to you. Having men's persons in admiration for advantage (Jude 16). Showing not only a bland spirit, but an affected piety. The foulest errors

are often introduced under the fairest promises. Satan is a skilful fowler and knows well how to set his snare. Soul destroyers are remarkable for seductive address (Gen. iii. 2, &c.; 2 Cor. xi. 3). Flatterers should be always suspected. Sweet tastes are not always wholesome. III. THEIR EFFECTS. 1. Deceiving. Deceived themselves they seek to deceive others. Deceiver, Satan's most characteristic title (John viii. 44; Rev. xii. 9). He practises his deception through his deceived followers. Deceivers more to be feared than open persecutors. 2. The simple, innocent, unsuspecting, inexperienced—those who are not sufficiently guarded and grounded in the truth. More distinguished for honesty than penetration; without malice themselves and suspecting none in others, and so the natural prey of designing men (2 Pet. ii. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 6). (*T. Robinson.*) *Difficult detection:*—The French have grown so clever at imitating pearls, that a jeweller in the Exhibition shows a necklace which purports to be a mixture of true pearls and false; and he challenges his customers to single out the real ones if he can. Nobody has yet succeeded. . . . We are told that there is only one way by which they can be detected, and that is by their specific weight; the false are much lighter than the real pearls. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.**—*Obedience of faith:*—1. Consists in a hearty reception of the gospel and compliance with its teachings. 2. Is a source of great satisfaction to every faithful minister. 3. Needs to be confirmed by wisdom and simplicity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.**—*Accessories to obedience:*—"But yet." Obedience is good, but needs to be guarded. Teachableness needs discretion for its companion. Pliable tempers require a double guard. The greater the grace received the more need of caution. The richest vessels carry the strongest convoys. Living Churches and Christians Satan's most coveted prey. Holy joy in others leads to holy jealousy over them (2 Cor. xi. 2). I. WISE UNTO GOOD. Wisdom is to know what is good, to embrace it, to hold it fast, to practise it, and to promote it. It includes understanding, discrimination, prudence, and discretion, and is necessary to avoid being ensnared by the crafty. The Roman Christians had already perhaps been none too cautious. The good includes doctrine, practice, and experience. The highest wisdom is to know the will of God and to do it, and the most profitable that which makes us wise unto salvation. II. SIMPLE CONCERNING EVIL. 1. Simplicity is—(1) Harmlessness; like an animal without horns. Believers, in respect of evil, are to be as children (1 Cor. xiv. 20), wise as serpents but harmless as doves (Matt. x. 16). (2) As contrasted with "wise"—without cunning, dexterity, or skill. Unknowing and unpractised in the ways of evil; ignorant of the depths of Satan (Rev. ii. 24). 2. Evil is—(1) Moral, *i.e.*, sin. (2) Harm done to others. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *True religion:*—If this Epistle had been lost in the streets of Rome, and had been picked up by some Roman philosopher, after reading all the wonderful things which would have filled his mind with amazement, I think he would have called this a golden sentence. What a comprehensive and beautiful wish. I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE RELIGION. 1. "Wise to that which is good" includes—(1) An intelligent comprehension of the nature of acceptable goodness, which is neither morality without religion nor religion without morality. It is neither secular virtue without any root in religious faith, nor is it the mere profession of religious truth, or the mere enjoyment of religious excitement, or the mere attention upon religious ceremonies distinct from real, downright morality of life. These two things must be combined; and then there is a perfection about the human character that the man who has to do with God cannot but have to do with man under the influence of feelings that belong to God. (2) The application of this knowledge to practical life; for wisdom is the practical application of knowledge. To be wise unto that which is good is to see to it that the principle of religious faith shall be the root and spring of holy moral action. Yet how many professors are very knowing as to the theory, but want the "wisdom" of the manifestation of the thing as a practical law. (3) The being alive to whatever will promote or retard this. Most men are like horses to a chariot, one dragging and another backing, one starting aside and another standing still. But where there is a predominant principle, it will subordinate everything to itself, and make obstacles stepping-stones to the object. Now, if a Christian man has for his ruling principle a desire to advance in acceptable goodness, and if he is "wise" in relation to it, he will be alive to favourable circumstances. Aye, and how "wise" such a man will become in relation to self-knowledge! He will draw upon his memory and upon his experience. From past failures he will draw principles

of caution. He will be "wise" to understand his weakness as well as his strength, and, guarding against weakness and seeking to increase strength, there will be a practical wisdom perpetually manifested in the way in which he will seek to improve opportunities and avoid hindrances. (4) Promptitude and tact in doing good. And the man that is really "wise to that which is good" will acquire a talent for saying and doing things without giving the least offence, leaving an impression upon men which shall lead them to God. 2. "Simple concerning evil." (1) The happy simplicity of ignorance. Often the knowledge of evil is evil, and many a man has lived to regret that he has had any acquaintance with it. (2) Perfect candour, guilelessness, simplicity of purpose and manner and language. How unenviable is the reputation of some men, who seem to be perpetually acting upon the principle of language being given "to conceal the thoughts." It is painful to have to do with such people. (3) Thinking no evil of our brother. Some men are ever suspecting and acting with every man as if he might one day be an adversary. Let us have more faith in one another. Even though we may sometimes be deceived, still do not let us give up faith in man. (4) Steady simplicity of purpose in the resistance of evil. Man cannot say with his Master, "The evil one cometh and hath nothing in me"; but by the grace of God there must be perfect clearness of character, unspottedness from the world. No paltering with evil, but a manly front, arising from the rectitude of purpose, with which we desire to glorify God. II. THE WAY IN WHICH WE MAY SEEK TO REALISE IT. 1. Frequent, deep, and devout meditation upon the ultimate object of religion. That object is not numbers, faith, profession, religious pleasure, all this it gives, but it gives and demands something more. Everything is to terminate in more and more practical "fruits of the Spirit" and a holy likeness to the God that gave it. Now Christian men should meditate upon it, and that would aid them in realising it. 2. Steady, constant, and conscientious use of the means of grace as means. Not to find the end in the mere coming in contact with the means, and in the pleasure which they produce; but to use these things as means to strengthen and nourish faith, holy feeling, and motives, and to lead the man from the Church into the family and all the thoroughfares of the world, there to act and to live out the principles which the means of grace cherish and strengthen within him. 3. Act the text. The really doing a good thing has a happy reflex operation, both upon a man's understanding and heart. Get over some suggestion of selfishness or feeling of revenge, go and forgive thy brother, or visit the wretched and poor, go with simplicity of purpose and desire to manifest thy love; and then come and read thy Bible. It is wonderful how beautiful thou wilt perceive the truth to be; and how every word from that very preparation of the heart will come with power upon thy soul, and strengthen within thee every holy purpose. But come from your hours of dissipation, your places of frivolous amusement, come after actually committing some act of violence, and read thy Bible; how it will strengthen the sceptic within thee! how it will cloud thine eye! how it will make thee find reasons, or attempt to find them, for denying and disbelieving this Divine thing! Conclusion: 1. Not only is the gospel pre-eminently a practical thing, but, whether Christianity be true or false, it will be blessedness to the world for its spirit to become practically universal. 2. Christianity bears upon it, in these attributes, the indications of the source from which it comes. Take the character that the world admires; why, if that spirit were to become universal, if there were nothing to counteract it in the virtues of Christian men, the world would become like the infernal pit. 3. Admitting that a great many Christians are far inferior to the demands of the Book, a vast many of them are superior to the world. "The fruits of the Spirit" do appear in some degree; and after all, what would the world be if there were not a Christian Church with a Bible in it in the midst of them? (*T. Binney.*)

Ver. 20. **And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.**—*Satan bruised by the God of peace*:—There were two victories to be obtained over Satan. By the first, his head was to be bruised under the feet of Christ; and by the second, the rest of his body will be bruised under the feet of believers. Of the second of these victories, Paul here speaks. In the first prediction, God speaks as the Lord of Hosts, the God of war—"I will put enmity." The war continues till the bruising of Satan's head has taken place and his empire is overthrown, and when it is subverted, peace is made, and God is the God of peace. As, then, the Seed of the woman has bruised the head of the serpent, so His people will, through Christ, likewise bruise Satan. The apostle says not we shall bruise him under our

feet, but God shall do it; yet he says not He shall bruise him under His own feet, but under yours. The victory shall be ours though wrought by Him; and He shall do it shortly. Some understand this of the final victory that all the Lord's people will obtain at last over Satan and all his emissaries. But though they will not be free from the attacks of this subtle adversary as long as they are in the body, yet from the phrase "speedily," or "shortly," as well as from the immediate reference to the power of God in the Church, it appears rather to refer to a present victory. It is consistent with God's wisdom to permit Satan to try His people; but when they are sufficiently tried, they are delivered from the temptation. So it was with the Son of God Himself. Satan was for a time permitted to harass Him, but at last he was dismissed. In like manner, Churches and individual Christians are all to be tried in various ways; but if they abide the trial they shall be delivered from the temptation, and, in the most emphatic and extensive sense, they shall all at last bruise Satan under their feet. They shall obtain a complete victory over him in the day of the appearing of their Almighty Lord, who will then cast him into the lake of fire and brimstone. On that day the full import of this expression will be seen. (*R. Haldane.*) *Victory over the disturber of peace:*—Consider:—I. How SATAN DISTURBS THE CHURCH. By divisions, &c. (ver. 17). II. THE CERTAINTY OF OUR DELIVERANCE. By the God of peace. III. THE SIGNAL MANNER IN WHICH HE WILL EFFECT IT. He will bruise, &c. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The wonderful conquest:*—Earth is the scene of a great moral struggle between truth and error, right and wrong, God and Satan. This fact invests our planet with an interest which perhaps attaches to no other portion of the universe. The text prophesies a conquest, in every aspect wonderful on account of—I. THE GIGANTIC FOE THAT IS OVERCOME. "Satan." 1. The word means first an accuser, a calumniator, and then an enemy. The Bible represents him as the introducer of evil into the universe, the leader of all the hosts of wickedness, in hell and on earth; at once the instigator and the strength of all opposition to the cause of virtue and the well-being of humanity. 2. To crush him is to destroy the root of the upas, to dry up the fountain of sin and misery. He shall be "bruised"; his purposes thwarted, his influence destroyed, his powers paralysed; the crushed victim of his own gigantic follies and stupendous wickedness. What a blessed event in the history of the universe this will be! II. THE CHARACTER OF THE GLORIOUS CONQUEROR. "God of Peace." How sublimely strange—not the God of vengeance, the God of war. Note—1. That God has the consciousness of a sufficiency of power for the work. There can be no peace of mind to one who has the faintest suspicion of his own insufficiency. Anxious doubt would fill the spirit with agitation. Mighty as Satan is, he is feebleness itself in the grasp of Omnipotence. 2. That God is free from all malevolent emotions in the work. Where anger, revenge, &c., exist, there can be no peace. They agitate the heart. God crushes Satan from impulses the most benevolent. 3. That God has a consciousness of rectitude in the work. Whenever a being has misgivings as to the rightness of a course of action, he cannot be in the enjoyment of peace. God feels He has a right to crush Satan the usurper, &c. III. ON ACCOUNT OF THE CREATURES FROM WHOM THE CONQUEST IS ACHIEVED. Satan is under the feet of angels. They tower in virtue, blessedness, and dignity, in spheres above his influence. It is over men he has control. God will put him under men's feet. 1. Completely. "Under your feet," indicating entire subjection. He will rise no more. 2. Speedily. "Shortly." The conquest is not far off—(1) In the individual history of good men. At death, by God's grace, they obtain the entire mastery over Satan. Death will be "shortly" with all of us. (2) In the general history of this world. Satan has been ruling the world for ages, still a period shall come when he shall be put under its feet. Though this period may be many ages distant, still in a sense it is close at hand—(*a*) To us. We die, and the intervening period is as nothing. Only as the few hours of a refreshing sleep. (*b*) To God. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years," &c. Let us, then, take heart. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Satan under the control of God:*—We looked into the Botanical Gardens at Rome, and saw a leopard walking to and fro upon the terrace. He appeared to be quite loose, but we were morally certain that he was chained in some way. We saw no chain, but we were as much at ease as if we could, because we were sure there must be one somewhere. So is it with Satan, affliction, temptation or trial—there is a Divine restraint upon them; whether we see it or not, the tether is there. Let us trust and not be afraid. God will take in the enemy a link or two if he becomes too malicious. Dread not the foe, but bless God for the chain. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 21–24. **Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.**—*Timotheus the workfellow*:—I. WHAT CO-OPERATION IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST IMPLIES. 1. One faith. 2. One spirit. 3. One aim. 4. One effort. II. WHAT IT SECURES. 1. Peace. 2. Love. 3. Success. 4. Honour. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Natural and spiritual relationships*:—1. Paul and Timothy. 2. Paul and his kinsmen. (*Ibid.*) *Lucius*:—Either Luke, now with Paul (Acts xx. 5), or Lucius of Cyrene (Acts xiii. 1), or both. One name often appears under different forms. *Jason*:—A convert of Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 5, 7), who entertained Paul at much risk, and accompanied him to Corinth, as usual in those times (chap. xv. 24; Acts xx. 4). *Sosipater* of Berea (Acts xx. 4). These were Paul's kinsmen, relations both by nature and grace. The holy lives of relatives a joy to believers. Yet note that Timothy a workfellow is named before them. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The greetings of the saints derive value*:—I. FROM THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO SEND THEM. 1. They are God's children. 2. Love us for Christ's sake. 3. Seek our truest happiness. 4. Hence their good-will is better than that of the most distinguished children of this world. II. FROM THEIR IMPORT. 1. They are not mere formalities. 2. But heartfelt wishes—and silent intercessions. 3. Whose essential meaning is expressed in ver. 24. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Mutual salutations*:—1. Are not only courteous, but Christian. 2. Should be the symbol of heartfelt love, and unity in Christ. 3. Should be accompanied with earnest prayer. 4. Are then of real and essential value. (*Ibid.*) **I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.**—*Tertius*:—We often see in old religious pictures a small portrait of the artist on his knees in a corner. This is such a picture of the man who had the humble task of writing this Epistle from Paul's burning lips. We never hear of him before or after; just one little gleam of a light falls upon him, as sometimes you may see a star peep out for a moment, with a great bank of blackness on either side of it—but one gleam of light and one word makes this man immortal. "I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle," will last as long as the Bible, and longer too. Note here:—I. A VERY REMARKABLE, BECAUSE UNCONSCIOUS EXAMPLE OF THE STRANGE UNITING POWER OF COMMON FAITH. The Church in Rome knew nothing about Tertius; so it was needful to introduce himself. 1. Here, then, is an utter stranger to a body of people in Rome, possibly separated from them by race, nationality, education, and all the deep clefts which split humanity up into so many uncommunicating or hostile forces. And he stretches out his hand across all this, and says, "Here is a brother's hand. God has made us of one family." And look how beautifully he pushes himself in: "I salute you *in the Lord*. If you want to know why I speak to you, I point to Christ's name. You and I are one in Him, and so we can salute each other." The world was all broken up by great deep clefts frowning against each other, and Christianity threw across what seemed to be mere gossamer threads, but what has drawn the frowning precipices together, and of the twain has made one. 2. These early Christians loved each other all the more because the world hated them. The pressure of antagonism forced them together, as loosely compacted substances are squeezed together by the hydraulic press. Christianity is a great deal more loosely compacted than when the world sat upon it; but take this lesson—do not put your experience within any little ring fence. You are tall enough to look over it, however high it is; and though you may talk about "our Church," do not fancy that that is the same as Christ's Church, and that you are to keep all your sympathy for your own Church. Put your hand out, be sure that your brother there will grasp it; and make the effort after the pattern of this voice from Corinth, that shouted across the water to the people in the mother-city. Do not let our faith have less of a uniting power than the infantile faith of those early Christians. II. THE DIGNITY OF SUBORDINATE WORK. 1. The man was very little more than a machine; he sat there to put down whatever Paul told him. Yes! But he is evidently proud of his work, with the kind of pride that a true man may have, not that it has been done well, but that God has given it to him to do at all. "I have not done much in the world, but I have done that, at any rate. If it had not been for me you Roman Christians would not have had this in your hand." 2. And Tertius was quite as necessary as Paul, before the letter could get finished. All the bits of a machine are equally important, because if the smallest screw drops out, the whole thing stops. However minute a link of a chain may be, if it drops out, the whole thing is at an end. And so in God's work there is no such thing as "great" and "small." Besides, nobody can tell what is big and what is little. If it had not been for Tertius you would not have had your New Testament, as you have it. He did not know what he was doing, and none of us know what we are

doing when we are working for the Master. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee." The wise and seeing people in the Church, the clever, and educated people, cannot say to the people with no views or insight to speak of, but can do the work that they are directed to do—"I have no need of thee." Every note in the great score is needed for the total effect, and the Master foresaw its power. Every instrument in the orchestra is needed. III. WHAT IS THE BEST THING TO BE REMEMBERED BY? Very beautiful to see how in this good man's mind there was evidently present the desire to live in the affections of those to whom he had been the means of bringing God's truth. And there is no such sacred tie as that. And it is right that he who has helped you in any way to feel Christ nearer or more precious to you, should seek to have and to keep a place in your hearts. Only, let us remember that it was "in the Lord" that Tertius wanted the Roman Christians to love him. And it is not mere admiratory esteem, affection of an earthly sort that a true minister seeks from his flock. IV. "I wrote this Epistle." That is all his life that we know anything about. All the rest of it has shrunk away and been forgotten. INTO HOW LITTLE A SPACE THE IMPORTANT FACTS OF A LIFE CAN BE CONDENSED. It takes acres of roses to make a phial of essence of roses. And it takes days and years to be, and do, that which can be spoken in a line. Well! Tertius did not care what of his life was known or unknown by other people; but he did want that other people should know that he had written this Epistle. Will it be an epitaph of that sort, in five or six words, that will do for us? This is my ambition, that this at least may be engraven on my tomb: "A servant of Christ, who helped some people to know His will, and to do it for His love's sake"? If so, all the rest may well go. If so, it matters very little what may become of our names or reputation. He has said, "Surely I will never forget any of their works." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Tertius the scribe*:—Why Paul employed an amanuensis we cannot certainly tell. That he did so usually is undoubted, and only wrote the concluding sentence to show that the Epistle was genuine (1 Cor. xvi. 21; Col. iv. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 17). It has been supposed that he laboured under a chronic defect of sight, arising from the effect of "the light from heaven above the brightness of the sun" which fell on his astonished eyes on the way to Damascus, and to which it has been supposed that there are various references in his writings, especially Gal. iv. 13–15. It is not unlikely that, like many literary men, he did not write a very legible hand. Some have supposed there is a reference to this in Gal. vi. 11. Every man has his own gift, and, in the employment of it may be useful. Tertius could not have composed this Epistle; but he could probably write it better than its author. The greatest of men has not every qualification, and may be much the better for the assistance of those who are immeasurably his inferiors. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) **Gaius mine host, and of the whole Church, saluteth you.**—*Gaius the host*:—I. A MAN CHARACTERISED BY A SINGLE VIRTUE. It is noteworthy that most of the saints immortalised in this chapter have just one distinguishing mark. Doubtless they were not wanting in other qualities necessary to the symmetry of Christian character, but one excellence seems to be prominent. 1. It is better to use one talent well than to neglect or imperfectly employ five talents. One ripe apple on a bough is worth more than twenty green ones. Many Christians richly endowed are far less useful than those poorer furnished, but who do what they can with all their might. Gaius may have been no eloquent preacher, no sagacious administrator, no zealous evangelist; but his means enabled him to dispense hospitality, and he did this well. 2. Gaius' excellence at first sight shows at a disadvantage beside those who were "beloved," who "laboured in the Lord," who were Paul's "helpers," &c. Yet he did what he could, and in the Master's estimation to give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple is sometimes better than to do many mighty works in His name. But—II. THIS VIRTUE INCLUDED A VAST NUMBER OF OTHER VIRTUES. Probably no virtue stands alone; certainly hospitality does not. Apart from the fuller portrait of Gaius in 3 John we can gather from the text—1. His devotion to the apostle. "Mine host." And he who was devoted to the apostle was devoted to the apostle's Master. "Inasmuch as ye have done," &c. 2. His courage. It required no small amount of moral heroism to shelter the leader and members of a sect everywhere spoken against. 3. Disinterestedness. "Not many noble," &c. There was nothing to gain, but everything to lose. 4. Large-hearted Christian love. He was not a "boon companion," but "the host of the whole *Church*." If charity be a distinguishing Christian grace surely Gaius must have been an eminent Christian. III. THIS VIRTUE WAS WORTH RECORDING, AND IS WORTHY OF IMITATION; because of—1. Its usefulness. How much Chris-

tianity was indebted to this good man only the day will declare. Think what it must have been to the apostle and the Church to have had one house that was always open, one table always spread, one heart always ready to sympathise, one hand always ready to help. 2. Its neglect. "Given to hospitality" was a common and required mark of the early Christians, which has largely dropped from the modern Christian ethics. Yet how much good might be done if more of our rich men were to invite Church workers, particularly the humble ones, to their homes. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Hospitality*, in its widest significance, is a form of sympathetic relation to other men, by which we open to them our house, our family circle, and let outsiders share the advantages of our own family life. In ancient and mediæval times this virtue was practised to a wider extent than at present, because the state of the law was then imperfect, the roads insecure, and public houses of entertainment, where refreshment might be had for money, were few. A certain character of sacredness and individuality was attributed to a stranger thus received, and this feeling has been maintained among all nations. And however past and present circumstances may differ, hospitality, both in its broader and narrower meanings, should be continually exercised (chap. xii. 13), partly by entertaining strangers, partly by affording access to our domestic circle to the stranger who has inspired us with confidence; now by collecting about us those who are deprived of the advantages of family life, now by inviting friends who have families of their own, in exhilarating social meetings. (*Bp. Martensen.*) **Erastus, the chamberlain of the city.**—Perhaps the apostle's helper in Ephesus (Acts xix. 22). Mentioned in connection with his own city, Corinth (2 Tim. iv. 20). An undesigned coincidence. Probably on receiving he accompanied Paul for a time. He was the public steward or treasurer, town clerk or recorder—an office of high respectability—mentioned by Josephus. The gospel suits and gains all classes. Yet not many noble called (1 Cor. i. 26). Grace is compatible with high position and manifold avocations. Christians may hold office under heathen rulers (Neh. i. 1). To serve Christ we need not abandon worldly business. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Erastus the chamberlain*:—"Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," but there were exceptions; and in some places not a few. If, when a Christian, Erastus retained office, the fact speaks highly of his reputation as a citizen and a functionary. The disciples of Jesus are still members of society; and if on any occasion their fellow-citizens call them to any situation of authority and influence, not requiring anything inconsistent with their Christian principles, it may even become an imperative duty for them to obey. Whatever station we are called in providence to fill, let us see to it that we never act the part of a trimming worldly policy. In every situation "let your light shine." There *is* danger, when Christians are placed in situations of worldly honour and influence, of their getting secularised: sad is it when this is the case; for it is alike injurious to the spiritual interests of the individual and to the cause of Christ. Oh, for grace according to our situation—that God in all things may be glorified! (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) **Quartus a brother.**—It is easy to make a little picture of this brother. He is a stranger to the Church in Rome, and is evidently a man of no especial reputation in the Church at Corinth. He has no wealth like Gaius, nor civil position like Erastus, nor wide reputation like Timothy. But he would like the Romans to know that he thought lovingly of them, and to be lovingly thought of by them. So he begs a little corner in Paul's letter, and gets it; and there, in his little niche, like some statue of a forgotten saint, scarce seen amidst the glories of a great cathedral, "Quartus a brother" stands to all time. Note—I. How deep and real these words show the new bond of Christian love to have been. A little incident of this sort is more impressive than any amount of talk about the uniting influence of the gospel. Quartus was a Corinthian, and there was little love lost between Rome and Corinth. The world then was like some great field of cooled lava on the slopes of a volcano, all broken up by a labyrinth of clefts and cracks, at the bottom of which one can see the flicker of sulphurous flames. Great gulfs of race, language, religion, and social condition, far profounder than anything of the sort which we know, split mankind into fragments. And all these disintegrating forces were bound together into an artificial unity by the iron clamp of Rome's power, holding up the bulging walls that were ready to fall—the unity of the slave-gang manacled together for easier driving. Into this hideous condition of things the gospel comes, and silently flings its clasping tendrils over the wide gaps, and binds the crumbling structure of human society with a new bond, real and living. And we see the very process going on before our eyes in this message

from "Quartus a brother." 1. It reminds us that the very notion of humanity, and of the brotherhood of man, is purely Christian. A world-embracing society, held together by love, was not dreamt of before the gospel came; and if you wrench away the idea from its foundation, as people do who talk about fraternity, and seek to bring it to pass without Christ, it is a mere piece of Utopian sentiment—a fine dream. But in Christianity it worked. The gospel first of all produced the thing and the practice, and then the theory came afterwards. The Church did not talk much about the brotherhood of man, or the unity of the race; but simply ignored all distinctions, and gathered into the fold the slave and his master, the Roman and his subject, fair-haired Goths and swarthy Arabians, the worshippers of Odin and of Zeus, the Jew and the Gentile. 2. And before this simple word of greeting could have been sent some profound new impulse must have been given to the world. What was that? What should it be but the story of One who gave Himself for the whole world, who binds men into a unity because of His common relation to them all, and through whom the great proclamation can be made: "There is neither Jew nor Greek," &c. Brother Quartus' message, like some tiny flower above-ground which tells of a spreading root beneath, is a modest witness to that mighty revolution, and presupposes the preaching of a Saviour in whom he and his unseen friends in Rome are one. 3. So let us learn not to confine the play of our Christian affection within the limits of our personal knowledge. Like this man, let us sometimes send our thoughts across mountains and sea. He and the Romans were strangers, but he wished to feel, as it were, the pressure of their fingers in his palm. II. QUARTUS BELONGED TO A CHURCH WHICH WAS REMARKABLE FOR ITS DISSENSIONS. One "said, I am of Paul," &c. I wonder if Quartus belonged to any of these parties. It is quite likely that he had far more love to the brethren in Rome than to those who sat on the same bench with him in the upper room at Corinth. For sometimes it is true about people, as well as about scenery, that "distance lends enchantment to the view." A great many of us have much keener sympathies with "brethren" who are well out of our reach than with those who are nearest. Do not let your Christian love go wandering away abroad only, but keep some for home consumption. III. HOW SIMPLY, AND WITH WHAT UNCONSCIOUS BEAUTY, THE DEEP REASON FOR OUR CHRISTIAN UNITY IS GIVEN IN THAT ONE WORD, A "BROTHER." "Never mind telling them anything about what I am, tell them I am a brother, that will be enough." We are brethren because we are sons of one Father. The great Christian truth of regeneration is the foundation of Christian brotherhood. That is the true ground of our unity, and of our obligation to love all who are begotten of God. All else—identity of opinion, practice, and ceremonial, local or national ties, and the like—all else is insufficient. It may be necessary for Christian communities to require a general identity of opinion and form of worship; but if ever they fancy that such are the grounds of their spiritual unity, they are slipping off the real foundation, and are perilling their character as Churches of Christ. IV. HOW STRANGELY AND UNWITTINGLY THIS GOOD MAN HAS GOT HIMSELF AN IMMORTALITY BY THAT PASSING THOUGHT OF HIS. One loving message has won for him the prize for which men have joyfully given life itself—an eternal place in history. How much surprised he would have been if, as he leaned forward to Tertius and said, "Send my love too," anybody had told him that that one act of his would last as long as the world! And how much ashamed some of the other people in the New Testament would have been if they had known that their passing faults—the quarrel of Euodia and Syntyche for instance—were to be gibbeted for ever in the same fashion! When a speaker sees the reporters in front of him he weighs his words. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Distinctions even in the Church*:—Here is—I. GAIUS the respectable. 1. Known of all. 2. Hospitable to all. 3. Beloved and well reported of all. II. ERASTUS the official. 1. Esteemed and honoured by those without. 2. Not many wise, not many noble, are called. III. QUARTUS a brother. Unknown, yet well known; "prized and loved by God alone." (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all**—*The pastor's parting blessing*:—The Christian is a man of generous actions, but his wishes go far beyond his deeds. Where he cannot be beneficent he is benevolent. Thus the great heart of the apostle relieved itself; though he would have been willing to lay down his life for the brethren, yet he did not think it idle to give them his blessing. Long has the benediction lain in the Epistle like the wheat in the Egyptian catacomb, but there is a vitality in it yet; lo, it buds and brings forth good to us after the lapse of eighteen centuries. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST? 1. The grace which was revealed in Christ. 2. The

grace which comes to us through Christ. Our Lord, as it were, took out of the river-bed of grace the great rock which blocked up the water-courses. 3. The grace which comes to us with Christ. Those peculiar blessings which come to souls who abide in Christ, who are not drowning men barely landed on the shore, but have life abundantly. 4. All the grace that is in any way connected with Christ. Elsewhere he extends the benediction to the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost. But the shorter form is intended to comprehend all the rest. In many of his epistles the apostle sums up with "grace be with you all," without mentioning any person of the Godhead. So that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is synonymous with grace as such; and comprehends all the various displays of grace. He wishes the saints all the grace they need, or can desire, and that the Infinite God can give. 5. When the text is the desire of our heart, we mean—(1) May the love of Jesus Christ be with you, and may you know that you have it. (2) May His mercy be with you, as shown by the full pardon of all your sins, and your knowledge of it. (3) May you be the subjects of His work constantly. (4) May you have His peace. (5) May you exhibit the grace which shone so brightly in Him, and was seen by men and angels to the glory of God the Father. II. WITH WHOM IS THIS GRACE TO BE? 1. With all the saints. (1) You all need it. (2) You all may have it. (3) There is no grace which you may not have, and which you ought to be content to go without. It is grievous to see how we stunt ourselves, and appear content with a poor form of spiritual life. 2. All the saints, *i.e.*—(1) Church officers. (2) Church workers. (3) Church members, poor, rich, young, and old. 3. This benediction is limited to the saints. In Philemon and Galatians the apostle says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." It is only meant for spiritual-minded men, for such as have been born again of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. xvi. 21–24 he pronounces a solemn curse upon those whom he feels he cannot bless, because they are so base as not to love the infinitely loving Jesus. III. WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT IF THIS GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL? Blessed consequences will accrue to—1. Yourselves. (1) You will love God better. (2) You will be much in prayer, for this eminently distinguished his character. (3) You will walk with God, even as he did. 2. Your fellow Church-members. (1) You will love each other with a pure heart fervently. (2) Your speech will be to edification. 3. Your families. The servants will find the house a home, and the children will become children of God, when the master and mistress are filled with the grace of our Lord Jesus. 4. The world. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*:—1. What it supposes. 2. What it includes. 3. For whom it is desired. 4. How it is secured. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Grace for all*:—Grace—1. Is needed by all. 2. Is provided for all. 3. Is offered to all. 4. Is supplicated for all. 5. May be enjoyed by all. (*Ibid.*) *Fellowship with Christ*:—On Christ faith feeds. I saw a group of lovely ferns the other day in a grotto, from the roof of which continually distilled a cool, clear, crystal rain: these ferns were perpetually fresh and beautiful, because their leaves were continually bathed in the refreshing drops. Although it was at a season when verdure was scant, these lovely ferns were as verdant as possible. I observed to my friend that I would wish to live in the everlasting drip of grace, perpetually laved, and bathed, and baptized in the overflowing of Divine fellowship. This makes a man full of faith. If Moses had faith you do not wonder, for he had been forty days upon the mount. If we have communed with God it shall be a marvel if we doubt, and not that we believe. Feed faith with the truth of God, but especially with Him who is *the* truth. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 25–27. **Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel.**—*Apostolic praise*:—What a doxology! Full of Divine melody; full of grace and truth! I. THE STABLISHER. He is the Creator. (1) He is the mighty God. He is "of power" (literally, "able") to stablish you. (2) The fountain-head of the mystery of hidden wisdom. (3) He is the everlasting God (Psa. xc. 1). (4) He is the God only wise. Such is our Stablisher! Can we fear or be discouraged? Shall our weakness, or frailty, or the number of our foes appal us? II. THE STABLISHING. The word expresses steadfastness, fixture, and strength (see Luke ix. 51; Rom. i. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 2, 13; 2 Thess. ii. 17, iii. 3; James v. 8; 1 Pet. v. 10). It assumes that on our part there is weakness, wavering, changeableness; that there is peril. The process of stablishing is what we need so much; it is more than being "kept from falling," and we require both. The gospel (1) says to us, "Be steadfast"; (2) shows us what steadfastness is; (3) supplies us with the means of stead-

fastness. In clasping that gospel, we are holding that which alone can keep us from being moved. III. THE STABLISHED. These are, first of all, the saints at Rome, "called," "beloved of God," whose "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." They needed "stablishing," though apostles were their pastors and teachers. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The doxology*:—This Epistle is remarkable for the number of its endings. The invocation at the end of chap. xv. may be regarded as closing the Epistle itself. Then the first benediction (chap. xvi. 20) was doubtless intended to be indeed the conclusion of the whole. But now Paul's companions desired to send greetings, which having been done, we have the benediction a second time (ver. 24). The pen of Tertius was now put down. The Epistle must be read aloud for review and correction. What was done in the latter respect we cannot tell. But the apostle and his companions were filled with profound emotions; and so Tertius was bidden to again take up the pen, and to write, "Now to Him," &c. And then the MS. was devoutly rolled up and sealed, and delivered to Phebe. Notice—I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS IN THE FAITH. Observe—1. That in respect to which the establishment is to be effected: the gospel. It is described in respect to—(1) Its subjective medium and source—"my gospel." Not that "his gospel" differed essentially from the "gospel" of any other apostle, though he had not learnt it from any of them; but it was his as distinguished from all corrupted gospels (Gal. i. 6, 7). (2) Its objective character and contents. (1) It is the revelation of a mystery which—(*a*) had been kept silent in eternal times, *i.e.*, from eternity up to the time of the advent of Christ; but—(*b*) had now, since the appearance of Christ, been made fully manifest. It is the great mystery of redemption through the One Divine-human Mediator, so called, not in respect to its incomprehensible character, but because it never could have been imagined by unaided human reason, nor appreciated by men before it had been evolved in history (Eph. i. 9; 2 Tim. i. 9, 10). (2) Enigmatical portions of the truth concerning it were disclosed from time to time in type and prophecy; but given in such separate fragments, that there was not skill to bring piece to piece, and so combine the whole as to discover the mystery. Even the prophets themselves were perplexed as to what could be the true significance of their predictions (Pet. i. 10-12). (3) But now, since the advent, the whole mystery had been manifested, and the time for silence has passed away: "Go ye into all the world," &c. 2. The establishment itself. (1) This was not simply that they should become so steadfast as never to apostatise; nor only that they should so maintain personal faith in Christ to inherit everlasting life; but also that they should have such a clear understanding of the spirit and purpose of Christianity; such a grasp of its various facts and truths, as that they should be in no danger of enfeebling the gospel by heterogeneous additions, or by an incomplete apprehension or enunciation of its truths. (2) Those who should thus be firmly established in the truth concerning Christ, are also supposed to hold firmly to Him, by personal living faith, who is Himself the Truth. II. THE ASCRIPTION OF GLORY TO THE ONLY WISE GOD THROUGH CHRIST, WHO WAS ABLE TO DO THIS THING FOR THEM. 1. The ability here spoken of is not an ability of mere power, but one which is manifested, and which becomes effective, through wisdom. Men are established in the truth by a clear apprehension of it, and of its grounds and bearings (Eph. iv. 14; Heb. v. 12-14). God has made abundant provision to present to believers the truth in an unmistakable form, and to give them every aid in mastering that form. 2. But the establishment includes, not only apprehension and belief, but also love, of the truth. And in all this God has manifested not His sole wisdom only, but His surpassing love; and we may be fully assured that He who thus appeals to the understanding by intelligible truth for the purpose of salvation will also, by the gentle and persuasive influence of love, appeal to the heart. 3. And this ascription of praise to the only wise God through Christ who is able to do this, was itself also intended to be one of the means to promote this very end. There are contained therein both incentive and encouragement. (*W. Tyson.*) *Praise*:—I. BELONGS TO God—as—1. The God of power. 2. The only wise. II. IS DUE TO GOD. 1. For everything. 2. But especially for the gospel. (1) Its revelation. (2) Publication. (3) Successes. III. IS AWAKENED BY GOD. 1. Through faith. 2. In the preaching of the gospel. IV. IS PRESENTED TO GOD. 1. Through Christ. 2. In glory. 3. For ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Stablished in the gospel*:—In the introductory words of the Epistle, Paul declares his strong desire to visit Rome, that its members might be established in the faith. As, then, he commences the Epistle

with the expression of this object, it is natural that he should close it with the ascription of glory to Him who was able to do it. I. THE MATERIAL IN WHICH THE ESTABLISHING IS TO TAKE PLACE. 1. "My gospel." (1) The gospel as preached by Paul. Already there had appeared those who proclaimed another gospel, of whom he says, "let him be accursed." His gospel was that which this Epistle especially expounded. (2) But the gospel is not a mere intellectual object set forth in order by the reason, and made evident in logical and eloquent speech; it is something which a man possesses in the inner nature of his being. It was a spiritual life for Paul. 2. The preaching of Jesus Christ. Paul's gospel was the fact that Jesus was the Saviour of the world, and the Christ of God. 3. It is easy now to see the substance of the Christian character in which believers are to be established. (1) It consists in the apprehension of a truth. That truth is—(*a*) Historic. The facts of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, His glory and power given to Him of God. (*b*) Doctrinal. The relations which these facts bear to one another, to man, to God, to the Divine government, to sin, to the destiny of the race and the universe. (2) This substance of the Christian character is moral and personal. When a man rightly apprehends these truths, he comes into moral relation to them. He believes them; this belief produces a becoming state of the emotions; these emotions act upon the character, will, conscience, and life. The man not only believes, he also lives. Now, in this sphere of the believer's condition there will be growth, and for the development, as for the commencement of this, the Holy Ghost is ceaselessly engaged. (3) As the central fact and power, both of doctrine and life, is the preaching of Jesus Christ, we ever need to be more fully instructed in the life of Jesus, more clearly to apprehend it, more strongly to feel His relation to us, more completely to have our lives and hearts submitted to His control, and consecrated to His service. II. THE NATURE OF THIS ESTABLISHING. The word signifies the supporting, the solidifying of anything. Thus, a prop set under an object that might fall, the fastening of what was shaking and unstable, the setting of a liquid into firm consistency, are all expressed by words of kindred origin with the word "establish." It is not difficult, then, to perceive the application of the term to the faith and life of a Christian man. It is clearly no external ratification. No such foreign act as confirming by bishop, or approval by the Church or its officers, is contemplated. But it is that work of Divine grace upon the heart after belief, whereby the knowledge and the faith, with all the graces that spring therefrom, are made more clear and strong, and the soul more able to contend and to continue, until the final victory is attained. Establishment in the faith—1. Consists in an increase of knowledge of the facts and truths of the gospel. Deeper and deeper will the believer drink into the teaching of that gospel, and every draught shall freshen and quicken and establish him in the faith. The best means of dealing with the prevailing spirit of unbelief is not controversial defence; the truth, the history, the doctrine, is its own best defence. Rich in this lore, the cunning craftiness of men will assault you in vain. Justified by this learning, you will meet the mightiest attack of the enemy unmoved as the stony rock when it receives the beat of ocean's waves and breaks them into harmless foam that only laves its brow and makes it glisten with a brighter radiance. 2. Must take place in the moral and spiritual nature of the man. We may increase in knowledge without any corresponding increase in virtue. The little brook that babbles as it runs, when it has reached the plain, grows to a broad, deep river, but is silent in its onward majestic flow. The waves of the streamlet only glistened in the light. The bosom of the river reflects a heaven upon its calm, still surface. So shall the soul grow in its love for God and Christ, its blessed experiences of mercy and grace. Less show and excitement, but the enjoyment of a fuller blessing, a richer knowledge. 3. Reaches forth into the life, and controls it. At first, the power of the truth was intermittent, partial; but as the confirming went on, the life became fuller of golden deeds of a Divine and celestial beauty. The altar of our surrender was ever builded higher and made wider, until at last it filled all the space of life, and life became a complete consecration. III. THE POWER BY WHICH THIS CONFIRMATION SHALL BE SECURED. It is a Divine work. He who gave the foundation of our faith alone can establish us in it, as He alone will crown it at last. It is quite certain that we can do nothing of ourselves, for as life proceeds we learn our helplessness, our vanity. But our God has power to hold us up. His grace is limitless, and by this established, we shall not fail. (*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *Establishing grace*:—I. ITS NECESSITY. II. ITS SOURCE. The God of power. III. ITS MEANS. 1. The

gospel. 2. The gospel of Paul. 3. The gospel preached. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **According to the revelation of the mystery.**—*The world's mystery unfolded in Christ*:—I. THE MYSTERY. The word "mystery" in Scripture implies not necessarily that the fact or truth cannot be understood, but that it is not known except as revealed from God. It is a favourite word of Paul's. Except in three passages of the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10), and four places in the Revelation (Rev. i. 20; x. 7; xvii. 5; xvii. 7), Paul is the only writer who employs the word, and he uses it twenty times. In several of these cases of Pauline usage, the term refers to that great fact of the universality of the gospel (Eph. iii. 6). And this mystery forms one of the great subjects of this Epistle. It may be interesting to refer to some of the passages and there learn what this great mystery is (chap. i. 5, 6, 13, 15; iii. 29; iv. 11; ix. 25, 26, 30; x. 11–13; xi. 11, 30; xv. 8–21). The mystery, then, is the universality of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All men have sinned. But all men may be saved by the free and sovereign grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. This was the sublime truth which Paul desired firmly to establish in the imperial city of the world, in order that there might then go forth to all mankind a power greater than that of Rome, more splendid than her glory, more searching than her law, more victorious than her legions, and which should abide when Rome should have crumbled into ruins. This mystery has been revealed to you. If you have received it, are you living in its blessedness, and up to the measure of the fulness of its freedom and life? II. ITS CONCEALMENT. "Which was kept silent in the æonian periods." 1. The past ages received concerning this great truth no voice from the Divine silence. Men knew nothing of this gracious scheme of salvation for the universe. (1) The Jew did not know it. If he regarded his God as also the creator and ruler of other men, they at least bore to Him some inferior relation, and if they were to be blessed at all, it was to be by and through the law of Moses. (2) The Gentile had altogether failed to gain a glimpse of it. Each people held itself to be autochthonous, sprung from the soil; all the rest were strangers, aliens, slaves. Humanity was unknown, and anything like a moral dealing with the individual that was to be of universal application, had never been hinted at in the whole range of Gentile philosophy and faith. (3) And now those who have not themselves accepted this gracious mystery in practice wholly ignore the idea that the entire human race is dealt with in the atonement of Jesus, and that the purpose of God includes that whole race within His love and power. Even within the Church, how few fully understand or obey the law which declares that there is in Jesus Christ neither bond nor free, &c. 2. What wisdom may we not find, yea, what grace, in the concealment of this truth! The world had to be and is still being prepared for it. All those denominationalisms which are only the Judaisms of the modern world, and the patriotisms which at best are bnt pagan virtues, are nothing but the concealment of the truth of the human unity in Jesus Christ, which is part of the plan of God when He will perfect the society of man in the breaking down of nationalities and ecclesiasticisms in a world-wide union. Happy souls who catch some glimpses of this bright day! Happier they who help on its coming, and make this their gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the unveiling of the mystery which in the past ages of the Divine purpose had not been uttered unto men. III. ITS MANIFESTATION. 1. The mystery was manifested in the character of Christ. While our Lord was a Jew and was careful of all Mosaic ordinances, yet the "enthusiasm of humanity" glowed within Him. His parables, sermons, conversations, works of charity and power, and death, are stamped with the mark of human nature, and have in them not a trace of the Israelite. He predicts the fall of the sacred city, affirms the universal worship of the God of heaven, and points with sublime assurance to the fact that when He has been crucified, He will draw all men unto Him. 2. And the history of the Church reflects the quality of its Master's work. At first baptized with a spirit which promised a universal scope, then narrowing down to the dimensions of a new Jewish sect, Divine providence compelled it to pass beyond the limits within which its leaders would have confined it, until it proved itself to be a world-wide Church, every road in life leading to its sacred courts. 3. And does not the history of the Church prove this in every succeeding age? What nation has been able to resist its advance? The seed of the kingdom grows in every soil. Conclusion: 1. In respect of the inexplicable and perplexed events and conditions of human life we have only to await the Divine time, and all shall be made clear. 2. Learn from this mystery the measure and the inspiration of our preaching. "According to

the revelation of the mystery." For every man is the mercy obtained; to every man its grace offered. 3. This mystery being for a world, awaits your acceptance. (*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The mystery of the gospel*:—The gospel is—I. A MYSTERY—long kept secret. II. A mystery REVEALED. 1. By the prophets. 2. Apostles. III. A mystery revealed BY THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD. IV. A mystery revealed by the commandment of God TO ALL NATIONS. V. A mystery revealed by the commandment of God to all nations FOR THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **And by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.**—*The universal gospel*:—1. Revelation is perfected in promulgation. That which has been made manifest in Jesus Christ is to be made known by the Church unto all nations. 2. The means of this information is the Scriptures of the prophets. Which from Eph. iii. 3–6 we must not limit to either those of the ancient or the later dispensation. The later Scriptures supplement and expound the former, and thus come to the obedience of faith. I. THE GOSPEL AS A SCHEME OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION IS REVEALED IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE PUBLISHED TO ALL MEN. 1. God might have adopted some method of treatment of the race which was not a matter for revelation. There must be a great part of the Divine system of the universe which deeply affects man which, perhaps, he never will and never can know. Indeed, very much of the physical constitution of things, by which the circumstances of our daily life are determined, is wholly unknown to us. We find it out only by patient observation after long ignorance, repeated failure, constant mistake. The system of nature is left for man to find it out for himself. But this is not so with the gospel. It must be made known, to be effective. There are no esoteric or exoteric doctrines in Christianity. All need it, all may receive it; it must be made known to all, and this universal knowledge must be a knowledge of all the truth. When Jesus was revealed, nothing was to be kept back. "All the truth," and "All the world" are the twin legends of His revelation. 2. Thus nothing which conceals from men the truth or seeks to produce spiritual effect other than by the influence of truth clearly apprehended, can be in harmony with the gospel. Two evils are contrary to this clear law of gospel promulgation, viz: the sacrifice of intelligent apprehension to mere feeling and sentiment; and the production of religious ends by mechanical services. The former is the error of the fanatic, the latter of the sacerdotalist. II. THE LAW OF THIS PROMULGATION IS THE COMMANDMENT OF THE ETERNAL GOD. 1. We might seek for illustrations of this command in the words of Christ, "Go ye into all the world," &c, or in His appointment of those who should be "witnesses unto Him," &c. (Acts. i. 8), or in the vision of Peter, or in the word to Ananias concerning Saul, or to any other of those direct appointments of the gospel ministry in its relation to the entire race. But we prefer to understand by the "command of the eternal God" that everlasting purpose which lay at the base of the methods of the Divine procedure. Any conception of the gospel which is less than this, must necessarily be incomplete. Creation lies in the bosom of redemption. Salvation by Christ is not a mere scene enacted as part of a vast drama upon the theatre of time and nature. The world, with all its physical characteristics, &c., its human story are but episodes in vast movements and evolutions of salvation. 2. Science boasts that it has relegated the earth and all earthly things to their proper place as very minor items in the universe of being. But such science forgets that, after all, its universe must be a universe which thought transcends. I can, in imagination, pass beyond the utmost limits of your natural universe, and I can rise to a height of moral being, beyond the uttermost reach even of my thought. Thus, vast though the universe may be, I am greater even than all the worlds, and it is with this range of being that the eternal God is concerned in the redemption of Jesus Christ. Hence, the consummation of the spiritual ends of the Divine purpose is the only infinite. It is this that circumscribes the universe. It is this that antedates creation. 3. The gospel is thus no expedient put in to prop the falling race, the temporal cure of an accidental injury to man. The salvation of the entire race of man is part of that universal gathering of all things into one in Christ which has been the everlasting purpose of God's almighty will. Upon this ocean of eternal will, time and being float, as the barques which the waves lift and the currents bear. And, as a part of this commandment of the eternal God, the mystery is revealed and made known unto all nations. 4. If this be so, with what calm equanimity shall we not regard the phases through which the Divine designs move on to their accomplishment. We see the world in its apostacy, overwhelmed by a flood, and threatened with

complete destruction. Over the raging of that catastrophe moves the calm purpose of the eternal God. We behold patriarchal ages when one family, and it but feebly, maintained the pure faith. How the flame flickers; but we know the eternal God is overhead, and His purposes depend not upon the choice and fleeting life and character of man. It is the time of the Mosaic economy, and one people is chosen, one family is priestly, one land alone has received the light of God's revealed grace; and we are affronted by its idolatry and sin. Shall we fear for the outcome? Not at all. The purposes of God are ripening fast, and millenniums are only the moments of the Eternal. And so of our own age and time. Perchance we lift the old lament or mocking cry: "The fathers, where are they?" &c. Lift up your eyes and see the clear, calm stars of an eternal purpose. The tempest reaches but a few fathoms below the surface, and the waves that strew the ocean with wrecks are only ripples in the mighty currents that roll unceasing in the sovereign will of God. The gospel is His; its proclamation is His command. And when the eternal throne crumbles into ruin, then, and then only, shall the evangel of God's grace and Christ's redemption be an empty sound. III. THIS DIVINE PURPOSE OF THE PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN BY THE UTTERANCES OF A CONTINUED SERIES OF INSPIRED PERSONS. There has ever been a witness amongst men, the sum of whose testimony has been to make known to all nations the mystery of a universal salvation. A Divine purpose has ever been accompanied by a prophetic word. IV. THE ULTIMATE END OF THIS PUBLISHING OF THE MYSTERY IS THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH AMONG ALL NATIONS. 1. Paul here returns to the opening ideas and expressions of the Epistle, one of which is the "obedience of faith." By this, some understand that obedience which springs from faith. But this does not seem altogether to suit the word as it is used in the first passage. Others give to faith the meaning of "the Christian truth"—a signification which belongs to the word in the later usage of the Church and not in the New Testament. Is it not rather that obedience which counts as faith itself, that yielding of the heart and the will to the revelations of God which is the ground of justification on its human side? (chap. x. 3). To accept the grace, to believe in God through Jesus Christ, is to render the obedience of faith. This, then, is the object which is sought by the divulging of the mystery. 2. The end, then, of an apostolic ministry is more than a mere testimony. Some have held that the gospel is only a test, whereby the elect and non-elect are discovered. Men say, on the one hand, We have preached the truth, the hearer must take the responsibility. On the other hand, men say, We have heard the truth; it does not compel our faith; it cannot be for us. Now, to both of these Paul says, "Made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Shall we dare to rest content that we have spoken even the whole of the Divine grace, and not seek by every means in our power to induce men to obey? How is it with you who have believed? Are you content with a world still disobedient, with your city full of the faithless, with your homes, your very pews, occupied by those who resist the gospel? And what shall I say to you who hear and refuse? You heap judgment on yourselves. There is no hope but in the gospel. If you do not obey, with faith in God's way of salvation, there is nothing for you in this world but disappointment, and in the world to come eternal death. 3. The promulgation of the gospel is not merely that men may know; the object of its being known is the obedience of faith. Will you believe? Then you take Jesus Christ not only as your atonement, but as your Lord, your pattern, your rule, your guide. (*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*) **To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.**—*The universal doxology*:—If you consult the Revised Version, you will there find the accurate reproduction of the Greek words, "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever." The words, "through Jesus Christ," and the place of the words "be the glory" at the end of the passage, furnish at once the representation of the original. It is clear that after the lengthened construction of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses, the apostle intends by the words, "to the only wise God," to complete and explain the pronoun "to Him," with which the whole passage commences. So far it is clear. Then comes the expression, "through Jesus Christ," understood by some to be the instrument through whom the glory is given, and by others the person by whom God is the only wise. Neither of these interpretations perfectly contents me. Have we not the true parallel to this passage in the words of St. Paul to the elders at Ephesus: "And now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace who is able to hold you up." The idea is not altogether foreign from that of establishing which we have in the

passage. Would not such a prayer more naturally find its place at the end of the Epistle than even a doxology, the latter being generally more incorporated into the very substance of the letter itself? Might not this be one of the prayers to which Paul refers in the opening words of the Epistle (ver. i. 9)—prayers, the end of which was this very establishing of his correspondents? Then the phrase "through Jesus Christ" is natural and appropriate, the entire construction of the clause easy and unbroken, the concluding relative fittingly introduced, referring to Jesus Christ just mentioned, the ascription of glory to Him being quite in harmony with other such ascriptions, found in other portions of the apostle's writings. We shall therefore base our discourse upon the passage viewed as a combined prayer and doxology, as if the words ran, "To the only wise God do I look for aid and blessing upon you, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory of the eternal ages. Amen." I. THE CONSIDERATION OF THE GOSPEL AS A SCHEME OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION, NATURALLY DIRECTS THE ATTENTION OF THE DEVOUT AND EARNEST HEART TOWARDS THE ONLY WISE GOD. Christianity, though rich in its ideas, is also always a practical and an efficient system. It is not the parent of dreams, it is not a mere poet. It presents the dream only as the token of what it will produce. It chants its sublime rhapsodies only as preludes of what shall be the song of triumph when its redeeming, its new creating work, is done. Thus, is it an ideal man that it would paint? It manifests Him and makes us touch Him, and hear Him, and walk with Him, and live in the light of His beauty and perfectness, in the person of Jesus Christ. Or is it a Divine power which, it declares, man needs? This power it gives to man. The Holy Ghost is shed abroad. The Comforter has come, and has abided for all the past years, and throughout all the world He is now dwelling as a real and actual strength and grace and life among the saints. So with this conception of the perfected and glorified Church of the redeemed: the race restored and made one not only with itself but with its God and Governor, its Lord and Ruler. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ which supplies the conception. Nowhere else has the grand vision been displayed. II. SUCH TURNING OF THE HEART GODWARDS DEMANDS THE MEDIATION OF JESUS CHRIST, NOT ONLY AS THE MEANS OF FINDING GOD, BUT ALSO AS THE INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHOM GOD WILL BESTOW ALL GRACE. Two attributes that necessarily are involved in this mystery of a world's salvation are clearly displayed. The one is power and the other love. All natural reasoning upon the state of man and his relation to God would lead us to conclude that the only possible end of human life must be everlasting destruction and eternal loss. All that we can see is the law and the sin. Man needs no revelation to make this plain. But the gospel declares that man can be rescued, and rescued without any loss of the dignity of law, without any lessening of the sanction and obligations of moral duty. This is done by a sacrifice on the part of God, not of the law, but of Himself, at a vast cost of suffering and shame, and weakness and death, all borne in the person of Jesus Christ. What is this, then, but the wisdom which we have seen God alone possesses in the fashion and guise of love? Nay, it is love itself. And all so necessarily and inherently Divine, that the love becomes a showing of that very being of God which is Love. But this thought of a world's salvation that leads us to our God is not only a thought of love, but also a thought of power. To bring it about will need a strength far beyond any wielded by a human arm. III. THE CONCLUSION OF THIS GODWARD ASPECT WILL BE THE ASCRIPTION OF ETERNAL GLORY TO THE AUTHOR OF THIS SALVATION. This glory is ascribed to the God of salvation by the conscious and uttered praises of the redeemed. How wonderful is that song of praise which ever ascends to the eternal throne! And what will be the ascription of glory when earth is exchanged for heaven, and the curtains of the eternal world are withdrawn, and the redeemed race has entered into its promised inheritance of bliss! But the glory that will be rendered to the Author of our salvation will not be the mere ascription of praise from the assembled myriads of the redeemed; it is to be found also in the very nature and character of the salvation itself. You all remember how the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral has no tomb or sculptured monument, to bear his name and tell the story of his skill in carven effigy, or cut upon the lasting brass. A brief inscription over the entrance of the cathedral gives his name, and then bids you "if you seek his monument to look around." And such as this is the true ascription of glory to the Lord. It is not the mere voices of the angels; it is their hosts themselves, kept in their places, holden in their high, unfallen blessedness. It is not the cry of jubilant triumph from the creation of life; it is that very creation itself, in its being, in its growth, in its perfectness, made by His word, sustained by His power, completed for the great

purposes of His changeless will. IV. THE PRAYER AND DOXOLOGY OF THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN WORKMAN WILL RECEIVE THE ACCORDANT ACCLAIM OF THE UNIVERSE. The word Amen is used as the expression of agreement, of consent, of assurance, of certainty. The doxology uttered by St. Paul is such as all will unite in. The prayer, the commending to God, the giving of glory, are the consentaneous expressions of all who may catch the ideas and hear the words. 1. It is the consent of wonder. All will marvel at the great achievement of God and His Christ. In awe and reverence profound the universe shall cry, "Amen." 2. It is the consent of delight. Throughout the universe of spiritual being, then freely traversed by the purified minds, all parts being in harmony, a communication opened up between all spheres, the delight shall spread when the glory of God shall be seen in the heavens. 3. It is the consent of approval. God's right to judge will be recognised, and His higher right to save will be equally assured. Splendid will be the state of heaven; high will be the joys of that serene condition. But chief of all, men and angels will perceive the justice and the righteousness of that salvation which the human race shall gain. 4. Then finally, this consent shall be the consent of all. Not a single spirit in the entire universe shall hold back its acclaim. All men who shall be saved must surely join in the "Amen." It will be impossible that any of the redeemed will be silent. (*Ibid.*) *God only wise*:—In the beginning of the doxology he praises God's power, and at its close His wisdom. God also is the only wise in the sense that in the scheme of salvation He acted without counsel from any, and in a method which none other could have devised. He wrought the best ends by the best means. He solved problems which never otherwise could have been solved. He removed barriers which He alone could remove. He reconciled contradictions which were incapable of reconciliation, except by Divine knowledge. He effected a scheme of redemption which is simple in itself, adapted to man everywhere, and which is of such a nature as to attract all who have minds to think and hearts to feel. He caused "mercy and truth to meet together." He broke down all partition walls which existed between Himself and the sinner, and between Jew and Gentile. He united the claims of justice and purity with the pleadings of love and grace. In redemption, even more than in creation, we adore "the manifold wisdom of God," and behold Him as One who has no second, but stands alone in His glory, infinitely removed from all His creatures in heaven and earth. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *God's wisdom*:—I. WHAT WISDOM IS. It consists in—1. Acting for a right end. 2. Observing all circumstances for action. 3. Willing and acting according to the right reason and judgment of things. Wisdom and knowledge are two distinct perfections. Knowledge hath its seat in the speculative understanding, wisdom in the practical. II. SOME PROPOSITIONS IN GENERAL CONCERNING THE WISDOM OF GOD. 1. There is an essential and a personal wisdom of God. The essential wisdom is the essence of God, the personal wisdom is the Son of God (Luke vii. 35; 1 Cor. i. 24). 2. It is not a habit added to God's essence, as it is in man, but it is His essence. It is like the splendour of the sun, the same with the sun itself. 3. It is the property of God alone. He is only wise. (1) Necessarily. He cannot but contrive counsels, and exert operations becoming the greatness of His nature. (2) Originally. Men acquire wisdom; God goes not out of Himself to search it (chap. xi. 34; Isa. xl. 14). (3) Perfectly. There is no cloud upon His understanding. (4) Universally. Wisdom in one man is of one sort, in another of another sort. But God hath an universal wisdom. His executions are as wise as His contrivances. (5) Perpetually. The wisdom of man is got by instruction and lost by dotage. But "the Ancient of days" is an unchangeable possessor of it (Job. xii. 13; Psa. xxxiii. 11). (6) Incomprehensibly (Psa. xcii. 5; Rom. xi. 33). (7) Infallibly. The wisest men often design and fail; God never fails of anything He aims at (Isa. lv. 11; Prov. xxi. 30). III. THE PROOFS OF GOD'S WISDOM. 1. God could not be infinitely perfect without wisdom. All the other perfections of God without this would be as a body without an eye, a soul without understanding. God, being the first Being, possesses whatsoever is most noble in any being. 2. Without infinite wisdom He could not govern the world. He could not be an universal governor without a universal wisdom; nor the sole governor without an inimitable wisdom; not an independent governor without an original and independent wisdom; nor a perpetual governor without an incorruptible wisdom. 3. The creatures working for an end, without their own knowledge, demonstrates the wisdom of God that guides them. As there was some prime cause, which by His power inspired them with their several instincts, so there must be some supreme wisdom which moves and

guides them to their end. 4. God is the fountain of all wisdom in the creatures, and therefore is infinitely wise Himself. As He hath a fulness of being in Himself, because the streams of being are derived to other things from Him, so He hath a fulness of wisdom, because He is the spring of wisdom to angels and men (Job. xxxii. 8; Dan. ii. 21). IV. WHEREIN IT APPEARS. 1. In creation. As in a musical instrument there is first the skill of the workman in the frame, then the skill of the musician in stringing it proper for such musical notes as he will express upon it, and after that the tempering of the strings, by various stops, to a delightful harmony, so is the wisdom of God seen in framing the world, then in tuning it, and afterwards in the motion of the several creatures (Psa. civ. 24; Prov. iii. 19; Jer. x. 12). This wisdom of the creation appears in—(1) Its variety (Psa. civ. 24). (2) Its beauty and order, and in the situation of the several creatures (Eccles. iii. 11). (3) The fitness of everything for its end, and the usefulness of it. Divine wisdom is more illustrious in this than in the composure of the distinct parts, as the artificer's skill is more eminent in fitting the wheels, and setting them in order for their due motion, than in the external fabric of the materials which compose the clock. (4) The linking all these useful parts together, so that one is subordinate to the other for a common end. 2. In His government of man—(1) As a rational creature. (*a*) In the law He gives to man, which is suited to his nature, happiness and conscience. (*b*) In the various inclinations and conditions of men. Some are inspired with a particular genius for one art, some for another. The rich have as much need of the poor as the poor have of the rich. (2) As fallen and sinful. God's wisdom is seen in—(*a*) The bounding of sin (Psa. lxxvi. 10). (*b*) The bringing glory to Himself out of sin. (*c*) Bringing good to the creature out of sin. The redemption of man in so excellent a way was drawn from the occasion of sin. The devil inspired man to content his own fury in the death of Christ, and God ordered it to accomplish His own design of redemption. The sins and corruptions remaining in the heart of a man, God orders for good, and there are good effects by the direction of His wisdom and grace. (3) As converted (Eph. i. 11, 12). Divine wisdom appears—(*a*) In the subjects of conversion. Who will question the skill that alters jet into crystal, a glow-worm into a star, a lion into a lamb, and a swine into a dove? (*b*) In the seasons of conversion. The prudence of man consists in the timing the execution of his counsels; and no less doth the wisdom of God consist in this. (*c*) In the manner of conversion. So great a change God makes, not by a destruction, but with a preservation of, and suitableness to, nature. (*d*) In His discipline. 3. In redemption. The wisdom of God is seen here—(1) In that the greatest different interests are reconciled, justice in punishing and mercy in pardoning (chap. iii. 24, 25). (2) In selecting the fittest person for this work. He by whom God created the world was most conveniently employed in restoring it (Heb. i. 2). He was the light of men in creation (John i. 4), and therefore it was most reasonable He should be the light of men in redemption. Who fitter to reform the Divine image than He that first formed it? Who fitter to speak for us to God than He who was the Word? (John i. 1). (3) In the two natures of Christ, whereby this redemption was accomplished. This union was the foundation of the union of God and the fallen creature. He had a nature whereby to suffer for us, and a nature whereby to be meritorious in those sufferings. (4) In manifesting two contrary affections at the same time, and in one act: the greatest hatred of sin, and the greatest love to the sinner. (5) In overturning the devil's empire by the nature He had vanquished, and by ways quite contrary to what that malicious spirit could imagine. (6) In giving us this way the surest ground of comfort, and the strongest incentive to obedience. The rebel is reconciled, and the rebellion shamed; God is propitiated and the sinner sanctified by the same blood. (7) In the condition He hath settled for the enjoying the fruits of redemption; and this is faith, a wise and reasonable condition, and the concomitants of it. (8) In the manner of the publishing and propagating this doctrine of redemption. (*a*) In the gradual discoveries of it. (*b*) In using all proper means to render the belief of it easy. (*c*) In the instruments He employed in the publishing it. (*S. Charnock, B.D.*)

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